



ALCESTER NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN STEERING GROUP

Terms of Reference

BACKGROUND

Alcester Town Council has resolved to produce a Neighbourhood Development Plan and has determined that the Plan will cover the designated area (see Map). Alcester Town Council, while retaining full responsibility for the Plan, recognises that the content of the Plan must be driven by the community and draw on skills and expertise from outside the council. A Neighbourhood Development Plan Steering Group has been created to lead the project to successful completion.

NAME

The name of the group shall be the Alcester Neighbourhood Development Plan Steering Group.

PURPOSE

The purpose of the Alcester Neighbourhood Development Plan Steering Group is the preparation of a Neighbourhood Development Plan and associated tasks leading to its adoption.

OBJECTIVES

- Promote the process of preparing the Neighbourhood Development Plan, be encouraged to participate and provide their views and opinions on the specific topics which are covered during the preparation of the Plan
- Arrange meetings and appoint Working groups to gather views and consult on emerging policies which are considered appropriate for incorporation in the draft Plan
- Assess existing evidence about the needs and aspirations of the parish and surrounding area
- Liaise with relevant organisations and stakeholders to secure their input in the process
- Identify ways of involving the whole community in the process and gather the views and opinions of groups and organisations where appropriate
- Analyse the results of questionnaires or other community engagement activities undertaken including; other evidence received during the plan making process and use them to prepare a robust draft Plan
- Inform the Town Council of progress on a regular basis in order that Steering or Working Group Minutes can be noted
- Support the Local Planning Authority and Alcester Town Council during the referendum process

MEMBERSHIP OF THE STEERING GROUP

The group shall consist of no more than 15 members to include no more than 10 representatives from the local community and the remainder being elected members or officers of the Town Council. The Mayor of Alcester shall be a voting ex-officio member.

The Steering Group has delegated powers and may form Working groups to undertake various aspects of the work involved in producing the Neighbourhood Development Plan.

Nominations to the group will take place at a meeting open to the public. Any resident or person, particularly those representing a local group or local business may stand for membership to the group. If the number of nominees exceeds 10 an election will be held between nominees seeking membership from the local community. The group may co-opt non-members on to the Steering group as necessary, but the co-opted members do not have voting rights.

Steering Group members should declare an interest where there is a potential financial or pecuniary benefit to themselves, or their company / organisation arising from the decisions or recommendations of the group. Where there is a conflict of interest, members may not be able to vote on an issue and, depending on the conflict, may result in removal from membership of the Steering Group.

A person shall cease to be a member of the Group having notified the chair or secretary of his or her wish to resign.

MEMBERS OF THE STEERING GROUP AND WORKING GROUPS

- 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 organisation, ownership of or interest in any land or property (directly or indirectly) or a business or indeed any other matter likely to be relevant to the work undertaken by the Steering Group
- 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 the town and to those wishing to undertake development or be involved in the plan making process
- Work together for the benefit of the communities established within the Parish
- Treat other Members of the Group with respect and dignity, allowing Members to express their views without prejudice and interruption

MEETINGS

- The Steering Group will usually meet, in public, monthly or as may be required. The Working groups may meet more frequently as necessary. At least three clear days notice of meetings shall be given

to members by e-mail. All Notices of group meetings must detail the matters to be discussed

- Every matter shall be determined by a majority vote of the Group members present. In the case of equality of votes the chairperson of the meeting shall have a casting vote
- The Steering Group shall keep Minutes of meetings which will be open to public scrutiny. These will be publicised on the Town Council web site and displayed in the notice boards, or such other prominent places as may be requested
- Notices, Agenda, Minutes and associated papers shall normally be despatched to Steering Group members by email unless otherwise specified or agreed
- The Steering Group will regularly update and report its progress to the Clerk of the Town Council ensuring that she, as the Responsible Financial Officer for the council, is aware of the on-going budgetary implications associated with the project
- The Steering Group will report monthly to the Planning Committee
- All decisions taken by the Steering Group, other than those delegated to appointed officers, will be carried forward if a simple majority of those present are in favour
- The Steering Group will be quorate when 6 of its members are present
- Meetings shall be open to the public to observe proceedings and shall include the opportunity for public participation. However, the meetings will not be conducted as public meetings.
- Members may be excluded from the Steering Group or Working group for conduct or behaviour that is disruptive and/or does not promote the aims of the Steering Group or Working group. Exclusion of members will be by a majority vote of the Steering or Working group.

DATA PROTECTION

As overall responsibility for the Neighbourhood Development Plan rests with Alcester Town Council, all information gathered by the Steering Group or Working group belongs to and will be held securely by the Town Council in accordance with data protection legislation.

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION/ ENVIRONMENT INFORMATION REGULATIONS

Transparency in decision making at all stages of the neighbourhood plan processes is essential. Any material that is used (either positively or negatively) or collected to inform the Neighbourhood Development Plan (in particular consultation material) will be available for public inspection in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act/Environmental Information Regulations.

FINANCE

Alcester Town Council will hold any funds on behalf of the group. All monies raised by or on behalf of the Alcester Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group are only to be used to further the aims of the group, as specified in this document. The Clerk to the Steering Group shall be in consultation with Alcester Town Council Clerk regarding approval of all expenditure.

OFFICERS

The group will elect a Chair and Vice-Chair at the first Steering Group meeting. The group will elect other officers to undertake specific roles for the committee as required.

A retained, non-voting Clerk will be seconded to the Steering Group to ensure that appropriate clerking arrangements are followed and take Minutes of proceedings. Notices and associated papers will be despatched three clear days before the meeting and Minutes recorded and open to public scrutiny.

CHANGES TO THE TERMS OF REFERENCE

Draft amendments to the Terms of Reference may be made at Steering Group meetings. Any such amendments may be added with the consent of 75% of the group present. Any changes to the Terms of Reference shall require Town Council approval.

DISSOLUTION OF THE GROUP

If a meeting, by simple majority, decides that it is necessary to close down the group it may call a Special General Meeting to do so. The sole business of this meeting will be to dissolve the group.

Upon dissolution of the group any remaining funds shall be used to fund projects set out in the Alcester Neighbourhood Development Plan for the benefit of the community. No individual member of the group shall benefit from the dispersal.

The Terms of Reference were adopted at an Alcester Neighbourhood Development Plan Steering Group meeting on(insert date)

Chair

Signed

Vice-Chair

Signed