Strensall with Towthorpe Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group

Terms of Reference

1.       Purpose of the Steering Group

Strensall with Towthorpe Parish Council is the qualifying body for the preparation of a Neighbourhood Plan for their civil parish area. The Parish Council has agreed to establish separate project management arrangements to facilitate the delivery of this plan-making function through a Neighbourhood Planning Steering Group.

The purpose of the Steering Group is to design and oversee a process that will result in the preparation of a Plan for approval in order to:

“Preserve and enhance the quality of life, environmental attributes, economic growth and characteristics of the neighbourhood through the empowerment of local people and communities”

The process will be:

-        Inclusive: offering the opportunity to participate to everyone who lives or works in Strensall with Towthorpe,

-        Comprehensive: identifying all the important aspects of life in Strensall with Towthorpe for which we need to plan for the sustainable future,

-        Positive: bringing forward proposals which will improve the quality of life in Strensall with Towthorpe.

2.       Tasks

The Steering Group will:

-        Recommend an outline process in line with guidelines for producing the Neighbourhood Plan to the Parish Council for their approval,

-        Promote the process of preparing the Plan to encourage participation and the submission of views and ideas, providing updates on the village website and in the newsletter,

-        Organise meetings and appoint sub-groups as required,

-        Assess existing evidence about the needs and aspirations of the village, advising and making recommendations to the Parish Council,

-        Liaise with relevant organisations to secure their input in the process,

-        Analyse the views, ideas and proposals received during the planning process, and use them to prepare a draft Plan to present to the Parish Council for their consideration,

-        Provide progress reports to every meeting of the Parish Council, and

-        Keep the Parish Council informed of ongoing budgetary requirements.

3.       Membership

Members include the members of the Parish Council Neighbourhood Planning Working Party (currently 7), and up to seven other members.  The group shall be considered quorate when one third of members are present. If less than three members are present, the meeting shall be adjourned.

Residents and any other relevant people may be appointed to the group. New members will be brought up to be speed by existing group members so as not to hinder progress.

4.       Meetings

The Steering Group will meet regularly whenever appropriate and timed to report to the Parish Council monthly meetings. The agenda and associated papers will be despatched two clear days before the date of the meeting by e-mail or post.

The Steering Group will elect a Chairman and Vice Chairman from current members of the group and will consult with the Parish Council for the approval of those elected. If the Chairman is not present, the Vice Chairman shall take the meeting. If neither is present, members will elect a Chairman for the meeting from those present.

If the meetings are not to be serviced by the Parish Clerk, then a secretary must be elected.

If members of the public would like to sit in on the meetings, they may do so, but any comments must be made through the Chairman. Notes will be taken to assist reporting to the Parish Council.

Decisions made by the group will be by consensus. Where a vote is required, each member will have one vote. A minimum of three members shall be present where matters are presented for decisions to be taken. A simple majority will be required to support any motion. The Chairman, or in their absence the Vice Chairman will have one casting vote.

All recommendations made by the *Steering* Group are subject to adoption by the Council, and no actions can be taken until that has happened.

 5.       Conduct

When undertaking the task of preparing the Neighbourhood Plan, the Steering Group will apply the following principles:

 To ensure that the probity of the group and the plan is open and transparent, all members of the Steering Group must declare any personal interest that may be perceived as being relevant to any decisions or recommendations made by the group. This may include membership of an organisation, ownership of interest in land (directly or indirectly) or a business or indeed any other matter likely to be relevant to the work undertaken by the Steering Group.

Ensure that there is no discrimination in the plan making process and that it is an inclusive open and transparent process to all groups in the local community and those wishing to undertake development or be involved in the process in the community.

Members of the group will work together for the benefit of their community; treat other members of the group with dignity, courtesy and respect, allowing members to air their views without prejudice and interruption.

6.       Financial Arrangements

All expenditure must be approved by the Parish Council.