

SUTTON VALENCE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

TERMS OF REFERENCE

1. Introduction

Sutton Valence Parish Council took the decision to produce a Neighbourhood Plan at its meeting on 5th April 2013, following the Government's publication of the Localism Act 2011.

In order to produce this plan the Parish Council will establish a Steering Group to oversee a process that will result in the preparation of a draft plan which will be put to a public referendum. In doing so it is deemed appropriate that the Steering Group are provided with and accept the following terms of reference.

Sutton Valence Parish Council has advised Maidstone Borough Council of the intent of the residents of Sutton Valence parish, in consultation with other stakeholders, to produce a Neighbourhood Plan and the Parish Council will be the body that formally submits the Neighbourhood Plan to Maidstone Borough Council.

The plan will seek to:

- a. Identify all the important aspects of life in the parish for which are to be considered in planning for the future
- b. Bring forward proposals which will enhance the quality of life in the Parish in the years to come.
- c. Provide a framework for future land usage within the parish.

2. Membership of the Steering Group

The Steering Group will be formed from residents and the local business community. Elected members of Sutton Valence Parish Council may also be members of the Steering Group.

The Steering Group shall extend until the Neighbourhood Plan has been assessed and approved by the independent examiner. The Steering Group shall pass the draft neighbourhood plan to Sutton Valence Parish Council for approval prior to independent examination. If the Steering Group is holding any funds at this time or if the Steering Group is disbanded prior to the neighbourhood plan being approved and is holding funds such funds shall be paid to the Parish Council unless otherwise directed by an organisation from which the funds were obtained.

The Steering Group will consist of a maximum of 30 members and a minimum of 12 members

If a member of the Steering Group fails to attend 3 consecutive Steering Group meetings the member will be deemed to have resigned from the Steering Group unless otherwise agreed by the Steering Group. This provision does not prevent any member from resigning from the Steering Group by providing the Chairman with written notice of their resignation.

The membership of the Steering Group shall be reviewed and confirmed by the Parish Council on a quarterly basis.

Any person who wishes to become a member of the Steering Group after the commencement of the Neighbourhood Planning process shall apply to the Steering Group who shall resolve whether they shall be admitted to the Steering Group. If it is resolved that the individual shall be admitted to the

Steering Group, the Parish Council shall ratify as it sees fit the individuals membership at the next quarterly review.

The Steering Group will form Working Groups or sub committees to undertake various aspects of the work involved in producing the Neighbourhood Plan. These working groups will be subservient to the Steering Group and act under its instructions, adhering to the same terms of reference.

The Local planning Authority is obliged to provide assistance under the statutory provision of the Localism Act 2011.

3. Roles and Responsibilities of the Steering Group

The members of the Steering Group will:

- Promote the process of preparing the Neighbourhood Plan, be encouraged to participate and provide their views and opinions on the specific topics which are covered during the preparation of the Plan.
- Arrange meetings and appoint sub groups to gather views and consult on emerging policies which are considered appropriate for incorporation in the draft Plan.
- Assess existing evidence about the needs and aspirations of the Parish.
- Liaise with relevant organisations and stakeholders to secure their input in the process including neighbouring Parishes.
- Analyse the results of questionnaires or other evidence received during the planning process and use them to prepare a robust draft Plan
- Inform the Parish Council of progress on a regular basis in order that Steering/Working Group minutes can be noted.
- Work with the local planning authority and Sutton Valence Parish Council during the referendum process

The Parish Council will:

- Support the preparation of the Sutton Valence Neighbourhood Plan providing sufficient assistance and financial resources to ensure the plan is prepared expeditiously providing that overall expenditure falls within the budget allocated by the Council.
- 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 with the Neighbourhood planning (General) regulation 2012 and engage with Maidstone Borough Council during the referendum process of the plan for which the principle 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.

All Members of the Steering Group and any working group formed will:

- 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.

- Ensure that there is no discrimination in the plan making process and that it is a wholly inclusive, open and transparent process to all groups in the parish and to those wishing to undertake development or be involved in the plan making process.
- Work together for the benefit of the communities established within the Parish. Treat other members of the Group with respect and dignity, allowing members to express their views without prejudice and interruption.
- 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.
- To liaise and listen to 'Critical Friend' employed by the Parish Council.

4. Steering Group Chairman

- The Steering Group shall elect a Chairman and Deputy Chairman from their number.
- If the Chairman is not present, the Deputy Chairman shall take the meeting. If neither is present, members shall elect a Chairman for the meeting from amongst their number

5. Frequency, Timing and procedure of Meetings

The Steering Group will usually meet monthly and must meet at least bi-monthly, although sub groups may meet more frequently as necessary.

- The Steering Group and its sub groups shall keep minutes of meetings which will be open to public scrutiny. These will be publicised on the Neighbourhood Plan website
- Notices, Agendas, Minutes and associated papers will be emailed where possible to all Steering Group members who have attended any Steering Group meeting.
- Meetings shall be conducted in accordance with set procedure to be determined and agreed by the Steering Group.
- The Steering Group shall be quorate when 6 members are present
- The Steering Group will regularly update and report its progress to the Clerk of the Parish Council ensuring that she, as the Responsible Financial Officer for the Council, is aware of the on-going budgetary implications associated with the project.
- These Terms of Reference will be reviewed throughout the project and amended as required by the Steering Group.

6. Application of Terms of Reference

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