

Wooler Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group

Terms of Reference

1. Purpose of the Steering Group

1.1 Wooler Parish Council is the qualifying body for the preparation of a Neighbourhood Development Plan for their civil parish area. The Parish Council has agreed to establish separate project management arrangements to facilitate the delivery of this plan-making function. The Parish Council has granted delegated authority in exercise of all relevant plan-making functions to the Wooler Neighbourhood Planning Steering Group. The Steering Group sits as the Project Board for project management and decision making purposes and will lead the preparation of the Wooler Neighbourhood Plan. The Group will guide and agree the content of the Plan and all associated evidence and analysis up to Preferred Option Consultation Draft stage.

1.2 The Group will:

- provide a locally accountable and representative lead for plan-making;
- agree a project timetable and endeavour to secure compliance [with national and county planning policies](#);
- agree a project communication, consultation and engagement strategy;
- agree the initial scope of the Plan prior to early public engagement;
- confirm, subject to consultation with the Parish Council, the scope of the Plan following analysis of early and subsequent community engagement;
- approve all background and evidence based reports prior to publication;
- agree all consultation documents prior to publication;
- agree, subject to ratification by the Parish Council, a final submission version of the Wooler Neighbourhood Plan, and
- actively support and promote the preparation of the Wooler Neighbourhood Plan throughout the duration of the project.

1.3 The Steering Group will be established for a time-limited period. The project is intended to run until a Plan has been presented for independent examination. The Steering Group will remain active until the independent examiner's report is published.

2. Steering Group Objective

- 2.1 The objective of the Steering Group is to produce a sound Neighbourhood Development Plan for the Parish of Wooler, that defines the spatial 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 Plan will include or be supported by an appropriate delivery plan setting out, where relevant, the means by which these policy priorities may be implemented.

3. Steering Group Membership

- 3.1 The Steering Group will comprise the following members:

- Northumberland County Council Ward Member;
- Chair of Wooler Parish Council;
- Three additional Members of Wooler Parish Council;
- One Board Member of the Glendale Gateway Trust, and
- [Five community representatives drawn from the parish of Wooler.](#)

[The Steering Group will be supported and advised by officers from the Northumberland National Park Authority and Northumberland County Council.](#)

- 3.2 Membership will be reviewed and confirmed quarterly by the Parish Council.

4. Reporting and Communication

- 4.1 The Steering Group is established having full delegated authority from the Parish Council to deliver its plan-making functions up to and including publication of a Preferred Options Consultation Draft Neighbourhood Development Plan. The Group will report monthly to the Parish Council setting out progress on its work. The Parish Council will approve the Submission Draft Neighbourhood Development Plan prior to publication for consultation and independent examination.

- 4.2 The plan-making process remains in the control of the Parish Council as local

authority and qualifying body. All publications, consultation and community engagement exercises will be undertaken by or on behalf of Wooler Parish Council with appropriate recognition of the Parish Council's position given in all communications associated with the project.

5. Meetings

- 5.1 Steering Group meetings will take place monthly, normally to commence at 7.00pm on a Monday **and at least** ten days prior to a Parish Council meeting. All meetings should take place in Wooler Parish. The Parish Council will arrange appropriate venues for the meetings.
- 5.2 The Steering Group will elect a Chair and Vice-Chair from its membership. **Both positions will be reviewed quarterly.** Clause 3.2 of the Terms of Reference does not apply to these positions
- 5.3 Decisions made by the Steering Group should normally be by consensus at Steering Group meetings. Where a vote is required each member shall have one vote. A minimum of four members shall be present where matters are presented for decisions to be taken. A simple majority will be required to support any motion. The Chair, or in their absence the Vice-Chair shall have one casting vote.

6. Conduct

- 6.1 The Steering Group will follow the code of conduct set out by the Nolan Committee on Standards in Public Life. Whilst Members as individuals will be accountable to their parent organisations, the Steering Group as a whole is accountable to the wider community for ensuring that the Plan reflects their collective expectations. The Steering Group will achieve this through applying the following principles:

- Work with mutual trust and respect, and combine their expertise;
- Be clear when their individual roles or interests are in conflict;
- Provide feedback from Steering Group meetings to their parent organisation;
- Assist their parent organisation to bring appropriate ideas and concerns to the attention of the Steering Group;

- Inform the Steering Group when they are unable to deliver agreed actions;
- Treat everyone with dignity, courtesy and respect regardless of their age, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, ability, or religion and belief; and
- Actively promote equality of access and opportunity.