

Ewelme Neighbourhood Planning Steering Group: Terms of Reference 24 April 2017

Ewelme Parish Council resolved to produce a Neighbourhood Plan (the Plan) after a positive response from a Village Meeting on November 10th 2016. The first meeting of the Steering Group was convened on February 6th 2017. The Plan shall cover the area of Ewelme Parish.

The Parish Council, while retaining full responsibility for the Plan, recognises that the content of the Plan must be driven by the community and draw on the skills and expertise from outside the Council.

The aforementioned Steering Group has therefore been created to lead the project to successful completion.

1. Purpose of the group

The Ewelme Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group brings together representatives of Ewelme Parish Council along with stakeholders and members of the local community. Officers from the district council will assist the group but will not be full members. The purpose of the NPSG is the preparation of a Neighbourhood Plan and associated tasks leading to its adoption.

2. Role of the group

The role of the group is to:

- Define the neighbourhood area.
- Agree a budget; including how this will be funded and managed, taking into consideration the appointment of specialist consultants or advisers.
- Agree the governance structure for the project; for example, 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.
- Consider the options and develop policies to inform the future development and use of land in the neighbourhood area.
- Ensure the Neighbourhood Plan is supported by an effective on-going programme of communication and consultation with the community, businesses, developers, adjoining parishes and other key third parties.
- Liaise with statutory and other relevant authorities and organisations to ensure The Plan is as comprehensive and inclusive as possible.
- To report back regularly to Ewelme Parish Council on progress, significant issues and budgetary implications. To share Minutes of all Steering Group meetings with the Parish Council who will then review these at the next available Parish Council Meeting. They will then provide any feedback or queries regarding current progress, thereby closing the information loop.

2.1 Membership of the group

The Ewelme Steering Group will consist of local people, parish councillors and local business men and women as shown in the table below:

Name	Association to Ewelme/Organisation
Geoff Watts	Local Resident (<i>Chairman</i>)
Sarah Maine	Local Resident (<i>Vice Chairman</i>)
Shirley Meyer	Local Resident (<i>Secretary</i>)
Neil Blake	Local Resident (Treasurer)
Gemma Benoliel	Member of the Parish Council
Roger Moore	Member of the Parish Council
David Solomon	Local Resident
Ellie Clements	Local Resident
Mary Taylor-Lane	Local Resident
Andy Evans	Local Resident
Andy Green	Local Resident
Sue Cooper	Local Resident
David Cooper	Local Resident

The Steering Group may include representatives of chambers of commerce, any local economic partnerships, local voluntary or community organisations or schools. It may also include representatives from specific local businesses or landowners in the area, or it may include a number of local residents.

Of the steering group mentioned above, sub-committees or working groups may be formed to undertake various aspects of the work involved in producing the Neighbourhood Plan if this is appropriate for your area.

The Steering Group can also co-opt additional members to discuss particular issues where necessary or to join the Steering Group if required. These may be voting or non-voting members e.g. a district council officer could be identified as an advisor to the group and could become an informal member of the Steering Group.

3. Individual Member's 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.

In the event that an individual from the steering group cannot attend a meeting, a replacement delegate must attend in his or her place.

4. Responsibilities of the Steering Group

- 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 Ewelme.
- Undertake analysis, interpretation and reporting of the results from community engagement and public consultation activities, ensuring that they inform decision-making (either directly, or with 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 the village of Ewelme 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.

5. Chairman and other Officers

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/her absence the Deputy Chairman, will be responsible for dealing with any media enquiries and will also update the Parish Councillors should they not be able to attend any of the meetings.

6. Substitutes

If a member of the group is unable to attend a meeting, they should arrange for a substitute from the organisation they are representing to attend in their place.

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

7. Commitment from Ewelme Parish Council (EPC)

The EPC will;

- As detailed in Section 1, the Parish Council will review all new Steering Group Minutes and Correspondence at each Parish Council Meeting and provide feedback in order to close the information loop.
- Provide two Councillors who are members of the Steering Group and who will represent the Parish Council at Steering Group meetings. These are currently Gemma Benoiel and Roger Moore. If either is unavailable to attend a meeting, the Parish Council will endeavour to send another Councillor as a replacement for that meeting.
- Provide a link from the NP website to the Parish Council website when it becomes available

8. Commitment from District Council Officers

District Council Officers will be performing an advisory role. They should seek to ensure that all recommendations or outcomes of this process are in compliance with current policies and/or strategies and that they 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 the group may wish to carry out.
- Funding for towns, larger villages and smaller villages.
- Advice and support dealing with the media and publicising documents.
- 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.

9. Meetings

The group will meet at key stages in the development of the Neighbourhood Plan. The dates and frequency of the meetings will be discussed and decided by the group, taking into account the workload and depending on the stage of the process. The date of the next meeting will be decided by the group at each meeting in order to ensure that maximum attendance can be achieved. If not all are available then substitutes will be assigned following section 6 in this document.

The Steering Group members will receive an agenda at each meeting, with any important documents that need to be reviewed circulated to the group at least 5 working days before a meeting.

Minutes of all meetings will be recorded and kept on file for reference. Draft minutes will be circulated to all members following each meeting once they have been approved by the Chair.

In accordance with the Freedom of Information Act (2000), the Steering Group will make available to the public: minutes of meetings, policies and procedures, details of its organisation and structure and information on budget, expenditure and allowances.

10. 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 Town/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 ten members must be present to enable decisions to be taken. The Chair, or in their absence the Deputy Chair shall have the casting vote.

11. 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.

12. Review of the Group

The Steering group will be disbanded upon completion of the project at a time which will be agreed by the group or the Parish Council.