

CUMNOR PARISH COUNCIL

TERMS OF REFERENCE for the Cumnor Neighbourhood Development Plan Steering Group Issue 2

Issue History

Issue N°	Date of Adoption	Reference in Minute Book	Details of Change Made
1	03/10/2016	316/16	First Formal Issue
2	02/07/2018	247/18	Heading Substitutes to include the wording 'from a specified group ie VWHDC, OCC'.

Purpose

The Cumnor Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group brings together representatives of Cumnor Parish and stakeholders and members of the local community. Officers from the District Council will be able to assist the group but will not be full members. The main role of the Steering Group is to manage the production of a neighbourhood plan for Cumnor Parish.

Role

The role of the group is to:

- define the neighbourhood area
- agree a budget, how this will be funded and managed including appointment of specialist consultants or advisers
- agree the governance structure for the project e.g. any working groups and what their specific responsibilities will be
- prepare and agree a project plan which complies with the legislative requirements for producing a neighbourhood plan
- manage working groups
- ensure working groups have clear terms of reference related to their responsibilities and the project plan
- Gather data from a wide range of sources to ensure that the conclusions reached are fully evidenced and that the aspirations and issues of all residents are understood
- regularly report back to the Parish Council

Membership

Membership of the Steering Group will consist of *[parish councillors; representatives of local organisations; local people, landowners, local business representatives]* as shown in the table below.

Name	Organisation
Kathryn Davies	Member of the public
Ted Mott	Member of the public
Tim Pottle	Member of the public
Dianne Rees	Member of the public
Cllr Judy Roberts	Cumnor Parish Council
Chris Scruby	Member of the public
Chris Westcott	Member of the public

Working Groups

The Steering Group may establish working groups, made up of volunteers from the community to aid them in any Neighbourhood Plan related work. Each working group should have a lead person from the Steering Group. Members of the community will be encouraged to participate in the process at all stages.

Individual Members' Responsibilities

The decisions made by the group will undoubtedly require compromise and consensus building; consequently members should ensure they are:

- able and willing to make decisions and recommendations on behalf of their body/organisation committed to helping to guide the preparation of the neighbourhood plan
- supportive and committed to the process and its implementation
- willing to work with the group, accommodating views that are different from their own, seeking consensus and accepting compromise to reach agreement on the issues before the group
- open minded and able to consider the whole picture, not seeking simply to promote sectional interests
- able to represent the group and its work in a positive light to the wider community
- prepared to work with other groups/agencies in a constructive way to achieve the best outcomes for the area
- attend all meetings or delegate a replacement in the event that they are unavailable
- assess existing evidence about the needs and aspirations of the Parish, commission any technical evidence, e.g. housing and infrastructure needs to support the development of a neighbourhood plan, and identify gaps
- consider progress reports and work undertaken and agree appropriate course of action
- agree a programme of community engagement and public consultation at appropriate stages to ensure that the information gathered is representative of those living within Cumnor Parish
- undertake analysis, interpretation and reporting of the results from community engagement and public consultation activities and ensuring that they inform decision-making (either directly, or within the aid of consultants)
- ensure that any planning related documentation complies with the district councils Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) and is appropriate for adoption
- ensure consultation with and co-operation from key stakeholders to ensure the deliverability of the project and of proposals included in the final plan
- promote the appropriate development of Cumnor Parish in accordance with the Neighbourhood Plan
- work positively with the district council to ensure the plan is in conformity with the adopted development plan
- work positively with the district council in auditing the project plan or the use of any grant funding from the district council

Chairman and other Offices

The Steering Group will appoint/elect a Chairman and Deputy Chairman from the Group members.

Both the Chairman and Deputy shall remain in that position following their election until completion of the project.

The Chairman or in his absence the Deputy will be responsible for dealing with any media enquiries and for keeping the parish council up to date with progress of the group's work.

Substitutes

If a member of the group from a specified group ie VWHDC, OCC is unable to attend a meeting they should arrange for a substitute from the organisation they are representing to attend in their place. Substitutes are authorised to vote on behalf of the original member.

Where no suitable substitute is available then representations or comments will be accepted via email. This should be submitted to the group no less than 3 days prior to the date of a meeting.

Commitment from District Council Officers

District Council Officers will be performing an advisory role and should seek to ensure that all recommendations or outcomes of this process are in compliance with current policies and/or strategies, and are used to inform the future development of policies, strategies or direct implementation of work.

Other responsibilities include:

- initial advice and an introductory meeting to explain the process
- advice on an appropriate consultation strategy and how consultation should be recorded
- advice on the evidence needed to prepare the plan and details of statutory consultees
- a 'critical friend' role throughout the drafting of the plan, attending steering group meetings where necessary to provide advice and support
- reviewing draft documents to ensure they meet the basic conditions
- support for publicity that you may wish to carry-out
- funding for towns, larger villages and smaller villages
- advice and support dealing with the media and publicising your work
- bring in resources as required from other teams across the District Council to provide additional specialist advice
- facilitate discussion where the Steering Group has conflicting views
- identify best practice from elsewhere

Meetings

The group will meet monthly and will be held within the Parish. The dates will be posted on the Parish website and will be open to the public.

The Steering Group members will receive an agenda paper for meetings at least 3 days prior to the meeting.

Any documents which are to be considered prior to a meeting should be circulated at least 3 working days prior to a meeting.

Minutes of all meetings will be recorded and kept on file for reference, draft minutes of meetings will be circulated following each meeting after clearance by the Chair.

At least two-thirds attendance is required for a meeting to proceed.

Decision Making

All members of the Steering Group, with the exception of co-opted members' e.g. District Council employees, will have an equal vote in decision making.

However, it is likely that some decisions will be in the form of a recommendation to the parish council or the District Council, for their consideration.

Decisions made by the Group should normally be by consensus at group meetings. If this is not possible then decisions will be taken by vote, with each member present having one vote, and a simple majority will be required to support a decision.

A minimum of five members must be present to enable decisions to be taken.

The Chair, or in their absence the Deputy Chair shall have the casting vote.

All decisions requiring expenditure above £500 shall go before the full Parish Council

The project plan will contain key gateways which will act as stop/go decision points. These decision points will be identified in the project plan and will be put forward to the full Parish Council.

Appointment and dismissal to and from the Steering Group will be by majority vote of the Parish Council. Stepping down from the Steering Group should be made in writing to the Chairman.

Conflicts of interest

Steering Group members should declare an interest where there is a potential financial or pecuniary benefit to themselves, or their company / organisation arising from the decisions or recommendations of the group.

Finance

1. All grants and funding will be applied for and held by the Parish Council, who will ring-fence the funds for NDP work.
2. The Steering Group will notify the Parish Council, advising them of any planned expenditure before it is incurred.
3. Steering Group members and volunteers from any working groups may claim back any previously agreed expenditure incurred during any Neighbourhood Plan related work.

Conduct

1. It is expected that all Steering Group members abide by the principles and practice of the Parish Council Code of Conduct including declarations of interest.
2. Whilst Members as individuals will be accountable to their parent organisations, the Steering Group as a whole is accountable to the wider community for ensuring that the Plan reflects their collective expectations.
3. The Steering Group will achieve this through applying the following principles:
 - i. Be clear and open when their individual roles or interests are in conflict;
 - ii. Treat everyone with dignity, courtesy and respect regardless of their age, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, or religion and belief; and
 - iii. Actively promote equality of access and opportunity

Changes to the Terms of Reference

This constitution may be amended with the support of at least two-thirds of the current membership at a Steering Group Meeting and with the approval of the Parish Council.

Dissolution

The Steering Group will be dissolved once its objectives have been attained and/or when at least two-thirds of its members and the Parish Council, consider its services are no longer required. The Steering Group will then dispose of any remaining funds held in accordance with any conditions imposed by the grant funders and in the best interests of Cumnor Parish.

Review date October 2020