

SUTTON POYNTZ NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN STEERING GROUP TERMS OF REFERENCE

1. Introduction

The Sutton Poyntz Society took the decision to produce a Neighbourhood Plan at its AGM on 13th April 2016. A motion was passed that the Society should become a Neighbourhood Forum.

The Sutton Poyntz Society has commenced initial meetings with Weymouth and Portland Borough Council (the Local Authority) to be as sure as possible that an application for Forum status will be successful, with an agreed Neighbourhood Area. The Society Committee will establish a Steering Group to oversee a process resulting in a Neighbourhood Plan which will be put to Independent Examination and then a Referendum. In doing so it is deemed appropriate that the Steering Group are provided with and accept the following terms of reference.

2. Objectives

The Steering Group will be responsible for the following four outputs:

- An application for the Society to act as a Neighbourhood Forum, along with a Neighbourhood Area application;
- A Project Plan, describing, with proposed timescales and resources, how the Neighbourhood Plan will be produced;
- A draft Neighbourhood Plan ready for Independent Examination, along with a Consultation Report and a Basic Conditions Statement;
- After Examination, a final Neighbourhood Plan ready for the Referendum.

These outputs will be submitted to the Society Committee for approval and for submission (where appropriate) to the Local Authority.

The Neighbourhood Plan will be guided (among other documents) by the Society's Village Survey, Village Plan, Conservation Policy and Planning Policy, as well as the NPPF, the Local Plan (and Local Authority objectives emerging during its Local Plan revision), the Listed Buildings descriptions, and the AONB Management Plan. It will identify all the important aspects of life in the village which have relevance in terms of future planning issues, and will propose a framework for future land usage within the village, identifying development opportunities and assets to be protected.

3. Subgroups

The Steering Group may form Subgroups to undertake specific aspects of the work involved in producing the Neighbourhood Plan; the Subgroups may have members who are not members of the Steering Group itself. These Subgroups will be subservient to the Steering Group, acting under its instructions and reporting back to it; these Subgroups shall adhere to the parts of these terms of reference that relate to membership qualification, behavioural standards, conduct of meetings and record keeping.

4. Membership of the Steering Group

The Steering Group will be formed from residents and people working in the village, chosen to be as representative as possible of the village's population and to provide a mix of required skills and knowledge.

The Steering Group shall extend until the final Neighbourhood Plan has been submitted for Referendum.

The Steering Group will consist of a suggested maximum of 18 members and a minimum of 6 members

If a member of the Steering Group fails to attend 3 consecutive Steering Group meetings the member will be deemed to have resigned from the Steering Group unless otherwise agreed by the Steering Group. This provision does not prevent any member from resigning from the Steering Group by providing the Chairman with written notice of their resignation.

Once the Steering Group is operating, it may coopt additional or replacement members, bearing in mind the need for the Group membership to be representative and the skills and knowledge needed. Any person who wishes to become a member of the Steering Group after the commencement of the Neighbourhood Planning process shall apply to the Steering Group.

The Local Authority is obliged to provide assistance under the statutory provision of the Localism Act 2011. There is extensive guidance available on the Dorset for you website <https://www.dorsetforyou.com/neighbourhoodplanning/west/weymouth>

5. Roles and Responsibilities of the Steering Group

The Steering Group will:

- Elect a Chairman and a Secretary from their number. If the Chairman is not present at a meeting, members shall elect a Chairman for the meeting from members present at that meeting.
- Agree the neighbourhood plan area and submit the initial application for approval of a neighbourhood area to the Local Authority;
- Gather views in order to generate a vision for the village's future;
- Arrange meetings and appoint Subgroups 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 village in regards to the planning aspects of the neighbourhood plan;
- Liaise with relevant organisations, consultants and stakeholders to secure their input in the process;
- Analyse the results of questionnaires or other evidence received during the planning process and use them to prepare a robust draft Plan;
- Use a variety of mechanisms for publicity and consultation, to ensure a healthy two-way flow of information between the Steering Group and villagers and other stakeholders;
- Provide regular reports of progress to the Society Committee;
- Keep a careful record of its activities as proof that the statutory conditions applying to Neighbourhood Plan preparation have been satisfied. In particular the majority of records (Agendas, Minutes, Working Papers and most Correspondence) should be made public on the village website, while any records that need to be kept confidential should be archived in the data area on the website server.

The Society Committee will:

- Support the preparation of the Sutton Poyntz Neighbourhood Plan providing sufficient assistance and financial resources to ensure the plan is prepared expeditiously providing that overall expenditure falls within the budget allocated for the purpose;
- Facilitate, if required, contact with the relevant statutory bodies or parties who must be consulted during the plan making process;
- Carry out all statutory duties contained within the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulation 2012 and engage the Local Authority during the referendum process of the plan for which the principle authority is responsible.
- Submit the various outputs of the Steering Group expeditiously to the Local Authority, and liaise with the Local Authority while it is dealing with the outputs;
- Provide access to the village website for publicity and archiving of material.

All Members of the Steering Group and of any Subgroups will:

- 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 parish and to those wishing to undertake development or be involved in the plan making process; and
- Work together for the benefit of the communities established within the village. Treat other members of the Group with respect and dignity, allowing members to express their views without prejudice and interruption.

6. Conduct of Meetings

The Steering Group will meet as required in order to achieve its tasks (not less frequently than bi-monthly). Notices, Agendas, Minutes and associated papers will be emailed (or otherwise sent) to all Steering Group members. The Steering Group shall keep minutes of all meetings.

The Steering Group shall be quorate when 50% of the Steering Group members are present. Any decisions taken by the Steering Group will be carried if the majority (more than 50%) of members present are in favour at any given meeting. The Chairman shall have the casting vote where the vote is equal.

Conflict of Interest: Steering Group members shall declare any disclosable pecuniary interest (as defined by the Disclosable Pecuniary Interests Regulations 2012) that may be perceived as being relevant to a topic being discussed. That member may speak on the topic, but shall not take part in any vote on the topic. Such an interest is most likely to be in the form of any beneficial interest in land or property being discussed, by either the member or their spouse or partner, but can take other forms. Owning a property or business in the area is not in itself a conflict of interest. In case of doubt, the Local Authority should be able to give advice.

Conflict Resolution: If it proves not possible for the Steering Group to reach agreement during any stage of preparing the Plan, every effort shall be made by the membership of the Steering Group to resolve the difference by negotiation. In the course of developing the Neighbourhood Plan, if serious conflict arises within the Steering Group regarding any issue and is unable to be resolved then the Steering Group will refer the matter to the Society Committee for investigation and decision. Before reaching a decision, the Society Committee may attempt to arbitrate or conciliate, or it may gather further information including from the Local Authority or via a public meeting or a Society General Meeting. To reach a decision, the Society Committee may make a decision in its own right, or may call a public meeting or a Society General Meeting. If the issue seems irreconcilable, the Society Committee may decide to abandon the Neighbourhood Plan, which decision shall be put to a Society General Meeting.

This section of the Terms of Reference also applies to meetings of any Subgroups created by the Steering Group.

7. Financial delegation

Significant grant funding will be available for the Steering Group activities, covering such things as training, expert consultancy, evidence collection, printing and publicity, and facilities for public meetings. In addition, a number of specific technical support packages are available.

The Steering Group shall identify its needs for funding, and shall provide expenditure forecasts to the Society Committee. This will allow the Society Committee to agree a budget with the Steering Group, and to apply for grant funding. The Steering Group will be given financial delegation to spend this grant funding, in accordance with the terms of the grant and with the agreed budget. The Steering Group may apply to the Society Committee for variations from this budget or for any additional expenditure.

8. Application of Terms of Reference

These Terms of Reference shall apply from the date of this document and retrospectively where relevant to the date of the inception of the Steering Group. The Terms of Reference will be reviewed throughout the project by the Steering Group and the Society Chairmen, and will be amended if necessary by the Society Committee.

Dated: 20 February 2018