

Terms of reference

(as at 12 February 2018)

Saxmundham Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group

Background

Saxmundham Town Council has determined that it intends to produce a Neighbourhood Plan and has established a Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group to oversee the process.

1. Purpose and Mission Statement

The purpose of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group (“the NPSG”) is to design and oversee a process that will result in the preparation of a draft Neighbourhood Plan for Saxmundham.

The process will be:

Inclusive – offering everyone who lives or works in Saxmundham opportunities to participate fully in the plan;

Comprehensive - identifying all the important aspects of life in Saxmundham for which we need to plan for the future via our Neighbourhood Plan;

Positive – bringing forward proposals which will improve the quality of life in Saxmundham;

Supported – where there is a need for professional support to complete the process.

2. Tasks

The NPSG, along with its technical advisers, where appropriate, will coordinate the process of developing the Neighbourhood Plan, and undertake the following tasks:

1. Prepare an outline process for producing the Neighbourhood Plan.
2. Promote the process of preparing the Neighbourhood Plan to encourage participation and the submission of views and ideas.
3. Organise meetings and surveys to gather views and consult on ideas.
4. Assess existing evidence about the needs and aspirations of the Town/Parish, and consider commissioning or obtaining further evidence if necessary.
5. Liaise with relevant businesses and organisations to secure their input in the process.
6. Ensure that the views of the full range and diversity of our community and the respective interest groups are sought through the process, as far as this is reasonably possible.
7. Co-ordinate, oversee and support the work of working groups
8. Analyse the views, ideas and proposals received during the planning process and use them in preparation of the draft Plan.
9. Keep the Town Council fully informed of progress and, where appropriate, present NPSG Meeting Minutes for acceptance and subsequent adoption.
10. With the Communications working group, ensure effective use of the NP website and relevant social and other media to inform and promote awareness of the Plan at each stage.

3. Membership of the Neighbourhood Planning Team and Quorum

Membership of the NPSG shall comprise no less than six members. Additional members can be co-opted if required, in particular to enhance the Group's capacity and representativity.

The Group shall review its membership from time to time.

The Group will contain at least 3 Town/Parish Council representatives.

Where appropriate, officers from Suffolk Coastal District Council (SCDC) and other key stakeholders will be invited to attend Meetings in an advisory capacity, and representatives from neighbouring parishes may be invited as active observers.

The NPSG shall be quorate when 4 members are present, of whom at least one must be an elected Town/Parish Council representative.

The technical advisers and observers will not have voting rights.

4. Chair of the Neighbourhood Planning Team

The Group shall elect a Chair and Vice Chair(s) from their number.

If the Chair is not present, the/a Vice Chair shall take the Meeting. If neither/none is present, members shall elect a Chair for the meeting from amongst their number.

Elections shall take place at the beginning of each year, or if a casual vacancy occurs.

5. Frequency, Timing and Procedure of Meetings for the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group

The NPSG shall meet not less than once every quarter. In the initial period, up to the completion and analysis of the household survey, it will aim to meet at least monthly, or more frequently if needed.

Any changes to NPSG Terms of Reference will require Town/Parish Council approval.

6. Secretarial Arrangements

Each meeting shall nominate a Secretary/note taker, who may be a member of the Group or a person (e.g. town council officer) invited to attend for that purpose. Meeting Notes or Minutes must be provided to the Town Council, normally in electronic form, and will be a matter of public record. They will be posted on the website for the Neighbourhood Plan.

7. Budget

The Town Council may allocate to the Steering Group a small budget for necessary reasonable expenses in relation to the work of the Steering Group, which shall keep all appropriate records and report regularly on use of the budget.