



Legend

- Swanage Neighbourhood Area
- Dorset parish boundaries

Swanage Neighbourhood Area

Covering the parish of Swanage

Designation Date: 22 February 2022

Organisation who made the application: Swanne Town Council

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Terms of Reference

Swanage Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group

Introduction/Background

The Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group is a sub-committee of Swanage Town Council's Planning and Consultation Committee and is referred to below as the "Steering Group".

Swanage Town Council (STC) is aiming to produce a Neighbourhood Plan that ensures the growth of our town is both sustainable and achieved within a townscape and environment that protects and enhances the special characteristics of the town as recognised by the Swanage community and which, in turn, attract the visitors who power the town's seaside economy.

1. Purpose and Objective

To produce a Draft Neighbourhood plan, which defines the planning 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.

2. Constitutional Arrangements

2.1 The Steering Group is a Sub-Committee of Swanage Town Council's Planning and Consultation Committee. As such its governance arrangements must be in accordance with the Town Council's Standing Orders.

2.2 STC is the qualifying body for the purposes of preparing and financing the Plan. Quarterly reports will be made to the full Council to ensure effective progress, and the Town Council's Planning and Consultation Committee will receive copies of the Steering Group minutes to consider any matters arising.

2.3 The Steering Group has full delegated authority to manage the preparation of the Plan as set out in the objectives, and within agreed budgets, up to and including the publication of the Draft Neighbourhood Plan for public consultation.

Adopted 5th September 2022

STC will approve the final draft Neighbourhood Plan prior to submission to the Local Planning Authority.

2.4 The Steering Group will approve the minutes of its meetings for accuracy.

2.5 The Steering Group must seek approval from its parent committee for any changes to these Terms of Reference.

3. The Steering Group will initially meet regularly to:

3.1 Determine the overall scope and objectives of the plan based on public feedback;

3.2 Prepare and monitor a project plan and report to Swanage Town Council to ensure effective progress;

3.3 Keep under review the legislative requirements around Neighbourhood Planning to ensure the plan meets all requirements;

3.4 Make recommendations to the Town Council on resourcing the Plan, via the Planning and Consultation Committee;

3.5 Involve the wider community in the Plan process;

3.6 Manage the gathering of evidence necessary to inform each of the themes within the scope of the Plan;

3.7 Identify and assess options available in respect of each theme and prepare a draft Plan for wider consultation and review;

3.8 Ensure minutes, reports and documents relating to the plan are made publicly accessible;

3.9 Agree a timescale for completion.

4. Theme Groups

The Steering Group will oversee the setting up of Theme Groups, which will feed evidence back to the Steering Group to support preparation of the Plan. A member of the Steering Group will chair the Theme Groups. The initial theme groups are:

- Town Centre and Economic Development
- Housing and Community Services
- Environment
- Heritage and Conservation

5. Membership

5.1 Membership of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group is as follows:

- a) Six Councillor Members of Swanage Town Council's Planning and Consultation Committee, nominated by the Planning and Consultation Committee.
- b) Up to six other members residing in the Parish of Swanage (the Steering Group having delegated authority to co-opt accordingly, dependent on skills and experience).

5.2 The Chair and Vice-Chair will be elected by the Steering Group.

5.3 Representatives of O'Neill Homer, Planning Consultants can attend any meeting of the Steering Group, and Theme Groups, as advisors.

6. Meetings

The Steering Group will meet regularly. Decisions made by the Steering Group should normally be by consensus at Steering Group meetings. Where a vote is required, in accordance with legislation each Councillor Member shall have one vote, and votes can only be made in person. The quorum is three voting members, although a minimum of five voting members shall be present at Steering Group meetings when a proposal is considered to recommend changes to these Terms of Reference. A simple majority will be required to support any motion. The Chair shall have one casting vote.

Adopted 5th September 2022

Town Council administrative staff will take minutes and organise meetings of the Steering Group and reporting to STC.

7. Conduct and Interests

The Steering Group will follow the Code of Conduct as adopted by Swanage Town Council. Whilst members as individuals may be accountable to their parent organisations, the Steering Group as a whole is accountable to the wider community for ensuring that the Plan reflects their collective expectations.

The Process and Roles



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Once you have gone through the area designation process with your Local Planning Authority, this is usually followed by the formation of a Steering Group, comprising residents and representatives from the Qualifying Body. The Steering Group usually has delegated authority from the Qualifying Body to make day-to-day decisions on the preparation of the Plan and some agree a Terms of Reference or Memorandum of Understanding for this purpose.

Once you have gone through these processes, we hold a vision workshop with your team. Essentially this will consist of a virtual round table discussion that leads to an action plan. These actions inform the preparation of the Pre-Submission Plan and eventually the Submission Plan which undergoes an examination and referendum before being made.

Throughout the process there will be informal and formal engagements. Our action plan usually advises that a community engagement strategy is prepared, unless the Council already has one that can be suited to project purposes. Essentially, informal consultations are not governed by regulations, but the formal consultations are and have statutory publicity periods. We will advise you of your obligations when the time comes.

For now, keep a record of all of these engagements. Most clients find keeping a dateline of events useful, as you will need it to write a Consultation Statement to submit to your Local Planning Authority along with your Submission Plan in due course.

The Qualifying Body will provide delegated authority to the Steering Group for the preparation of the plan. Once the Vision Workshop is held with the Steering Group, it is likely that there will be specific issues identified and actions to take forward the issues and policy ideas raised. For example, heritage, the environment or community facilities, etc. We usually advise the formation of Task Groups to take undertake these actions, and so those with a particular interest or expertise in a specific subject can contribute to the preparation of the plan. Ideally the chairs of each Task Team will be on the Steering Group to report progress so that the Group can spot any cross-overs or tensions between the Teams' work.

The Qualifying Body is also required to approve the Pre-Submission and Submission Plan (this means a formal meeting minute). We therefore advise regular updates between the Steering Group and the Qualifying Body.

The Submission Plan consultation, examination and referendum are the responsibility of the Local Planning Authority.



There are many influences on a neighbourhood plan project, and we'll cover many of these and what that means for the scope of your Neighbourhood Plan in our Visioning Workshop with you. For now, you may find it useful to simply familiarise yourself with the following terms.

Strategic Policy – We monitor the strategic planning policy context as your plan has to be in general conformity with strategic policies, but we expect you to update us with any developments if you are notified.

Community Opinion - Ultimately the plan can only be made following a referendum with a simple majority 'yes' vote of the electorate.

NPPF – We don't expect you to know the content of this document by heart, that's our job, but you should be aware of it as your plan has to have regard to national policy.

SEA/HRA – This refers to a Strategic Environmental Assessment and a Habitats Regulations Assessment. These are technical documents that may or may not be required to accompany your plan. We help you figure out whether you need them or not and then provide support in liaising with the Locality appointed contractor. The preparation of both of these is offered as technical support packages, in addition to grant funding, that you can apply for through Locality.

Physical constraints – You may already know some or all of these, but we help you understand what they are and what they mean for the preparation of your plan.

Landowners and developer intentions – It will depend upon the scope of your plan if you need to engage with these stakeholders. We support you through these negotiations.

A quick reminder on the benefits of neighbourhood plans and some of their key features to prepare you.

- Once a plan is made it becomes part of the development plan for your area.
- This means that policies will carry full weight when planning applications are decided.
- Your policies will therefore either encourage or discourage proposals, it is about managing planning risk.

- The burden is ultimately on the applicant to comply with the policies or show why they have not.
- During the examination process the examiner will be checking whether your plan meets a number of basic conditions – general conformity with strategic/local policy, regard to national policy mentioned earlier. It must also contribute to sustainable development, comply with EU sustainability/habitats directives and all other legal requirements must be met.
- Although you can include non-planning matters in the non-statutory part of your plan its policies must relate to the development and use of land and buildings. Things that need planning permission. Our tried and tested template documents put everything in the right place and has been successful in a number of examinations.

We'll be in touch about the details of the workshop but essentially what you can expect is a review of the planning policy context within which you are preparing your plan, a discussion about the spatial characteristics about your place, its qualities, designations, constraints, and opportunities. We will therefore need you to talk about the qualities, values and aspirations of the place and if you can provide us with a summary of these prior to the workshop it will help us to prepare.

We look forward to working with you in preparing your Neighbourhood Plan.