

Sandy Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group Terms of Reference

1. Background

- 1.1 Sandy Town Council is the qualifying body for the preparation of a Sandy Neighbourhood Development Plan (henceforth referred to as the "NP") for the parish of Sandy.
- 1.2 Sandy Town Council resolved to prepare an NP at the meeting of the Full Council on 28th September 2020, covering the entire area of the parish of Sandy (the "Plan Area").
- 1.3 Sandy Town Council has notified Central Bedfordshire Council its intent to prepare an NP in consultation with:
 - The residents of Sandy
 - Organisations employing persons within the Plan Area
 - Organisations that enhance Sandy such as BRCC, Greensand Country Landscape Partnership
- 1.4 Sandy Town Council will be the body that formally submits the NP to CBC.
- 1.5. The NP will seek to:
 - Provide a framework for future development and land use within the Plan Area
 - Set planning policies that accord with adopted policy at the national, county and district level, but which recognise the specific character of Sandy and preserve or enhance the quality of life within the Plan Area
- 1.6 Sandy Town Council has agreed to establish a Steering Group to lead the preparation of the NP.

2. Purpose

- 2.1 The Steering Group is a working party of Full Council and will work within the relevant Town Council Standing Orders.
- 2.2 The Steering Group will lead the NP preparation process, including project management and decision making.

2.3 The Steering Group will:

- Promote the process of preparing the Neighbourhood Plan and encourage Sandy residents, employers and service providers to participate and provide their views and opinions on the specific topics which are covered during the preparation of the plan.
- Report to the Full Council at every meeting on the progress of the NP project and seek to gain input and agreement regularly to ensure that there is understanding and alignment at key decision points in the process.
- Refer all items of expenditure, outside an approved budget, to Full Council.
- Work with and manage any appointed contractors or supporting bodies as agreed by the Town Council
- Prepare a budget for the NP process for each financial year for consideration in the Town Council's annual budget setting.
- Liaise with Central Bedfordshire Council (CBC) as required.
- Hold public, employer and service provider consultation events and analyse the responses received to inform the NP preparation.
- Gather and assess evidence about the needs and aspirations of Sandy.
- Determine the number of topic areas to be addressed in the preparation of the NP.
- Establish, and approve the terms of reference of, working parties for each policy area. The working parties will consult on, consider and develop policies in that area that are considered appropriate for incorporation in the draft NP.
- Retain oversight of the working parties and ensure that the outputs of individual working parties are in accordance with adopted policy and do not contradict each other. Where an individual policy could reasonably be considered by more than one working party, the

Steering Group will coordinate and direct those working parties to ensure co-operation in the consideration of that policy.

- Approve all reports and consultation documents before they are issued.
- Agree, subject to ratification by Full Council, the final submission version of the NP.
- Support Sandy Town Council and CBC during the referendum process.

3. Membership

- 3.1 The Steering Group will select its own Chairman.
- 3.2 Members will either be Sandy Town Councillors, residents or people who work in Sandy or representatives of organisations that enhance Sandy as in 1.3.
- 3.3 Membership of the Steering Group is unlimited.
- 3.4 Members are volunteers and may chose to leave during the project. At which time a new Member may be appointed.

4. Obligations of the Steering Group Members

- 4.1 Steering Group members shall:
- Work together for the benefit of Sandy.
 - Abide by the Localism Act and Sandy Town Council's Code of Conduct.
 - Declare any pecuniary or personal interests that may be perceived as being relevant to any decisions or recommendations made by the group, including membership of any organisation, any ownership or interest in land or businesses (directly or indirectly) within the Plan Area or any other matter likely to be relevant to the work undertaken by the Steering Group. Such declarations are to be recorded and made publicly available.

- Ensure that there is no discrimination in the plan making process and that it is a wholly inclusive, open and transparent process.

5. Frequency, Timing and Procedure of Meetings

- 5.1 The Steering Group will meet at monthly intervals.
- 5.2 The Steering Group shall keep minutes of meetings which will be open to public scrutiny. These will be published on the Town Council website, once they have been approved by the Steering Group.
- 5.3 Any decisions taken by the Steering Group, other than those delegated to appointed officers, will be carried if the majority (more than 50%) are in favour at any given meeting. The Chairman shall have the casting vote where the vote is equal.
- 5.4 Notices, Agendas, Minutes and associated papers will be emailed to all Steering Group members.
- 5.5 The Steering Group has up to 10 members and shall be quorate provided that:
- At least 3 members or a third of the group are present.
 - One of the members present is a member of Sandy Town Council
 - The meeting has been properly convened.
 - Outside persons, including planning consultants may attend by invitation and participate in Steering Group meetings, but may not vote.
 - These Terms of Reference will be reviewed throughout the project and amended as required by the Steering Group or Full Council.

6. Tenure

- 6.1 The Steering Group, in its present form, shall continue to operate for three years or until the NP is adopted or rejected in referendum, whichever is the sooner. In the event that the referendum is rejected the Steering Group will continue to meet until such time as the referendum is adopted or a new Steering Group is appointed. At that stage the TC will form appropriate implementation body.

7. **Application of Terms of Reference**

- 7.1 These terms shall apply from the date of this document and retrospectively where relevant to the date of the inception of the Steering Group.

Agreed by STC: 9 November 2020
Adopted by SG: 19 November 2020