

# **Uckfield Neighbourhood Development Plan Steering Group Terms of Reference**

## **1. Background**

Uckfield Town Council (UTC) believes that a Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) would be an opportunity to shape future development in the Town whilst safeguarding and enhancing what is valued. Following various discussions and meetings a Steering Group was established to oversee the process of preparing a NDP, within the context of the Wealden Core Strategy Local Plan.

## **2. Purpose**

The Steering Group's purpose is to design, implement and oversee the NDP process in order that this will then progress to Independent Examination and a successful community referendum and ultimately be adopted by Wealden District Council (WDC) and become planning policy.

## **3. Principles**

- That the Steering Group will undertake the process in a democratic, transparent and fair fashion, allowing opinion and ideas to be put forward by all.
- That the Steering Group will give or encourage those who live in Uckfield the opportunity to inform and shape the process e.g. through taking part in the consultation process.
- That the Steering Group will make this a positive and constructive process. That ultimately it is intended to take a holistic approach that will improve quality of life and strengthen the community.
- The Steering Group will prepare a plan that sets a vision for the future of Uckfield. The plan will help the community achieve identified local needs and ambitions and provide it with the ability to establish general planning policies for the development and use of land in the neighbourhood.

## **4. Tasks and Activities**

- Work with Uckfield Town Council and ensure that they are fully informed throughout the process, and appropriate decisions referred to them when applicable;
- All key decisions must be mutually agreed by the Steering Group and UTC – hence the need to ensure communication is effective and appropriate;
- Prepare a project plan to set out how they will create a NDP;
- The project plan should contain a timeframe to focus activity and to aid planning;
- Publicise the intention to produce a NDP, to inform and engage the community, and publicise all subsequent activities and progress;
- Meet regularly to agree actions and discuss issues that arise, in order that the process is dealt with in an efficient and timely manner;
- Gather baseline information;
- Establish and understand the needs of residents and what the long term vision or aspiration is;

- Decide upon and, if required, set up sub-groups (theme groups) to gather statistics, information and views, subject to this being agreed and delegated by the full steering group;
- Liaise with residents, partners and stakeholders throughout the development of the NDP;
- Consult as widely and thoroughly as is possible to ensure that the draft and final NDP is representative of the views of the residents;
- Analyse the available information to prepare the draft and final NDP;
- Produce Minutes from Steering Group meetings and circulate to UTC and Steering Group members (and others as agreed to be appropriate e.g. support staff);
- Set up a mechanism to inform interested residents of progress e.g. monthly updates by email. Encourage residents to sign up to this;
- Actively publicise the draft NDP prior to the Referendum;
- Agree financial arrangements and budget with UTC.

#### **5. Membership of Steering Group**

- The Steering Group should consist of no less than 10 members;
- UTC must be represented on the Steering Group;
- Members must reside in Uckfield.
- A person living outside this area but running a local business established for at least three years may be invited to join, subject to there being no conflict of interest with regard to landownership.
- The Steering Group shall be quorate when at least half of the members attend;
- Wealden District Council officers or Councillors, as well as other agencies appointed by the Council to support the process cannot be voting members of the Steering Group but are able to attend meetings and contribute to the discussions as required.

#### **6. Roles within Steering Group**

The Steering Group shall elect a Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary and a Finance Co-ordinator. If the Chair and Vice Chair are unable to attend a meeting then a temporary Chair (selected from the Steering Group members) will be elected for that meeting. The Secretary will take notes/minutes from the meeting, record main decisions and action points; and make available to the public these and any relevant information as appropriate.

These appointments will be reviewed when requested by a majority of the Steering Group members.

#### **7. Steering Group Meeting Arrangements**

- The Steering Group (and sub or theme groups) shall meet regularly;
- The public can observe the meeting and speak at the Chairpersons discretion;
- Decisions from sub or theme groups should be relayed back to the full Steering Group for ratification and/or information;

- From time to time stakeholders or interested parties may be invited to attend a specific Steering Group meeting to give a presentation and/or discuss their interest in the proposed NDP;
- A list of Steering Group members and contact details shall be maintained.
- Details of, and any changes to, the Steering Group membership will need to be notified to UTC.

## **8. Finance**

- Expenditure to be agreed by majority decision of the Steering Group, in quorate during the meeting in which the matter was discussed, in accordance with the guidelines used by UTC.
- Financial decisions outside of meetings may be discussed and decisions made by e-mail. A quorum of respondents will be necessary.
- Finance decisions will need to be recorded in the minutes and notified to UTC.
- Expenditure must fall within the level of funds held by UTC for the purpose of the Uckfield NDP. UTC will supply financial updates to the Steering group in order to make appropriate financial decisions.
- If expenditure is desired in excess of the funds available, this will need to be decided upon and agreed by UTC.

## **9. Changes to the Terms of Reference**

Any amendments to the terms of reference may be made at a Steering Group meeting and agreed by the majority of the Steering Group members. Amendments to be notified to UTC.

## **10. Dissolution of the Group**

The members will agree by a majority vote at a Steering Group meeting to call a Special General Meeting for the sole purpose to dissolve the group.

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

The Terms of Reference was adopted during an Uckfield Neighbourhood Development

Plan Steering Group meeting on 17th April 2014.