

# Fawkham Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group: Terms of Reference - FINAL

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## 1. Purpose

Fawkham Parish Council is the qualifying body for the preparation of a Neighbourhood Plan for the parish of Fawkham. The Parish Council has agreed to establish separate project management arrangements to facilitate the delivery of this plan-making function. The purpose of the Fawkham Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group is to project manage the preparation of a sound Neighbourhood Plan for Fawkham that defines the planning policy priorities identified by the community taking into account all representations made during the plan-making process and having regard to all relevant existing plans and evidence.

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## 2. Principles

- a. That the Steering Group will undertake the process in a democratic, transparent and fair fashion, encouraging widespread participation and giving consideration to opinions and ideas from all members of the community.
  - b. All decisions made shall be fully evidenced and supported through consultation with the local community.
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## 3. Roles and Responsibilities

In order to achieve this, the Steering Group will:

- a. Be accountable for steering and providing strategic management of the Neighbourhood Plan for Fawkham.
  - b. Produce, monitor and update a project timetable, and endeavour to secure compliance.
  - c. Produce a consultation and engagement strategy, showing how the community will be involved throughout the process.
  - d. Undertake evidence gathering and analysis to support the plan production process, gathering 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.
  - e. Actively support and promote the preparation of Fawkham's Neighbourhood Plan throughout the duration of the project.
  - f. Work closely with Sevenoaks District Council throughout the process.
  - g. Identify sources of funding.
  - h. Liaise with relevant authorities and organisations to make the plan as effective as possible.
  - i. Consult as widely and thoroughly as is possible to ensure that the draft and final NDP is representative of the views of residents.
  - j. Agree, subject to ratification by the Parish Council, a final submission version of the Fawkham Neighbourhood Plan.
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## 4. Membership

- a. The Steering Group will be made up of volunteers from the community, including two Parish Councillors, with a minimum of four and a maximum of ten members.
  - b. Membership appointments are to be approved, and subsequently reviewed every six months, by Fawkham Parish Council, and membership information included on Fawkham Parish Council's website.
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## 5. Decision Making

- a. The Steering Group has full delegated authority from the Parish Council to deliver its plan-making functions up to and including publication of the Consultation Draft Plan. The Group will report monthly to the Parish Council setting out progress on its work. The Parish Council

will approve the Submission Draft Neighbourhood Development Plan prior to publication for consultation and independent examination.

- b. The plan-making process remains the responsibility of the Parish Council as the qualifying body. All publications, consultation and community engagement exercises will be undertaken by or on behalf of the Parish Council with appropriate recognition of the Parish Council's position given in all communications associated with the project.

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## 6. Meetings

- a. Steering Group meetings will take place at least every two months or more frequently as may be required.
- b. Where possible, meetings will be held in the Village Hall (or virtually if required by Government restrictions).
- c. The dates of future meetings will be made publicly available via Fawkham Parish Council website to provide the maximum opportunity for community participation.
- d. The Steering Group will elect a Chair and Secretary from its membership. If these positions should become vacant, the Group will elect an alternate.
- e. The Secretary shall keep a record of meetings and circulate notes to Steering Group members and the Parish Council in a timely fashion, for approval at the following meeting. Approved minutes shall be made publicly available on Fawkham Parish Council's website to provide the maximum opportunity for community participation.
- f. At least four clear days' notice of meetings shall be sent to members via email.
- g. Members should declare an interest at the beginning of a meeting if they have a disclosable pecuniary or non-pecuniary interest relating to an agenda item to be discussed.
- h. Meetings will normally be open to members of the public. If a member of the public wishes to speak on a particular subject, the Chair shall invite him/her to speak when the subject is discussed, for no more than five minutes.
- i. The Steering Group can exclude the public from all or part of meeting and hold a closed session in exceptional circumstances for matters that are sensitive.
- j. Decisions made by the Steering Group should normally be by consensus at Steering Group meetings. Where a vote is required each member shall have one vote. A minimum of 3 members, including one Parish Councillor, shall be present where matters are presented for decisions to be taken. A simple majority vote will be required to support any motion. The Chair shall have one casting vote if required.

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## 7. Working Groups

- a. The Steering Group may establish working groups to aid them in any Neighbourhood Plan related work.
- b. Each working group should have a lead person from the Steering Group. The leader may co-opt additional volunteers from the community to further the work, subject to the agreement of the Steering Group.
- c. The work of these groups does not need to be open to the public and their meetings are not required to follow the procedures referenced in section 6 above.

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## 8. Finance

- a. All grants and funding will be applied for and held by the Parish Council, who will ring-fence the funds for Neighbourhood Development Plan work.
- b. The Steering Group will notify the Parish Council, advising them of any planned expenditure before it is incurred.
- c. Steering Group members and volunteers from any working groups may claim back any previously agreed expenditure incurred during any Neighbourhood Plan related work.
- d. The Clerk to Fawkham Parish Council, as its Responsible Financial Officer, will maintain a record of all income and expenditure for Neighbourhood Plan work.

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## 9. Conduct

- a. It is expected that all Steering Group members conduct themselves when working on the Neighbourhood Plan in a manner consistent with the standards of conduct expected for those in public life, ie. selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership.
- b. The Steering Group as a whole is accountable to the wider community for ensuring that the Plan reflects their collective expectations.
- c. The Steering Group will achieve this through applying the following principles:
  - i. Be clear and open when their individual roles or interests are in conflict;
  - ii. Treat everyone with dignity, courtesy and respect regardless of their age, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, or religion and belief; and
  - iii. Actively promote equality of access and opportunity.

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## 10. Changes to the Terms of Reference

- a. This constitution may be amended with the support of at least two-thirds of the current membership at a Steering Group Meeting and with the approval of Fawkham Parish Council.

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## 11. Dissolution

- a. The Steering Group will be dissolved once its purpose has been attained and/or when at least two-thirds of its members and Fawkham Parish Council consider its services are no longer required.
- b. The Fawkham Parish Council will then dispose of any remaining funds held in accordance with any conditions imposed by the grant funders and in the best interests of Fawkham Parish.