

## **TERMS OF REFERENCE AND GOVERNANCE FOR WITHERLEY PARISH COUNCIL NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN STEERING GROUP**

### **1) Background**

a) Witherley Parish Council has resolved to produce a Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) and has determined that the NDP shall cover the area of the Parish of Witherley. Subsequently this has been formally designated by Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council.

b) The Parish Council, while retaining full responsibility for the NDP, recognises that the content of the NDP must be driven by the community and draw on skills and expertise from outside the Council. A Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group has therefore been formed to lead the project to successful completion.

### **2) Name**

a) The name of the Steering Group shall be the Witherley Parish Neighbourhood Development Plan Steering Group.

### **3) Role**

a) The role of the Steering Group is to carry out the following NDP tasks on behalf of the Parish Council:

i) Undertake the preparation of a NDP for the designated area of the Parish of Witherley;

ii) Utilise external funding secured by the Parish Council and assist with planning, budgeting and monitoring expenditure under the control of the Parish Council.

iii) Liaise with relevant authorities, organisations and identified Stakeholders to ensure the NDP is comprehensive and inclusive;

iv) Identify and implement a wide variety of ways to engage the whole community throughout the process;

v) Appoint Theme Groups as necessary to undertake specific areas of work on behalf of the overall NDP Steering Group, involving additional persons with specific expertise as required;

vi) Be responsible for the analysis arising during the NDP process and the production and distribution of the final report;

vii) To work closely with Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council throughout the process;

viii) To submit the draft NDP for consultation with the Parish Council, local residents and Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council;

ix) To secure the endorsement of the Parish Council for the final NDP document.

- x) To prepare the NDP for submission to Hinckley and Bosworth Council;
- xi) To ensure the NDP is in general conformity with Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council's existing Core Strategy;
- xii) To ensure the NDP meets the requirements of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012, the Localism Act 2011 and other relevant legislation, including European obligations.

#### **4) Membership**

a) The NDP Steering Group shall have a minimum of eight members, including at least two members of the Parish Council. The membership and appointments are to be approved by the Parish Council and membership information included on the Parish Council website.

#### **5) Meetings**

a) The NDP Steering Group shall hold a full meeting at least every two months or more frequently as may be required.

b) Meeting dates shall be confirmed at least ten days in advance.

c) The meeting agenda shall be passed to all members, with the details of all supporting documentation, at least 3 clear days prior to each meeting. Members will be expected to have read the papers in advance of the meeting.

d) Declarations of Interest for Agenda items shall be a standard agenda item at the beginning of each meeting.

e) The minutes of the meeting shall be produced and circulated to all members within 10 days at most following the meeting, for approval at the following meeting.

f) Resolutions shall be decided by a majority of votes, with the Chair having a casting vote if required.

g) A minimum quorum of members for the transaction of business is 50% or more of members, including the Chair.

h) Meetings will normally be open to all members of the public. If a member of the public wishes to speak on a particular subject, the Chair shall invite him/her to speak when the subject is discussed, for no more than 5 minutes.

i) The agendas, supporting papers and meeting minutes are to be posted on the Parish Council website to provide the maximum opportunity for community participation. The agenda and meeting minutes will also be posted on the Village notice board, with a contact address for those wishing to view the supporting papers.

j) The NDP Steering Group can exclude the public and hold a closed session in exceptional circumstances for matters that are sensitive.

## **6) Theme Groups**

a) The NDP Steering Group may appoint specific Theme Groups to carry out agreed work on its behalf, with a nominated Leader for each Theme Group. The work of the Theme Groups does not need to be open to the public and meetings are not required to follow the procedures referenced above.

b) Each Theme Group will comprise at least one member of the NDP Steering Group

c) The Leader may co-opt additional members to further the work of the Theme Group.

d) The Theme Group may make recommendations, but decisions will be taken by the full NDP Steering Group, for ratification by the Parish Council.

## **7) Finance**

a) The Secretary shall maintain a record of all income and expenditure with decisions on financial matters to be taken by the Parish Council.

b) A current financial statement will be available as necessary.

## **8) General Conduct of NDP Steering Group Members**

a) Members are expected to conduct themselves when working on the NDP in a manner consistent with the standards of conduct required for those in public life, i.e. selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership.

b) Members are required to read and sign the Parish Council Register of Interests and Code of Conduct. The Secretary will hold the signed forms in a central place.

c) Members, including co-opted members, should declare an interest at the beginning of a meeting if the member has a disclosable pecuniary or non-pecuniary interest relating to an agenda item to be discussed.

## **9) Public Access to Information**

a) Members of the public, under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, have the right of access to all meetings of the NDP Steering Group, unless specific reasons have been announced in advance when confidential material may be discussed which might be prejudicial to the public interest. It is envisaged that this would rarely, if ever, be implemented.

b) Members of the public should declare an interest, if applicable, in respect of any agenda item to be discussed at the meeting.

c) The agendas, relevant papers and subsequent minutes of all NDP Steering Group meetings will be published on the Parish Council website and available for all members of the public to access.