

Long Melford Neighbourhood Plan Terms of reference

1. Purpose

- The main purpose of the Long Melford Steering Group (a committee of Long Melford Parish Council) is to oversee the preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan for Long Melford in order that these will then progress to Independent Examination and a successful community referendum and ultimately be adopted by Babergh District Council to become planning policy.
- The Steering Group will engage the local community to ensure that the Plan is truly representative of the ambitions of Long Melford. The Group will maximise support for the approach taken in the Neighbourhood Plan by ensuring high levels of community engagement throughout the plan-making process.

2. Principles

- That the Steering Group will undertake the process in a democratic, transparent and fair fashion, encouraging widespread participation and giving equal consideration to opinions and ideas from all members of the community
- All decisions made shall be fully evidenced and supported through consultation with the local community.

3. Roles and Responsibilities

In order to achieve this, the Steering Group will carry out the following roles:

- Be accountable for steering and providing strategic management of the Neighbourhood Plan for Long Melford;
- Produce, monitor and update a project timetable;
- Produce a consultation and engagement strategy, showing how the public will be involved throughout the process;
- Regularly report back to the Parish Council for endorsement of decisions taken;
- To undertake analysis and evidence gathering to support the plan production process;
- Actively support and promote the preparation of the Long Melford Neighbourhood Plan throughout the duration of the project;
- Identify sources of funding;
- Liaise with relevant authorities and organisations to make the plan as effective as possible.
- Gather data from a wide range of sources to ensure that the conclusions reached are fully evidenced and that the aspirations and issues of all residents are understood
- Consult as widely and thoroughly as is possible to ensure that the draft and final NHP is representative of the views of residents
- Agree, subject to ratification by the Parish Council, a final submission version of the Long Melford Neighbourhood Plan;

4. Membership

- a. The Steering Group will consist of members from a cross-section of volunteers from the community, including Parish Councillors.

5. Decision Making

- a) The Steering Group has delegated authority from the Parish Council to deliver its plan-making functions up to and including publication of the Consultation Draft Plan. The Group will report to the Parish Council setting out progress on its work. The Parish Council will approve the Submission Draft Neighbourhood Development Plan prior to publication for consultation and independent examination.
- b) The plan-making process remains the responsibility of the Parish Council as the qualifying body. All publications, consultation and community engagement exercises will be undertaken by or on behalf of the Parish Council with appropriate recognition of the Parish Council's position given in all communications associated with the project.

6. Meetings

- a. Steering Group meetings will take place as and when required subject to an annual minimum of 6 meetings.
- b. Where possible, all meetings should be held within the Parish. The dates of future meetings will be made publicly available via the [parish council] website.
- c. The Steering Group will elect a Chair annually from its membership.. If this position should become vacant, the Group will elect an alternate.
- d. The Secretary, who should be the Clerk, shall keep a record of meetings and circulate notes to Steering Group members and the Parish Council in a timely fashion. Minutes shall be made publicly available on the Long Melford website.
- e. At least 3 clear days' notice of meetings/agendas shall be sent to members via email, or an alternative agreed communication method. The notice will also be displayed on public noticeboards.
- f. 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 minimum of 4 members shall be present where matters are presented for decisions to be taken. A simple majority vote will be required to support any motion. The Chairman shall have one casting vote.

7. Working Groups

- a) The Steering Group may establish working groups, made up of volunteers from the community to aid them in any Neighbourhood Plan related work.
- b) Each working group should have a lead person from the Steering Group.
- c) Members of the community will be encouraged to participate in the process at all stages.

8. Finance

- a) All grants and funding will be applied for and held by the Parish Council, who will ring-fence the funds for Neighbourhood Development Plan work.
- b) The Steering Group will notify the Parish Council, advising them of any planned expenditure before it is incurred.

These Terms of Reference were adopted by Long Melford Parish Council on 6 July 2017, under minute 46

9. Conduct

- a) It is expected that all Steering Group members abide by the principles and practice of the Parish Council Code of Conduct.
- b) Whilst Members as individuals will be accountable to their parent organizations, the Steering Group as a whole is accountable to the wider community for ensuring that the Plan reflects their collective expectations.
- c) The Steering Group will achieve this through applying the following principles:
 - 1. Be clear and open when their individual roles or interests are involved;
 - 2. Treat everyone with dignity, courtesy and respect regardless of their age, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, or religion and belief; and
 - 3. Actively promote equality of access and opportunity.

10. Changes to the Terms of Reference

- a. This constitution may be amended with the support of at least two-thirds of the current membership at a Steering Group Meeting and with the approval of the parish council.