

# PEACEHAVEN & TELSCOMBE NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN

## STEERING GROUP - TERMS OF REFERENCE

### 1. Background

- 1.1 Peacehaven & Telscombe Town Councils have determined that they should produce a Neighbourhood Plan in pursuance of the Government's Localism Act 2011 and the Neighbourhood Plan (General) Regulations 2012. In order to produce this plan the two Town Councils have established a Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group to prepare a draft Neighbourhood Plan which will be submitted to Lewes District Council for independent inspection and finally put to a public referendum for adoption.
- 1.2 The Town Councils have advised Lewes District Council of the intent of the residents of Peacehaven & Telscombe in consultation with other stakeholders to produce a Neighbourhood Plan for submission.
- 1.3 The Town Councils have conveyed the drafting of the Neighbourhood Plan to the Steering Group; however major financial decisions and process decisions will continue to be overseen by the two Town Councils, via recommendations made by the Steering Group and taken forward by appointed Councillors to the Towns Full Council meetings for approval. The Steering Group will be involved in all aspects of the development of the Neighbourhood Plan.

### 2 Purpose/Objectives

- 2.1 The main purpose of the Steering Group is to oversee the preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan in order that it will then progress to Independent Examination, a successful community referendum and ultimately be adopted by both Councils to become planning policy.
- 2.2 The Steering Group will engage the local community to ensure that the Plan is truly representative of the ambitions of both Towns. The Group will ensure high levels of community engagement throughout the plan-making process, in order to:-
  - a) identify all the important aspects of life in the Towns which are to be considered for planning purposes in the future;
  - b) bring forward proposals which will enhance the quality and wellbeing of life in the Towns in the years to come; and
  - c) provide a planning framework for future use and protection of land within the Town's area.

### **3 Principles**

3.1 In establishing the Steering Group, it is deemed appropriate that the Group is provided with and accepts these terms of reference. In particular:-

a) 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 members of the community;

b) all decisions made shall be fully evidenced and supported through consultation with the local community.

### **4 Tasks and activities**

4.1 The Steering Group will:

a) promote the process of preparing the Neighbourhood Plan. Steering Group members and the public will be encouraged to participate and provide their views and opinion on the specific topics which are covered in the preparation of the plan;

b) arrange meetings and appoint working Groups to gather views, information and consult on the emerging policies which are considered appropriate for incorporation into the emerging plan;

c) assess existing evidence about the need and aspirations of the Towns;

d) liaise with relevant organizations to secure their input in the process;

e) develop guiding principles and policies to guide the Neighbourhood Plan;

f) appoint professional planning and other relevant expertise that may be acquired during the development of the plan to ensure conformity to national and local policy and that the plan will be sound and robust to stand for independent examination;

g) inform the Town Councils of progress on a regular basis;

h) support the Local Planning Authority and the Towns Council's during the referendum process.

4.2 The Town Councils will:

a) support the preparation of the Peacehaven and Telscombe Neighbourhood Plan providing sufficient assistance and financial resources to ensure that the plan is prepared expeditiously providing that the overall expenditure falls within

the budget allocated by the Councils. The costs will fall as two thirds Peacehaven Town Council and one third Telscombe Town Council;

b) facilitate, if required, contact with the relevant statutory bodies or parties who must be consulted during the plan making process;

c) carry out all statutory duties contained in the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 and engage with Lewes District Council during the referendum process of the plan for which the principle authority are responsible;

d) following the preparation of the draft plan and with the agreement of the Group and Town Councils, submit the plan to the Local Planning Authority for inspection and independent examination.

## **5 Roles and Responsibilities**

5.1 The Steering Group will carry out the following roles:-

a) Be accountable for steering and providing strategic management of the Neighbourhood Plan.

b) Produce, monitor and update a project timetable.

c) Produce a consultation and engagement strategy, showing how the public will be involved throughout the process.

d) Regularly report back to the Town Councils for endorsement of decisions taken.

e) To undertake analysis and evidence gathering to support the plan production process.

e) Actively support and promote the preparation of the Neighbourhood Development Plan throughout the duration of the project.

f) Identify sources of funding.

g) Liaise with relevant authorities and organisations to make the plan as effective as possible.

h) 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.

i) Consult as widely and thoroughly as is possible to ensure that the draft and final NDP is representative of the views of residents.

j) Agree, subject to ratification by the Town Councils, a final submission version of the Neighbourhood Development Plan.

## **6. Decision Making**

- 6.1 The Steering Group has authority from the Town Councils to draft its plan making functions up to and including publication of the Consultation Draft Plan.
- 6.2 The Group will report monthly in writing to the respective Councils setting out progress on its work.
- 6.3 The Councils will need to approve the Submission Draft Neighbourhood Development Plan prior to publication for consultation and independent examination.
- 6.4 The plan-making process remains the responsibility of the two Town Councils as the joint qualifying bodies.
- 6.5 All publications, consultation and community engagement exercises will be undertaken by or on behalf of the Councils with appropriate Councils' positions given in all communications associated with the project.

## **7. Conduct**

- 7.1 It is expected that all Steering Group members abide by the principles and practice of the Councillors Code of Conduct including declarations of interest.  
All members of the Steering Group will:-
  - a) Declare any personal interest that may be perceived as being relevant to any decisions or recommendations made by the Group. This may include membership of an organization, ownership of interest in land (directly or indirectly) or a business or indeed any other matters likely to be relevant to the work undertaken by the Steering Group.
  - b) Whilst Members as individuals will be accountable to their parent organizations, the Steering Group as a whole is accountable to the wider community for ensuring that the Plan reflects their collective expectations.
- 7.2 The Steering Group will achieve this through applying the following principles:-
  - a) Be clear and open when their individual roles or interests are in conflict.
  - b) Work together for the benefit of the communities established in the Towns.
  - c) Treat everyone with dignity, courtesy and respect regardless of their age, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, or religion and belief.

- d) Treat other members of the Group with respect and dignity, allowing members to express their views without prejudice and interruption.
- 7.3 The Steering Group will actively promote equality of access and opportunity.
- 7.4 The Steering Group will ensure that there is no discrimination in the plan making process and that it is a wholly inclusive, open and transparent process to all Groups in both Towns and to those wishing to undertake development or be involved in the plan making process.
- 7.5 Steering Group members will seek the Steering Group's agreement for meetings with businesses, landowners, stakeholders, etc. and will make reports of these meetings available as soon as possible.

## **8 Group Membership**

- 8.1 Subject to ratification by both Town Councils, the Steering Group will be formed from Town Councillors, Council Officers, residents and the local business, education and recreation communities of Peacehaven, Telscombe & Saltdean, together with relevant stakeholders. . Effort will be made to seek representation from under-represented sections of the community.
- 8.2 The steering group will elect 10 Officers for the posts of Chair and Vice Chair and 8 other officers, to be known as the Steering Group Committee. The Committee will become the main decision making body for the Steering Group.
- 8.3 The Steering Group will work with chosen planning consultants to scope out the main issues and prepare draft policies for the emerging neighbourhood plan.
- 8.4 The local planning authority will assist through their neighbourhood plan officer, who will be invited to attend Steering Group meetings when necessary.
- 8.5 If the Chair is not present, the Vice Chair shall take the meeting. If neither is present, one of the other Officers shall chair the meeting.
- 8.6 Officers shall be elected for a period of twelve months, after which date a further vote will be undertaken, to reappoint/elect Officers.

## **9. Working Groups**

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

## **10 Meetings & Voting**

- 10.1 The Steering Group will aim to meet monthly, although it may need to meet more frequently. These monthly meetings are open for all to attend and anyone can be nominated to come forward as a Steering Group member. Nominations will need to be seconded by an existing Steering Group member and then voted by the Group.
- 10.2 Officers of the Steering Group are likely to meet more frequently to progress decision making in association with the neighbourhood plan. The officers' meetings will not be open meetings but all minutes and decisions will be reported back to the overall Steering Group.
- 10.3 All meetings shall be advertised and open to be attended by residents, the local business community and other relevant stakeholders
- 10.4 The Steering Group and its sub Groups will keep minutes of meetings which will be open to public scrutiny. These will be published on the Peacehaven and Telscombe neighbourhood plan website.
- 10.5 Notices, agendas, minutes and associated papers will be emailed where possible to all Steering Group members at least three days prior to the meeting.
- 10.6 The minutes of each Steering Group meeting will be taken back to each Town Council for review.
- 10.7 Voting will be by a show of hands by all members of the Steering Group. In the event of an equality of votes, the Chairman will have the casting vote.
- 10.8 Any decisions taken by the Steering Group, other than those delegated to appointed officers or consultants will be carried forward if the majority are in favour at any given meeting.
- 10.9 For the purposes of interpretation or any doubt, the Councils' Standing Orders in relation to meetings and voting shall prevail

## **11 Finance**

- 11.1 Policy and Finance Committee at Peacehaven Town Council and Policy and Resources Committee at Telscombe Town Council to have delegated authority to authorise expenditure from £100 up to an amount of £500.
- 11.2 Expenditure of over £500 to be approved by both Full Councils
- 11.3 Monthly financial reports will be provided to the Steering Group by the RFOs.

- 11.4 All grants and funding will be applied for and held by the nominated Council Responsible Financial Officer, who will ring-fence the funds for Neighbourhood Development Plan work.
- 11.5 The Steering Group will notify the Councils, of any planned expenditure before it is incurred.

## **12 Changes to the Terms of Reference**

- 12.1 These Terms of reference will be reviewed every six months throughout the project and amended as required. Any amendments are to be ratified by both Councils.
- 12.2 These Terms of Reference 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 both Town Councils.

## **13 Dissolution of the Group**

- 13.1 The Steering Group will be dissolved once its objectives have been attained and/or when at least (two- thirds) of its members and the Town Councils consider its services are no longer required.
- 13.2 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 Peacehaven Town Council and Telscombe Town Council