

The Morpeth Neighbourhood Plan



Our Community
Our Future
Our Plan

Morpeth • Pegswood • Hebron • Hepscoth • Mitford
www.themorpethneighbourhoodplan.org.uk

Governance Arrangements

1. Decision Taking

Morpeth Town Council is the “qualifying body” for the purposes of preparing the Morpeth Neighbourhood Plan. It has granted delegated authority to the Morpeth Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group to manage the process of preparing the plan, as set out in the objectives and within agreed budgets, up to and including the preparation of the Submission Draft Plan. Morpeth Town Council will approve the submission of the final draft of the Morpeth Neighbourhood Plan to the Local Planning Authority. Regular reports will be made to the Town Council’s Planning and Transport Committee to ensure effective progress on plan preparation.

Morpeth Town Council has invited the adjoining parish councils of Pegswood, Hepscoth, Mitford and Hebron to become partners to, and assist in the preparation of, the Morpeth Neighbourhood Plan.

2. Morpeth Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group – Membership

The Steering Group will be made up of the following members:

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

Morpeth Town Council, as the “qualifying body” will elect the Chair of the Steering Group.

Deputies from adjoining parish councils can attend in the event that Member representatives are unable to attend Steering Group meetings.

Steering Group membership may be reviewed from time to time. The Steering Group has the power to co-opt additional members by virtue of their expertise or their involvement in the plan making process.

The following officers (all non-voting) will attend Steering Group meetings in an advisory capacity:

NCC Planning Support Officer(s)
Neighbourhood Planning Project Coordinator
Clerk(s) to Morpeth Town Council

3. Morpeth Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group – Role and Purpose

The objective of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group is to produce a sound Neighbourhood Plan for Morpeth (and the adjoining parishes of Pegswood, Hepscott, Mitford and Hebron) 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
- Project manage the preparation of the Plan and report to the Council's Planning and Transport Committee to ensure effective progress
- Keep under review the legislative requirements around neighbourhood planning to ensure the plan meets all requirements
- Effectively resource the plan making process
- Build and maintain links with the Local Planning Authority
- 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 consultation report on Issues and Options
- Prepare and consult on a Draft Plan Ensure effective engagement in the preparation of the Plan and prepare a Consultation Statement for submission to the Local Planning Authority
- Produce and publish minutes, reports and documents relating to the preparation of the Plan

4. Morpeth Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group – Meetings

Steering Group meetings will take place monthly, normally to commence at 3.00 pm on the second Monday of the month.

Decisions made by the Steering Group will normally be by consensus. Where a vote is required each member will 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. Morpeth Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group – Conduct and Interests

While members as individuals will be accountable to their parent bodies, 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 interest are in conflict;
- Provide feedback from Steering Groups meetings to their parent organisations;
- 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

6. Morpeth Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group – Plan Making

The Steering Group will establish Topic Groups to research their area of interest and gather the necessary evidence to underpin the plan making process, assist in the identification of plan objectives, and bring forward policies and proposals to address plan objectives. Policies and proposals must be based on objectively assessed needs or reflect agreed policy priorities. Topic Groups must report back to the Steering Group.

The four key Topic Groups relate to housing; the local economy; heritage and the local environment.

Cross cutting thematic groups relating to infrastructure; transport; education and sports and leisure will also be established to assist the plan making process.

Parish Panels will be established by Pegswood, Hepscoth, Mitford and Hebron Parish Councils to identify local issues faced by the local community and consider whether they can be tackled through the neighbourhood planning process. They will input into other Topic Groups as appropriate and as required. They will also scrutinise the plan making process from a parish perspective and review whether there has been effective community engagement.

7. Morpeth Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group – Stakeholders

The following umbrella organisations or sectoral interests/organisations are considered to be key stakeholders in the plan making process. As such the Steering Group will seek their positive engagement at all stages of plan preparation.

Northumberland County Council Members (for the Plan area)
Greater Morpeth Development Trust
Morpeth Chamber of Trade
Youth Sector (Barnabas / KEVI / BVAL)
Sports and Recreation Sector
Tourism Sector
Morpeth Housing – ISOS
Northumbria Police
Morpeth Churches

Equally these “civic consultees”, acting either individually or collectively, may wish to meet with the Steering Group, or their representatives, to scrutinise the plan making process and to ensure that there has been effective engagement in the preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan.

Additional key stakeholders may be identified during the course of plan preparation.

8. Morpeth Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group – Operations Group

The Steering Group Chair may convene an Operations Group to assist with project management and delivery. Its membership will comprise the Steering Group Chair and Vice Chair, the Neighbourhood Planning Project Co-ordinator, and any other member of the Steering Group as deemed appropriate by the Steering Group Chair. It will be supported by Morpeth Town Council officers.

The Operations Group will provide advice and prepare reports for the Steering Group; implement the decisions of the Steering Group; and provide advice and management support to the Neighbourhood Planning Project Co-ordinator.

Appendix

Morpeth Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group – Plan Preparation Group

Following the consultation on the Morpeth Neighbourhood Plan Issues and Options Report the Steering Group has agreed that a Plan Preparation Group (PPG) be established to manage and act as lead body for the preparation of the draft Morpeth Neighbourhood Plan and its associated consultation exercise in 2014. It is being established to ensure an effective and integrated approach to the plan making exercise.

The Plan Preparation Group will take on some similar responsibilities to the current Operations Group – hence it is proposed that its members would form the nucleus of the PPG. Other appointed members would be expected to adopt a corporate perspective on the plan making exercise rather than being appointed on the basis of their specialist knowledge or expertise.

In order to assist with plan preparation the PPG will:

- commission Topic Groups to undertake particular tasks
- establish other project teams to undertake particular aspects of plan preparation to ensure compliance with “Basic requirements”
- organise workshops and other events to provide additional evidence gathering and assist with policy development

PPG will be accountable to the Steering Group for delivering key milestones within an agreed timescale and in accordance with the agreed MNP Project Plan