

# Terms of Reference for the Salehurst & Robertsbridge Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group (NPSG)

## Relationship between the NPSG and Parish Council

Salehurst & Robertsbridge Parish Council ('the Parish Council') is the qualifying body for the preparation of a Neighbourhood Plan for the parish.

The NPSG is a Working Group of the Parish Council; it will be accountable for progress of the Neighbourhood Plan and will report regularly to the Parish Council.

## Purpose

The main purpose of the Steering Group is to oversee the preparation of a sound Neighbourhood Plan for Salehurst and Robertsbridge on behalf of the Parish Council and the community, to ensure that all relevant issues are addressed, with as high a level as possible of public participation and engagement during the process.

## Key Tasks

The NPSG will:

- determine the overall scope and objectives of the Neighbourhood Plan
- provide strategic management of the preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan, ensuring that key milestones are achieved, and that an appropriate delivery plan to implement the Neighbourhood Plan is produced
- determine a communication and engagement strategy so that as many members of the community as possible may be involved
- build links with Rother District Council and all other relevant authorities and organisations to maximise their assistance and commitment to the Neighbourhood Plan
- gather all necessary evidence, including commissioning such work to support the evidence base for the Neighbourhood Plan
- be accountable to the Parish Council for budgeting and controlling expenditure necessitated by the preparation and delivery of the Neighbourhood Plan
- agree subject to approval by the Parish Council a final submission version of the Neighbourhood Plan
- keep under review the legislative requirements around Neighbourhood Planning to ensure the plan meets all requirements
- do such other tasks as are necessary to facilitate the rapid preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan

**Key documents** – the following will be presented to the full Parish Council for approval / ratification:

- Steering Group Membership List
- Terms of Reference
- Project Timetable
- Draft and amended budgets
- Proposed scope of the Plan
- Drafts of the Plan and the final submission version

|                               |
|-------------------------------|
| CHAIRMAN : <i>Alun Davies</i> |
| DATE : <i>16/03/15</i>        |

## **Themes**

The Steering Group will oversee the setting up of thematic groups whose task will be to prepare and feed into the Steering Group the evidence necessary for the sound preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan. The thematic groups will include:

- Housing (including matters such as site allocation, design, affordability)
- Economy including tourism
- Education and training
- Environment, including flooding, green spaces, conservation, energy
- Leisure facilities, including recreation, footpaths, bridleways
- Infrastructure including rail, roads, parking, broadband

## **Membership**

Membership will consist of no fewer than eleven and up to seventeen energetic volunteers who are committed to the task of producing the Neighbourhood Plan. Such membership will include between three and five members of the Parish Council, including the incumbent Chair and Vice-Chair. Other members will include District Councillors, people who are able to represent other key parish-wide organisations, as well as residents and/or people who work in the Parish. The Steering Group will be supported by the Parish Clerk (advisory – non-voting).

## **Meetings**

- The NPSG will meet at least monthly and in addition when members determine that a meeting is needed.
- The Steering Group will elect a Chairman for the purpose of its meetings.
- A minimum of seven NPSG members must be present to effect decisions.
- The NPSG will aim to make decisions by consensus. However, should a vote be required, each member will have one vote and a simple majority, by show of hands, will be required. The Chairman will have a casting vote.
- The Steering Group will elect a Meetings Secretary to ensure that appropriate minutes are kept to be sent to members and the Parish Council in a timely manner (in draft form, until confirmed at the next meeting of the NPSG).
- As much use as possible is to be made of electronic communications.
- Meetings will be open to the public.

## **Standards and Declaration of Interests**

All members of the NPSG must recognise that their role is to move forward the Neighbourhood Plan in a way that benefits the whole community.

- Members of the NPSG must agree to follow the Seven Principles of Public Life upheld by the Committee on Standards in Public Life (see Appendix 1)
- Members of the NPSG will be encouraged to complete a Declaration of Interests form, similar to that of the Parish Council (see Appendix 2), which will be held by the Clerk.
- Members of the NPSG will recognise and declare any conflicts of interest; in situations where interests and roles are in conflict they must be declared before the business is discussed and the member should leave the room for that item.



## Finance

- The accountable body for the purpose of producing a Neighbourhood Plan will be the Parish Council.
- The NPSG will provide the Clerk/RFO with budgetary information so that all proposed spending on the preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan is dealt with in an open and transparent manner. Budgets and amended budgets will be presented to the Parish Council for approval.
- All receipts and payments associated with the production of the Plan will be processed through the Parish Council's accounting system.
- Invoices will be made out in the name of the parish council who will pay them in accordance with their Financial Regulations.
- All grants and funding will be applied for and held by the parish council, who will ring-fence the funds for Neighbourhood Plan purposes only.

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## Appendix 1 – Seven Principles of Public Life

### 1. Selflessness

Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest.

### 2. Integrity

Holders of public office must avoid placing themselves under any obligation to people or organisations that might try inappropriately to influence them in their work. They should not act or take decisions in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends. They must declare and resolve any interests and relationships.

### 3. Objectivity

Holders of public office must act and take decisions impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias.

### 4. Accountability

Holders of public office are accountable to the public for their decisions and actions and must submit themselves to the scrutiny necessary to ensure this.

### 5. Openness

Holders of public office should act and take decisions in an open and transparent manner. Information should not be withheld from the public unless there are clear and lawful reasons for so doing.

### 6. Honesty

Holders of public office should be truthful.

### 7. Leadership

Holders of public office should exhibit these principles in their own behaviour. They should actively promote and robustly support the principles and be willing to challenge poor behaviour wherever it occurs.

## Appendix 2

### DECLARATION OF INTERESTS FORM

#### SALEHURST AND ROBERTSBRIDGE PARISH COUNCIL ("THE Council")

#### Code of Conduct for Members 2012

I, ....., as a member of the Council's Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group have set out below my interests including those of my spouse or partner, in accordance with the Council's Code of Conduct for Members 2012

|   |                             |
|---|-----------------------------|
| <b>Employment, office, trade, profession or vocation</b><br>Any employment, office, trade, profession or vocation carried on for profit or gain.  |                             |
| <b>Myself</b>   | <b>My spouse or partner</b> |
|   |                             |
| <b>Contracts</b><br>Any contract which is made between me or my spouse or partner (or a body in which I have a beneficial interest) and the Council named above:<br>(a) under which goods or services are to be provided or works are to be executed; and<br>(b) which has not been fully discharged. |                             |
| <b>Myself</b>   | <b>My spouse or partner</b> |
|   |                             |
| <b>Land</b><br>Any beneficial interest <sup>1</sup> in land which is within the area of the Council named above.  |                             |
| <b>Myself</b>   | <b>My spouse or partner</b> |
| Address of land:  | Address of land:            |
|   |                             |
| <b>Licences</b><br>Any licence (alone or jointly with others) to occupy land in the area of the Council named above for a month or longer.  |                             |
| <b>Myself</b>   | <b>My spouse or partner</b> |
|   |                             |

**Corporate tenancies**

Any tenancy where (to my knowledge)—

- (a) the landlord is the Council named above; and
- (b) the tenant is a body in which I or my spouse or partner has a beneficial interest.

| Myself | My spouse or partner |
|--------|----------------------|
|        |                      |

**Securities<sup>2</sup>**

Any beneficial interest in securities of a body where—

- (a) that body (to my knowledge) has a place of business or land in the area of the Council named above; and

(b) either—

(i) the total nominal value of the securities exceeds £25,000 or one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that body; or

(ii) if the share capital of that body is of more than one class, the total nominal value of the shares of any one class in which I or my spouse or partner has a beneficial interest exceeds one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that class.

| Myself | My spouse or partner |
|--------|----------------------|
|        |                      |

**Membership of Organisations**

Where the member (of the Council) is a member of, or in a position of general control or management in:

- a) any body to which I have been appointed or nominated by the Council;
- b) any body exercising functions of a public nature (e.g. school governing body or another council);
- c) any body directed to charitable purposes;
- d) any body one of whose principal purposes includes the influence of public opinion or policy (including any political party or trade union).

| Myself | My spouse or partner |
|--------|----------------------|
|        |                      |

**Gifts and Hospitality**

Any gift or hospitality which I have received in my capacity as a member of the Steering Group with an estimated value of at least £50

| Myself | My spouse or partner |
|--------|----------------------|
|        |                      |

Signed.....

Date.....

1 Beneficial interest could include land or property which you own, or have a right to occupy (e.g. a tenancy) or receive an income from. This will usually include your home address.

2 "securities" means shares, debentures, debenture stock, loan stock, bonds, units of a collective investment scheme within the meaning of the Financial Services and Markets Act 2000 and other securities of any description, other than money deposited with a building society.