

Terms of Reference

1. Steering Group Objectives

The objective of the Steering Group is to produce a sound Neighbourhood Plan for Morpeth that defines 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 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.

The steering group will meet monthly to:

- Determine the overall scope and objectives of the plan
- Manage the process of preparing the plan and prepare and monitor a project plan and report to the Planning & Transport Committee to ensure effective progress.
- Build and maintain links with the Local Planning Authority
- Keep under review the legislative requirements around Neighbourhood Planning to ensure the plan meets all requirements
- Make recommendations to the Planning & Transport Committee on resourcing the plan.
- Make recommendations to the Planning & Transport Committee on involving the wider community in the plan
- 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

The Steering Group will oversee the setting up of the thematic groups who will feed evidence back into the Steering group for consultation with the Stakeholders Community Group and the wider community.

The thematic groups will be

- Transport / Highways
- Education
- Housing
- Economy / Business / Retail
- Green Belt
- Green Spaces / Environmental Considerations
- Heritage
- Utilities & Infrastructure

2. Membership of the Neighbourhood Planning Steering Group

The steering group has the following membership and will be chaired by the elected chair of the Steering Group.

- 9 Council Members of Morpeth Town Council
- 1 Council Member of Hepscoth Parish Council *
- 1 Council Member of Pegswood Parish Council *
- 1 Council Member of Hebron Parish Council *
- 1 Council Member of Mitford Parish Council *

** Subject to agreement with all adjoining parishes being included in the plan.*

NCC Planning Support Officer (Non-Voting)
Neighbourhood Planning Co-ordinator (Non-Voting)
Clerk/s to Morpeth Town Council (Non-Voting)

3. Membership of the Neighbourhood Planning Stakeholder Community Group

- 4 Council Members of Northumberland County Council
- 1 Representative of GMDT
- 1 Representative of Morpeth Chamber of Trade
- 1 Representative of Youth Groups (Barnabas / KEVI / BVAL)
- 1 Representative from Sports & Recreation
- 1 Representative from Tourism
- 1 Representative from Morpeth Housing - ISOS
- 1 Representative from Northumbria Police
- 1 Representative from Morpeth Churches
- 1 Representative from each Adjoining / Neighbouring Parishes / Parish Cluster

Steering Group membership and Stakeholder Community Group membership will be reviewed from time to time. Whilst organisations will have their nominated representatives, it will be acceptable for reserves to attend meetings as necessary.

Representatives will be expected to give feedback to the organisations that they are representing.

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 at least the independent examiners report is published.

4. Meetings

Steering Group meetings will take place monthly, normally to commence at 3.30pm on the second Monday in the month.

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 Chairman shall have one casting vote.

5. Conduct and Interests

The Steering Group will follow the code of conduct. 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.

In situations where interests and roles are in conflict they must be declared before the business is discussed and the steering group member should leave the room for that item.

6. Decision Making

Morpeth Town Council is the qualifying body for the purposes of preparing the plan. The steering group has full delegated authority to manage the process of preparing the plan as set out in the objectives and within agreed budgets; up to and including the publication of the consultation draft plan. Regular reports will be made to the Town Council's Planning & Transport Committee to ensure effective progress. Morpeth Town Council Parish Council will approve the final draft Neighbourhood Plan prior to submission to the local planning authority.