

NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN

STEERING GROUP

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Purpose

The Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group will take forward the production, through to examination and referendum, of Preston Neighbourhood Plan, ensuring that relevant consultation takes place so that the plan accurately represents the views of the residents, businesses and other stakeholders. The Steering Group for the Neighbourhood Planning process will be sponsored by and report to Preston Parish Council, which will be the accountable body, receiving regular reports from the Group. The Parish Council will act as sponsors for the plan and administer all funding and payments according to agreed diligence practices.

Terms of Reference

These Terms of Reference have been developed so that the governance and decision making of the Group can be seen to be transparent to local residents and other interested parties.

Objectives

To develop a plan which reflects local concerns and interests and which provides a planning framework for Preston as a sustainable, attractive and lively rural community with access to good facilities, infrastructure and transport.

The steering group will :

- Determine the overall scope and objectives of the plan
- Manage the process of preparing the plan and prepare and monitor a project plan
- Build and maintain links with the Local Planning Authority
- Consult residents as fully as possible about potential content of the plan, including but not limited to a questionnaire, meetings, drop in events, leaflets and flyers
- Communicate progress with residents through articles in the Village Newsletter, the Village web site and other publicity as appropriate
- Keep under review the legislative requirements around Neighbourhood Planning to ensure the plan meets all requirements
- Manage the gathering of evidence necessary to inform each of the issues within the scope of the plan
- Identify and assess options available in respect of each issue and prepare a draft plan for wider consideration.
- Produce minutes, reports and documents relating to the plan
- Instruct and engage professional consultants as part of the process of developing and producing the Neighbourhood Plan for the Preston Parish

Chairmanship

A Chairperson will be elected for the duration of the plan, or for a shorter period if determined by a meeting of the Steering Group or through the resignation. The main duties of the Chairperson will be to call and chair meetings, to ensure that these Terms of Reference are observed and to liaise with external bodies as agreed by meetings.

Membership

Membership is open to all residents of the parish who are on the electoral register. There is no requirement to register membership or to attend all or a minimum number of meetings, subject to the note below on qualification for voting and calling meetings.

The Parish Clerk will be an ex-officio member responsible for maintaining records, producing minutes and monitoring finance.

New members may apply to become members of the steering group. New members must be agreed by the existing committee.

Declarations of interest

All members of the Steering Group must declare any personal interest that may be perceived as being relevant to a decision of the group. This may include membership of an organisation, ownership of land or a business, or any other matter that may be considered to be relevant. Such declarations shall be recorded and be publicly available.

Meetings

The Steering Group shall aim to meet once per calendar month, or as may be required, with a minimum of five clear working days' notice given prior to a meeting taking place. The public and press shall be admitted to all meetings of the Steering Group but at any such meeting the public and press can be instructed to withdraw from the meeting if a majority of the Steering Group present vote that it is advisable in the public interest that they do so in view of the sensitive or confidential nature of the matter about to be discussed.

A meeting can be called by the Chairperson or by petition to the Chairperson in writing by any six residents. The valid quorum for any meeting is the Chairperson and three other members of the steering group, excluding the Clerk or Consultant.

Voting will be by simple majority of qualified members. Qualified members are any who have attended three previous minuted meeting.

Any decisions on funding expenditure will follow the following rules: the decision for payment of items under £500 has been delegated to the three members of the Parish Council; items over £500 must be referred to the Parish Council for approval.

Minutes

Minutes of all valid meetings, having been approved at the next meeting, will be posted on the Village website.

Freedom of Information

In accordance with the Freedom of Information Act (2000), as an extension of a local authority, the Steering Group will make available to the public, minutes of meetings, policies and procedures, its organisational structure and information on budget, expenditure and allowances.