Grappenhall and Thelwall Parish Council

Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group

Terms of Reference

Purpose

The Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group will take forward the production, through to examination and referendum, of the Grappenhall and Thelwall Neighbourhood Plan, ensuring that relevant consultation takes place so that the plan accurately represents the views of the residents and other stakeholders.

Principle

The Steering Group will produce a sound Neighbourhood Plan for Grappenhall and Thelwall 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. The neighbourhood area for the plan is contiguous with the parish boundary.

Tasks and Activities

1. The Steering Group will:

    - Determine the overall scope and objectives of the plan in consultation with the Parish Council.
    - Manage the process of preparing the plan and prepare and monitor a project plan and report to the Parish Council at its meeting on a monthly basis to ensure effective progress.
    - Keep under review the legislative requirements around Neighbourhood Planning to ensure the plan meets all requirements
    - Make recommendations to the Parish Council on resourcing the development of the plan.
    - Make recommendations to the Parish Council on involving the wider community in the plan
    - Manage the gathering of evidence necessary to inform each of the issues within the scope of the plan
    - Identify and assess options available in respect of each issue and prepare a draft plan for wider consideration.
    - Produce minutes, reports and documents relating to the plan
    - Produce engaging materials using all available media to encourage community engagement

2. The Steering Group will oversee the identification of planned themes which will lead the development of the plan including consultation with the Parish Council and the wider community.

3. Consultation and community engagement activities the Steering Group undertakes will be undertaken by or on behalf of Grappenhall and Thelwall Parish Council with appropriate recognition of the Parish Council's position given in all communications associated with the project.

The Parish Council will:

- Support the preparation of the Grappenhall and Thelwall Neighbourhood Plan providing appropriate financial resources to ensure the plan is prepared expeditiously providing that overall expenditure falls within the budget allocated by the Council.
- Provide **3** Parish Councillors as members of the Steering Group who will be fully functioning members of the Group, contributing to the overall work of the group and progress of the plan.
- Such members will be expected to facilitate an effective two-way dialogue between the Parish Council and the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group throughout the process.
- Facilitate, if required, contact with the relevant statutory bodies or parties who must be consulted during the plan making process.
- Carry out all statutory duties contained within the Neighbourhood Planning (General) regulation 2012 and engage with Warrington Borough Council during the referendum process of the plan for which the principal authority is responsible.
- Following the preparation of the draft plan, and with the agreement of the Group, submit the Plan to the Local Planning Authority for inspection and independent examination.

Steering Group Membership

The Steering Group will be made up of members of Grappenhall and Thelwall Parish Council along with members of the community in the parish. As a minimum the Steering Group will have the following key members:

- Chair
- Vice Chair
- Secretary
- Treasurer

All members of the Steering Group have equal voting rights and will be a steering group who will not only work on elements of the plan but will work to engage the community throughout the lifetime of its existence in order to ensure views of the whole community are heard and not just the views of group members. A minimum of four members shall be present where matters are presented for decisions to be

taken. A simple majority will be required to support any motion. The Chair, or in their absence the Vice Chair shall have one casting vote.

The Steering Group will be responsible for ensuring that suitable qualified technical support is obtained at relevant points of the plan's development in order that the Neighbourhood Plan is fit for purpose.

Should group membership need to change this will be dealt with as follows:

- Additional members - This will be agreed through a vote of Steering Group members at the next meeting and be minuted accordingly.
- Departing members - Should there be a need for a group member to depart this will be dealt with by the Chair/Vice Chair and Secretary. The departing member should agree to a suitable handover of the work they have been dealing with before their formal departure.

Neighbourhood Plan Committee

In order to take decisions expeditiously and to control the size of meetings, a Neighbourhood Plan Committee will be formed from the Steering Group of about 10 to 12 people. This will include the Parish Council representatives, Officers of the Parish Council, the Chair, Vice-Chair, Secretary and Treasurer of the Steering Group and the chairs of any working groups.
Any member of the Steering Group will be entitled to attend meetings of the Committee via Microsoft TEAMS.

The Committee will meet monthly and will exercise all the functions of the Steering Group subject to review of any of those actions at the next full Steering Group meeting.

Working Groups

The Steering Group may appoint such working groups as it considers necessary to assist it in carrying out the tasks and activities outlined above.

Initially there will be a Thelwall Heys working group and a Grappenhall Heys working group.

Each working group shall have a chair nominated by the Group, who will report on progress to the Steering Group as and when requested.

No working group shall be entitled to authorise or commit the Steering Group to any expenditure in relation to the project.

Conduct and Interests

The Steering Group will follow the code of conduct. The Steering Group as a whole is accountable to the wider community for ensuring that the Plan reflects their collective expectations. The Steering Group will achieve this through applying the following principles:

- Work with mutual trust and respect, and combine their expertise;
- Be clear when their individual roles or interests are in conflict;
- Provide feedback from Steering Group meetings to the Parish Council;
- Bring appropriate ideas and concerns to the attention of the Steering Group;
- Inform the Steering Group when they are unable to deliver agreed actions;
- Treat everyone with dignity, courtesy and respect regardless of their age, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, ability, or religion and belief; and
- Actively promote equality of access and opportunity.

In situations where interests and roles are in conflict they must be declared before the business is discussed. The Steering Group member will have no voting rights. It will be agreed depending on the conflict of interest before the item is discussed if they will be allowed to participate in any discussion on the item.

Meeting Arrangements

Meetings of the Steering Group will be held at least quarterly either face-to-face or virtually at a time to suit members. As a minimum the Chair or Vice Chair must be in attendance. If the Secretary is not in attendance a suitable delegate should attend in order for appropriate minutes to be taken.

Decision Making

Grappenhall and Thelwall Parish Council is the qualifying body for the purposes of preparing the plan. The Steering Group has delegated authority to manage the process of preparing the plan as set out in the agreed scope and budgets. Grappenhall and Thelwall Parish Council will approve the following stages of plan preparation:

- Issues and Options
- Vision and Goals
- Preferred Options
- Consultation draft Plan (Regulation 14 version)
- Submission Plan (Regulation 15 version)
- Choose Plan Examiner
- Need for Plan Review

Dissolution of the Group

The Steering Group will be established for a time-limited period. The project is intended to run until a Plan has been presented for independent examination. The Steering Group will remain active until at least the independent examiners report is published.

Review of this Document

The Terms of Reference will be reviewed and agreed by the Steering Group on a minimum of an annual basis. The Terms of Reference as agreed by the Steering Group will be presented to the Parish Council for its ratification. The Terms of Reference will then be made available on the Parish Council website.