



NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN STEERING GROUP (NPSG)

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Status of the NPSG: The group is a time limited project board, tasked with developing the Stow on the Wold and the Swells Neighbourhood Plan.

Number of Seats:	Ten - see "Membership" below.
Chair:	A member of Stow on the Wold Town Council who is elected by the council.
Vice Chair:	Elected by the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group (NPSG)
Quorum:	Four, of whom at least one must be a member of Stow on the Wold Town Council and at least one must be a resident.
Meeting frequency:	Once a month or as deemed necessary by the NPSG.
Budget:	Funded via grant from "Locality" & Stow on the Wold Town Council.

Background

Stow on the Wold Town Council ("the council") is the qualifying body for the preparation of a Neighbourhood Plan (NP) for the civil parish areas of Stow on the Wold and the Swells. Under section 102(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, a parish or town council may choose to appoint an advisory committee or sub committee and may appoint local people (a combination of members of council and residents) to the committee. The council has decided to establish the NPSG to deliver the Stow on the Wold and the Swells Neighbourhood Plan. In this context the NPSG is an advisory body, acting as a project board with the purpose, powers and accountability described below.

Purpose

The NPSG will take forward the production of a Preferred Options consultation draft. Once this is approved by the council the NPSG will support the subsequent consultation, approval and examination process and final community referendum, ensuring that the NP:-

- Is based on relevant research and consultation so that the NP correctly describes the challenges to long term sustainability of the two parishes.
- Is consistent with the strategic policies of the Cotswold District Council Local Plan.
- Accurately represents the views of residents and other stakeholders and,
- Clearly presents the consequent development and land use policies.

The council has granted delegated authority in exercise of all relevant NP making and consultation functions to the NPSG and sits as a time limited project board for decision making purposes and will lead the preparation of the NP. The NPSG will guide and agree the content of the draft NP and all associated consultation, collection of evidence and analysis of information. It is established for a time limited period through to examination and final community referendum.

Membership

The NPSG will consist of up to ten members as follows:-

- Up to four members of the council.
- One representative appointed by the Swells Parish Council.
- Up to six representatives of the Stow and Swells communities appointed by the NPSG.
- Community representative members will always be in the majority.

When a vacancy occurs, new members will be sought through notification to the two councils and contacting local community organisations and individuals otherwise active in the community, with details of the role, time commitment and responsibilities.

Meeting Arrangements

The NPSG meetings will take place monthly on dates to be agreed by the members for at least six months in advance. All meetings will take place in the main hall at Stow Youth Centre, Fosseyway, unless otherwise agreed. The council will provide administrative support to the group.

The Chair of the NPSG will be elected by the council. The NPSG may appoint a vice Chair from its membership. The Chair shall remain in post following his/her election until completion of the plan or they resign and are replaced.

A minimum of four members shall be present, of whom at least one must be a member of the council and at least one must be a resident, where matters are presented to the NPSG for decisions to be taken.

Decisions made by the NPSG should normally be by consensus at the NPSG meetings. Where a vote is required each member shall have one vote. A simple majority will be required to support any motion. If the vote is tied, then the Chair has the casting vote.

The Chair and other members of the NPSG may seek responses to draft proposals by email. These should be reported to the next formal NPSG meeting with the final proposal.

Finance

The funding for the preparation of the NP will be provided from a "Locality" grant and from funds allocated in the budget of the council. A report on the financial position will be provided to the NPSG by the council's clerk quarterly.

Reporting and Accountability

The NPSG is established having full delegated authority from the council to deliver its NP making functions up to and including publication of a Preferred Options consultation draft of the NP for approval by the council. The NPSG will support the council during the NP consultation, approval and examination process and will help the council to encourage a high level of participation in the final town referendum.

The NPSG will report as follows:-

- a) Minutes of the NPSG will be circulated to all members and attendees. The Swells Parish council representative will report to his/her council on behalf of the NPSG. NPSG minutes will be circulated to Stow on the Wold Town Councillors and published on the Council website. It is open to the Chair of any of the council's standing committees to include items from the NPSG minutes of interest to their committee on their agenda.
- b) A monthly progress report will be presented to the council by the Chair of the NPSG, so that all councillors are fully up to date.

- c) A monthly summary of progress will be submitted to “Stow Times” for publication and a report will appear in the quarterly newsletter “Stow Matters” published by the council.
- d) Where the NPSG is seeking approval of the council to:-
- Draft policies;
 - A consultant brief for the completion of a draft Preferred Options consultation NP;
 - A Preferred Options consultation NP; or,
 - Changes to policies or the Preferred Options consultation NP or a subsequent NP, already agreed by the council

these proposals will first be submitted to Swells Parish Council, the council’s Planning, Traffic and Parking Committee and any other council committee that has expertise relating to the proposed document, to allow time for consideration and comment before the next appropriate monthly council meeting, when the proposal will be formally presented by the Chair of the NPSG.

The NP making process remains in the control of the council as the local authority qualifying body. All publications, consultation and community engagement exercises will be undertaken by or on behalf of the council and Swells Parish Council, with appropriate recognition of the council’s position as the qualifying body given in all communications associated with the project.

Conduct

The NPSG will follow the Code of Conduct set out by the Nolan Committee on standards in public life. The NPSG 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.
- Complete agreed actions in the time required or inform the NPSG 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.

Dissolution of the NPSG

The NPSG will be dissolved by the council either once the examination and referendum are complete or at such other time as it deems necessary for the successful completion of the Stow and the Swells NP.