

Terms of Reference for the Neighbourhood Plan Advisory Group (NPAG)

1 TERMS OF REFERENCE

1.1 Principles

- i. The NPAG will engage the local community to ensure that the Plan is truly representative of the ambitions of Woodcote. The NPAG will maximise support for the approach taken in the Neighbourhood Plan by ensuring high levels of community engagement throughout the plan-making process.
- ii. The NPAG will undertake the process in a democratic, transparent and fair fashion, encouraging widespread participation and giving equal consideration to opinions and ideas from all members of the community.
- iii. All decisions made shall be fully evidenced and supported through consultation with the local community.

1.2 Roles and Responsibilities

In order to achieve this, the NPAG will carry out the following roles:

- i. Produce a draft of an amended plan to comply with the revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the emerging SODC Local Plan.
- ii. Produce, monitor and update a project plan.
- iii. Periodically report progress to the Parish Council and seek endorsement of decisions taken, as necessary.
- iv. To undertake analysis and evidence gathering to support the plan production process.
- v. Actively support and promote the preparation of the Woodcote Neighbourhood Plan throughout the duration of the project.
- vi. Liaise with relevant authorities and organisations to make the plan as effective as possible.
- vii. Gather data from a wide range of sources to ensure that the conclusions reached are fully evidenced and that the aspirations and issues of all residents are understood.
- viii. Consult as widely and thoroughly as is possible to ensure that the draft and final NP is representative of the views of the majority of residents.
- ix. Agree, subject to ratification by the Parish Council, a final submission version of the Woodcote Neighbourhood Plan.

1.3 Membership

The NPAG shall strive to be inclusive and non-discriminatory on grounds of gender, ethnicity, national origin, disability, sexual orientation, age, socio-economic background, religious or political belief.

- i. NPAG shall consist of no less than 10 and no more than 15 individual volunteers all of whom live or work in the parish of Woodcote.
- ii. The Parish Council shall be represented on the NPAG by at least two councillors.
- iii. The membership shall initially be drawn from those members of the original advisory group for WNP1 who wish to serve and other volunteers.
- iv. The membership shall be approved by WPC.
- v. Applications to join the NPAG shall be submitted to WPC for approval.
- vi. Applicants with a direct pecuniary interest in, or who are seeking change of use for, land owned or occupied by them cannot be members of the NPAG.
- vii. Any member shall cease to be a member of the NPAG having notified the Chairman, in writing of his/her intention to resign.

- viii. Any member who misses, without good reason, 3 consecutive meetings of the NPAG will, subject to a vote by the members of the NPAG, cease to be a member of the NPAG.
- ix. Members may be excluded from the NPAG for conduct and behaviour that is disruptive, breaches confidentiality, publicly criticises or disowns a properly made decision of the NPAG or otherwise fails to promote the aims and objectives of the NPAG. Exclusion of members will be by a majority vote of the Parish Council upon the recommendation of the NPAG.

A list of members' names (but not their contact details) shall be open to inspection by the public. Lists of members with their contact details are the sole ownership of the Group subject to any statutory requirements relating to the release of and access to this information

The members of the NPAG shall elect a Chair, Secretary and Treasurer. The Secretary shall record minutes of the meetings, noting decisions and actions. The approved minutes shall be circulated to the Parish Council and published on the NP website.

1.4 Working Groups

- i. The NPAG may form working groups to deal with aspects of the work of the NPAG.
- ii. Working groups shall have a minimum of three members.
- iii. Each working group shall have a nominated chair who is a member of the NPAG.
- iv. Each working group shall comprise members of the NPAG and may include additional volunteers (who must be residents of Woodcote) co-opted onto the working group, provided that the majority of members of a working group shall also be members of the NPAG.
- v. The NPAG shall define terms of reference for each working group created.
- vi. The membership and terms of reference of working groups shall be published on the NP website.
- vii. A working group may not authorise expenditure on behalf of the NPAG.
- viii. A working group may not make decisions on behalf of the NPAG.
- ix. Working groups shall provide regular updates on progress to the NPAG meetings.
- x. Working groups shall keep records of their meetings and recommendations, which shall be made available to members of the NPAG on request, but which shall not be made publicly available.

1.5 Affiliations and Independence.

- i. The Group shall be apolitical.
- ii. All members of the NPAG must declare any personal interest that may be perceived as being relevant to a decision of the group. This may include membership of an organisation, an indirect interest in the development of a site, a business, or any other matter that may be considered to be relevant. Such declarations shall be recorded and be published on the NP website.
- iii. Members must absent themselves from any discussions of the NPAG or any Working Group in which it is possible that a conflict shall arise between his or her duty to act solely in the interests of the NPAG and any personal interest. Any member absenting themselves from any discussions in accordance with this clause must not vote.
- iv. Organisations and businesses may assist in the production of the Neighbourhood Plan and may contribute to the cost of producing it. Details of any donations or assistance must be made publicly available and must not influence the recommendations of the NPAG.

1.6 Communications

- i. The Advisory Group shall communicate frequently and openly with the residents of Woodcote, sharing its plan of work, proposals and provisional recommendations.
- ii. The NPAG will use all appropriate methods of communication, including a dedicated website, e-mail, the Woodcote Correspondent, other local printed media, social media and

public exhibitions both to inform the community of its work and to obtain the views of the community.

- iii. The NPAG will undertake such community consultation as may be beneficial in the formulation of its recommendations. The results of all such consultations shall be made public as soon as practicable.
- iv. Public communications of the NPAG and its working groups shall make it clear that they do not represent the opinions, decisions or policy of the Parish Council unless approved by the Parish Council.
- v. The Parish Council may request the NPAG to assist the Parish Council in any consultation and communication programme they may effect following their receipt of the NPAG's recommendations.

1.7 Confidentiality

- i. Wherever possible and appropriate information received or generated by the NPAG should be publicly available. However, it is understood, and agreed, that NPAG members may from time-to-time receive information of a confidential nature, and that the NPAG and its individual members shall respect the protection of such information and preserve its confidentiality.
- ii. It is agreed that any recipient shall limit the disclosure of confidential information to the members of the NPAG that have a need to know.
- iii. NPAG members shall not disclose the confidential information obtained from the disclosure unless required to do so by law

1.8 Finance

- i. The Parish Council shall apply for grants to finance the activities of the NPAG.
- ii. All expenditure shall be approved by the Parish Council.
- iii. The Treasurer shall keep a clear record of expenditure and provide appropriate invoices to the Parish Council.
- iv. Members of the NPAG or a Working Group may claim back expenditure that is necessarily incurred and approved in advance by the NPAG during the process of producing the NP.

1.9 Changes to the Terms of Reference

The terms of reference may be amended with the support of at least two-thirds of the current membership at a NPAG Meeting and with the approval of the Parish Council.

1.10 Dissolution

The NPAG will be dissolved once its objectives have been attained and/or when at least two-thirds of its members and the Parish Council, consider its services are no longer required.