

# **THE SID VALLEY NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN**

## **Steering Group – Terms of Reference**

### **1. Purpose of the Steering Group**

1.1 Sidmouth Town Council is the qualifying body for the preparation of a Neighbourhood Plan for the Sid Valley area. The Council has agreed to establish separate project management arrangements to facilitate the delivery of this plan-making function.

The Council has granted delegated authority in exercise of all relevant plan-making functions to the **Sid Valley Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group**. The purpose of the Steering Group is to oversee the preparation of a Neighbourhood Plan, ensuring that all issues are properly addressed with high levels of community engagement. The Steering Group sits as the Project Board for project management and decision making purposes and will lead the preparation of the Sid Valley Neighbourhood Plan.

The Steering Group will guide and agree the content of the Plan and all associated evidence and analysis up to **Preferred Option Consultation Draft** stage.

### **2. Key Roles and Responsibilities:**

- 2.1 Provide a locally accountable and representative lead for plan making;
- 2.2 Agree a project timetable and endeavour to secure compliance;
- 2.3 Agree a project communication, consultation and engagement strategy;
- 2.4 Liaise with East Devon District senior planning officers;
- 2.5 Agree the initial scope of the Plan prior to early public engagement;
- 2.6 Confirm, subject to consultation with the STC, the scope of the Plan following analysis of early and subsequent community engagement;
- 2.7 Approve all background and evidence based reports prior to publication;
- 2.8 Agree all consultation documents prior to publication;
- 2.9 Agree, subject to ratification by the Town Council, a final submission version of the Sid Valley Neighbourhood Plan;
- 2.10 Act as the principal contact with the community, organisations, landowners and businesses, for the Sid Valley Neighbourhood Plan.
- 2.11 Actively support and promote the preparation of the Sid Valley Neighbourhood Plan throughout the duration of the project.

### **3. The Steering Group**

- The Steering Group will be established for the life of the project which is intended to run for 18 months to two years and will be dissolved once a referendum decision has taken place.

### **4. Steering Group Objective**

4.1. To produce a sound **Neighbourhood Plan for the Sid Valley**, including **Sidmouth, Sidford, Sidbury and Salcombe Regis** that defines the spatial

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.

4.2 To bring together local expertise and facilitate joint community working and promote active involvement in the Neighbourhood planning process for the Sid Valley.

## **5. Steering Group Membership**

5.1 **Chair: Deirdre Hounsom;**

5.2 **Three** additional Members of Sidmouth Town Council and up to

5.3 **Ten** Community Members, drawn from a cross section of volunteers in the community.

The Steering Group shall;

5.4 Elect a Deputy Chair from their number

5.5 Review its membership from time to time

5.6 The Steering Group have the power to form Teams to complete the required tasks within the Team areas defined in the Sid Valley Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group Structure document. Enabling specialist skills, knowledge and experience to be harnessed by the Steering Group 'Team' leads.

## **6. Voting Rights**

Decisions made by the Steering Group should normally be by consensus at Steering Group meetings. Where a vote is required each member shall have one vote. A simple majority will be required to support any motion. The Chair, or in their absence the Deputy Chair shall have one casting vote.

6.1 Members shall vote by show of hands

6.2 If a member so requires, the Clerk shall record the names of the Members who voted on any question so as to show whether they voted for or against it. Such a request must be made before moving on to the next business.

## **7. Quorum of the Steering Group**

Four members or one third of the total membership, whichever is the greater, shall constitute a quorum at meetings.

7.1 If a quorum is not present or if during a meeting the number of Members present (not counting those debarred by reason of a declared interest) falls below the required quorum, the meeting shall be adjourned and business not transacted shall be transacted at the next meeting or on such other day as the Chair may fix.

## **8. Frequency, Timing and Procedure of Meetings**

8.1 The Steering Group shall meet not less than eleven times a year.

8.2 Meetings shall normally be held at **6.30pm on a Monday** at a location to be specified. The first meeting to be held at **Sidmouth Town Council** offices. A

meeting schedule will be given to Steering Group members at their first meeting. It is expected that meetings of Teams will take place between Steering Group meetings to facilitate progress with tasks identified in the project plan.

8.3 All meetings shall be open to the public. Time will be allocated for 'Public Question Time' at these meetings, and each speaker will be limited to 3 minutes up to a maximum of 20 minutes per meeting.

8.4 Any changes to Steering Group Terms of Reference shall require Steering Group approval.

8.5 Steering Group meetings shall be conducted in accordance with set procedure to be determined and agreed by the Steering Group.

8.6 Notice with all dates of Steering Group Meetings will be posted on main town council notice boards as follows:

Sidmouth 3-cornered plot

Sidmouth Ham

Sidbury

Sidford Cross (

Stowford

## **9. Steering Group Conduct**

9.1 The Steering Group will be expected to follow the code of conduct set out by the Nolan Committee on Standards in Public Life.

9.2 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.

9.3 Ensure that there is no discrimination in the plan making process and that it is an inclusive open and transparent process. The Steering Group must;  
**"Model absolute transparency throughout the process"**

9.4 Members of the Group will work together for the benefit of the wider community. Members of the Group are expected to treat other Members of the Group with respect and dignity, allowing Members to air their views without prejudice and interruption.

9.5 Members of the Group will adhere to the principles of equality through active promotion and demonstration of equality of access and opportunity and ensure in all its work compliance and proactive promotion of the Equality Act 2010.

## **10 Administrative Support**

10.1 The Parish Clerk shall ensure that appropriate clerking arrangements are in hand for all Steering Group meetings.

10.2 Notice, Agenda and associated papers shall normally be despatched three clear days before the date of the meeting by e-mail.

10.3 The Steering Group shall keep Minutes of proceedings and shall cause the Minutes to be recorded and open to public scrutiny.

10.4 Requests to the Clerk for administrative support must go through the Chairman of the Council.

## **11. Reporting and Communication**

11.1 The Steering Group is established having full-delegated authority from the Town Council to deliver its plan-making functions up to and including publication of a Preferred Options Consultation Draft Neighbourhood Development Plan and referendum.

11.2 The Group will report monthly to the Town Council setting out progress on its work. The Chair (or Deputy Chair as necessary) will present a written progress report at each full council meeting for the duration of the project. **The Town Council and EDDC will approve the Submission Draft Neighbourhood Development Plan prior to publication for consultation and independent examination.**

11.3 The plan-making process remains in the control of the Town Council as local authority and qualifying body. All publications, consultation and community engagement exercises will be undertaken by or on behalf of Sidmouth Town Council with appropriate recognition of the Town Council's position given in all communications associated with the project.

## **12. Distribution of Terms of Reference**

12.1 A copy of the Terms of Reference shall be given to each Member of the Steering Group. The Clerk shall ask each Member **to agree and sign** a declaration of receipt of this document (or any superseded version) at the first meeting of The Steering Group. These terms of reference will be agreed by the whole group.

12.2 Each member of the Steering Group will be expected to have access to **email and the Internet**. A training session on the use of the electronic media used for communication between members will be offered at the start of the project and participants will be supported by other group members throughout the process.

12.3 The collective responsibility for the preparation of the Sid Valley Neighbourhood Plan shall be the joint responsibility of **STC and the Steering Group members**.