

Colney Heath Neighbourhood Plan

Steering Group

Purpose and Terms of Reference

Background

Colney Heath Parish Council (CHPC) is the qualifying and accountable body for the production of a Neighbourhood Plan (NP) for the civil parish area of Colney Heath.

CHPC has the authority to create a Neighbourhood Plan approved by St Albans District Council (SADC) Cabinet on 27 February 2014. The Neighbourhood Plan Area covers the current parish boundary. CHPC wishes to set up a Steering Group (NPSG) to manage the process for the creation of a Neighbourhood Plan (NP).

Purpose

The Primary purpose of the Terms of Reference is to set out the relationship between CHPC and NPSG.

1.1 The NPSG has the lead role for creating the NP.

1.2 The NPSG will develop the NP, in accordance with the actions set out in the NP Project Plan and will make recommendations to CHPC on the actions required, including where any expenditure is considered necessary.

1.3 The NPSG does not have delegated power from CHPC to make decisions on its behalf in accordance with paragraph 1.1 above.

1.4 The NP will define the spatial planning priorities identified jointly by CHPC, the NPSG and the community, having taken into account all representations made during the plan making process and having had regard to all relevant existing plans and evidence.

1.5 The NPSG will project manage the development of the NP and undertake all associated tasks up to the point where any revisions are agreed with St Albans District Council in order to produce the final version of the NP (anticipated 2018-9).

2. NPSG – specific tasks

- Meet on a monthly basis or as required to enable a progress report to be provided to meetings of CHPC no less frequently than quarterly;
- Review at each meeting, the project timetable and risk register and endeavour to secure compliance or seek solutions where slippage or other issues arise;
- Recommend to CHPC, the adoption of a NP communication, consultation and engagement strategy and assist with implementation thereafter;
- Consider all background and evidence based reports and report thereon to CHPC prior to publication;
- Actively support and promote the development of the NP throughout the duration of the plan making process;
- Liaison with St Albans District Council as required to ensure that the NP is prepared consistent with good practice and latest thinking.
- Compile a final submission version of the NP for endorsement by CHPC;
- Ensure all activities comply with the Data Protection Act, including the storage of confidential information.

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3. NPSG membership etc.

3.1 The NPSG will comprise

- Two CHPC Councillors and CHPC Chair, ex officio.
- A representative of each of the seven Community Working Parties (Alban Way South, Colney Heath Village, Oaklands, Highfield, Sleafshyde, Smallford, Tyttenhanger)
- The Parish Clerk
- The Neighbourhood Plan Project officer/manager, Mike Rawlins appointed by CHPC in January 2016.

3.2 The NPSG will have the option to change the Chairman of the Group based on the agenda and input required by members of the Steering Group. The Project Officer after the meetings will:

- Work closely Parish Clerk throughout the NP process;
- Provide progress reports, including recommendations, to CHPC.

3.3 The NPSG will have the ability to co-opt anyone, in an advisory capacity, it considers will be able to assist with a specific task. The NPSG will also have the ability to establish any sub groups it decides are necessary in order to undertake specific tasks and such sub groups will have the ability to co-opt anyone, in an advisory capacity, they consider will be able to assist with those specific tasks.

3.4 The County and District Councillors for the area and the Planning Officer for the area will be able to attend any meetings of the NPSG, or any of its sub groups, if appropriate, in an advisory capacity.

4. Reporting and communication

4.1 The Chairman of the NPSG and the NP Project Officer will report regularly to CHPC setting out the work undertaken and progress made by the NPSG.

4.2 The NP plan making process will be supported by CHPC (as the qualifying and accountable body) and CHPC will consider any recommendations for any additional support/training as the need arises.

4.3 The compilation of publications and arrangement of consultation and community engagement exercises will be prepared by the NPSG, in line with the Communications and Engagement Strategy endorsed by CHPC.

5. Meetings

5.1 NPSG meetings will be held usually within the parish of Colney Heath.

5.2 Recommendations made by the NPSG will be by consensus at meetings of the NPSG but where a vote is required, each member will have one vote and a simple majority will be required to make any recommendation. In the event of an equality of votes, the Chairman or in his/her absence, the Vice Chairman, may exercise a casting vote.

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5.3 Members of the NPSG shall declare any interests they may have at meetings.

5.5 A minimum of five members of the NPSG shall be present in order for a meeting to be held

5.6 The Steering Group will provide minutes of all meetings.

6. Support

6.1 The NPSG will receive all secretarial and administrative support from the NP Project Officer or Manager as approved by CHPC.

6.2 Central Resource File

To support the work of this Steering Group, the Project Officer/Manager will set up a Central Resource File using Google Docs or suitable alternative. All Steering Group Members will be able to access this Resource File, add to it, edit and download documents. Google Docs will provide an audit trail of everyone who accesses this folder and the work that they do.

7. Conduct

7.1 The NPSG will follow the Code of Conduct adopted by CHPC.

7.2 All external communications and meetings with Councils, statutory or voluntary organisations, businesses, or non-resident land owners must have prior approval from the NPSG chairman.

7.3 All documents and surveys must be approved by CHPC prior to release into the public domain.

7.2 The NPSG, as a whole, is accountable to the community for ensuring that the NP reflects their collective expectations. Every member of the NPSG will apply the following principles throughout their work on behalf of the community:

- Working with mutual trust and respect and using the knowledge, skills and experience of individuals for the collective development of a high quality NP;
- Being open and honest in all of their dealings and especially on any occasion when individual roles or interests may conflict;
- Treating everyone with dignity, courtesy and respect, regardless of their age, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, ability or religion and belief; and
- Actively promoting equality of access and opportunity throughout the plan making process.