

BRAMSHOTT & LIPHOOK PARISH COUNCIL

Terms of Reference for the Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) Steering Group

Final version approved by Bramshott & Liphook Parish Council on 27th February 2017

Bramshott & Liphook Parish Council voted to draw up a Neighbourhood Plan at its meeting in December 2014. The Council subsequently agreed with East Hampshire District Council (EHDC) and the South Downs National Park Authority (SDNPA) that the designated area should be the whole of the parish of Bramshott and Liphook.

The Neighbourhood Development Plan Steering Group, hereafter referred to as the Steering Group, shall be dissolved when the Neighbourhood Development Plan has been approved by a community referendum and has become part of the statutory development plan for the area. The Parish Council may choose to set up a Neighbourhood Development Plan Monitoring Group at this time with its own Terms of Reference.

PURPOSE

The purpose of the Steering Group shall be to work in partnership with Bramshott & Liphook Parish Council to oversee the preparation of a sound Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) in conformity with the local planning authorities, East Hampshire District Council and the South Downs National Park Authority and in conformity with national planning legislation. The NDP will promote or improve the social, economic and environmental well-being of the Parish.

The NDP should define the planning policy priorities identified by the community taking into account all representations made during the plan making process and having regard to all relevant existing plans and evidence. The NDP will include or be supported by an appropriate delivery plan setting out, where relevant, the means by which these policy priorities may be implemented.

PRINCIPLES

1. The Steering Group has delegated authority to develop and oversee a process that will result in the preparation of a draft Neighbourhood Development Plan for the Parish of Bramshott and Liphook within the timescales and budget agreed by the Parish Council subject to certain areas which will require express approval from the Parish Council
2. Investigate and identify support for the NDP and identify ways of involving the whole community to gather the views and opinions of residents, groups and organisations in the community
3. To utilise the work already carried out in the Parish Plan and carry these ideas forward into the NDP so far as is possible
4. Develop policies to inform the future development and use of land in the Parish, including infrastructure policies that go hand in hand with development
5. Maintain a comprehensive evidence base to support the NDP policies through community engagement, research, including communication with Parish Councillors
6. Ensure that there is ongoing communication and consultation with the community, EHDC, the SDNPA, the Parish Council and other key parties
7. Take note of the future housing and business needs of the Parish where these can be established
8. Keep the residents of the Parish informed of progress by means of public meetings
9. Identify priorities and timescale for actions in the NDP to include sources of funding

10. That the Steering Group will undertake the process in a democratic, transparent and fair fashion, encouraging widespread participation and giving equal consideration to opinions and ideas from all member of the community of Bramshott and Liphook
11. All decisions made shall be fully evidenced and supported through consultation with the local community
12. As the Parish Council remains the responsible body for the Neighbourhood Development Plan, the Steering Group must report back to the Parish Council on a monthly basis and receive ongoing endorsement via Council minutes such that the Draft Neighbourhood Development Plan when presented should have the full approval of the Parish Council and not the Steering Group alone. The Chair (or Deputy) of the Steering Group should also attend full Council meetings and provide further information on the NDP progress as appropriate
13. The NDP should be formally submitted to the Parish Council after the referendum
14. Members of the public who reside in the Parish may attend meetings of the Steering Group as observers and may also speak at Parish Council meetings during the Public Participation session. Any Parish Councillor may also attend meetings of the Steering Group as an observer. There may be exempt sessions (where the public cannot attend) of the Steering Group at their discretion on confidential or sensitive business.
15. Any conflict arising within the Steering Group can be referred to the Liaison Committee for resolution if the Steering Group are unable to agree
16. The Steering Group should develop a project plan within the budget and timescale set by the Parish Council and should inform the Parish Council of any change in timetable and budget requirements before they occur

FINANCE

The Steering Group shall not have the power to exercise, on behalf of the Parish Council, any authority, nor to incur any expenditure without prior authority from the Parish Council under its published Financial Regulations.

FINANCIAL PRINCIPLES

1. All grants and funding will be applied for and held by the Parish Council who will ring-fence the funds for NDP purposes only
2. Notification of all planned expenditure will be given to the Parish Council before actual costs are incurred
3. The Chair of the Steering Group (or the Administrator) shall keep a clear record of expenditure supported by receipted invoices and will regularly review and update the budget in liaison with the RFO
4. Any invoices will be made out in the name of the Parish Council who will arrange for payments to be made in line with normal procedures
5. In line with the Financial Regulations of the Council the RFO and Chair of Council may authorise expenditure for items up to £2,000
6. The RFO may authorise expenditure for items up to £1,000
7. Expenditure over £2,000 is to be evidenced by a Minute in the Council minutes. Contracts may not be disaggregated to avoid controls imposed by these regulations.
8. Substantial decisions, such as contracting a consultant, must be approved by the Parish Council or the decision delegated to the Finance & Policy Committee. The Council (or Finance & Policy committee if the decision is delegated) will also need to approve the terms and conditions of the contract.

MEMBERSHIP OF THE STEERING GROUP

The Steering Group will be made up of a cross section of volunteers from the Parish including Parish Councillors. Effort will be made to seek representation from under represented sections of the community.

Membership of the Steering Group will be open to the public indefinitely up to a maximum of 10 members.

The Parish Council should elect the Chair. The Steering Group members should elect a Deputy Chair.

The Steering Group should include at least 2 Parish Councillors (one of which should be from the Planning Committee). If a Parish Councillor resigns from the Parish Council they would automatically be resigning from the Steering Group and should be replaced by another Parish Councillor (following the Parish Council Standing Orders for appointment to Committees) thereby maintaining two Councillors on the Steering Group.

Each member of the Steering Group has an equal vote on all issues.

The Steering Group should also have a Clerk/Administrator who has no voting rights.

All volunteers should apply through the Parish Office. The Chair (or Deputy Chair) of the Steering Group should consider all applications and provide the Liaison Working Party with their application criteria, how candidates meet the criteria and recommendations for interview. Volunteers should be interviewed by the Chair (and/or Deputy Chair) of the Steering Group to ascertain their suitability. The Chair (or Deputy Chair) of the Steering Group should make recommendations to the Liaison Working Party of the suitability of members for the Steering Group and relevant Working Parties and it is for the Liaison Working Party to make recommendations to Council. The names of the members will then be brought to full Parish Council and will be minuted.

It is expected that all Steering Group and Working Party members abide by the principles and practice of the Parish Council Code of Conduct.

All members of the Steering Group and Working Parties should sign a Declaration of Interest before appointment declaring anything that may be perceived as being relevant to the decisions or recommendations made by the Steering Group. This may include membership of an organisation, ownership or interest in land or business, membership of a neighbourhood or community group relating to housing developments in Bramshott and Liphook or indeed any other matter likely to be relevant to the work undertaken by the Steering Group. Disclosure should also include the interests of their spouse.

Members should notify the Chair of the Steering Group and the Liaison Working Party of any change of interests or new interests after their appointment has commenced.

Members of the Steering Group and Working Parties may be removed if they declare an interest as outlined above or a pecuniary interest after the project has commenced or demonstrates behaviour which contravenes the Councillors' Code of Conduct which all members should abide by.

WORKING PARTIES

The Steering Group may appoint Working Parties who will carry out specific duties which may include but is not limited to:

- Data gathering
- Consultations
- Making recommendations

A lead person for each Working Party should be identified by the Steering Group and Terms of Reference agreed before commencement of any work.

Members of the Working Parties do not necessarily have to be members of the Steering Group however members of Working Parties will have the right to attend Steering Group meetings for the period that they are on the Working Party.

Members of the Working Parties have the right to vote on any issue within their working party and their votes will be recorded and submitted to the next Steering Group meeting.

MEETINGS

The Steering Group will set its own dates for meetings but it is expected that they will meet at least once monthly during the production of the Draft Neighbourhood Development Plan.

At least three clear days' notice of meetings shall be sent to members via the communication method agreed with and appropriate to each individual member.

The minutes shall be circulated after each meeting to each Steering Group member and to the Parish Council. The minutes will be published on the Parish Council website and on any Neighbourhood Development Plan website.

Copies of the Parish Council's Code of Conduct will be available at all NDP meetings.