

Terms of Reference for Whitchurch Neighbourhood Plan Steering Committee

Terms of Reference:

By decision of the Town Council, The Steering Group constituted as below is established to oversee the research and preparation of a Neighbourhood Plan for Whitchurch.

Name

The name of the organisation shall be the Whitchurch Town Council Neighbourhood Plan Steering Committee, hereafter referred to as the NP Steering Committee.

Purpose

The purpose of the committee shall be to act on behalf of the Town Council to carry out the following tasks:

1. Investigate and identify support for the Parish Plan.
2. Identify sources of funding in addition to the Countryside Agency grant.
3. Take responsibility for planning, budgeting and monitoring expenditure on the plan and report back to the parish council on these matters.
4. Liaise with relevant authorities and organisations to make the plan as effective as possible.
5. Identify ways of involving the whole community and gather the views and opinions of as many groups and organisations in the community as possible.
6. Determine the types of survey and information gathering to be used.
7. Be responsible for the analysis of the survey, the production and distribution of the final report.
8. Identify priorities and timescale for local action in the action plan including lead organisations and potential sources of project funding.
9. To report back to the parish council on progress, issues arising and outcomes from the exercise.

Reporting

The Steering group shall report its recommendations and progress to the Development Committee, and Policy and Resources committees of the Town Council

Membership

The committee will include up to 12 elected or co-opted members.

No more than four of these members will be members of the Town council. The initial members of the committee are to be elected directly by the Town Council.

Subsequent Election to the committee will take place at a meeting open to the public. Any resident or person, particularly those representing a local group, may stand for election to the committee. Residents may also nominate representatives for election to the committee.

The committee may co-opt additional members at its discretion, so long as the total number of co-opted members does not exceed the number of elected members.

A person shall cease to be a member of the committee having notified the chair or secretary in writing of his or her wish to resign.

Officers

At the first meeting the committee will elect: a chairperson. All other committee members should have a specific role, to be agreed by the committee. The Town Clerk or deputy Town Clerk will be ex-officio members of the committee.

Meetings

The committee shall meet every two months as a minimum, or as may be required. At least five clear days notice of meetings shall be given to members. All notices of committee meetings must detail the matters to be discussed.

By nature of the business being conducted, discussions will need to be confidential (ie not in public) with recommendations rather than decisions being reported to either Dev Committee or Full Council for debate/approval which are meetings open to the public.

Public meetings to seek evidence for the Neighbourhood Plan, Public Survey and feedback on draft sections of the local plan are to form an integral part of the preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan.

Every matter shall be determined by a majority of votes of the committee members present and voting. In the case of equality of votes the chair of the meeting shall have a casting vote.

The committee may decide the quorum necessary to transact business – with a minimum of four members.

The secretary shall keep a record of meeting, and circulate notes recording headings and actions to members of the committee not more than 14 days after each meeting.

Working Groups

The committee may appoint such working groups, as it considers necessary to carry out functions specified by the committee. Each working group should have a nominated chair but this person does not have to be a member of the steering committee or member of the Town Council.

Working groups do not have power to authorise expenditure on behalf of the committee.

Working groups will be bound by the terms of reference set out for them by the steering group.

Finance

The committee shall keep a clear record of expenditure, where necessary, supported by receipted invoices.

Members of the community who are involved as volunteers with any of the working groups may claim back any expenditure that was necessarily incurred during the process of producing the Neighbourhood Plan. This could include postage and stationary, telephone calls, travel costs and childcare costs.

The Town Council will draw up and agree with the committee procedures for volunteers who wish to claim expenses and the rates they may claim.

The committee will report back to the Town Council on planned and actual expenditure for the project, and liaise with the Town Clerk to set up a petty cash system and enable cash withdrawals and payment of invoices to be made as required.

Changes to the constitution

This constitution may be altered and additional clauses may be added with the consent of two-thirds of the committee present.

Dissolution of the Committee

Upon dissolution of the committee any remaining funds shall revert to the Town Council.