

Odell Parish Council

Neighbourhood Plan Working Group – Terms of Reference

Purpose

Odell Parish Council has granted delegated authority to the Neighbourhood Plan Working Group to undertake all relevant functions needed to produce a draft Neighbourhood Plan, and to take it through its examination and referendum stages. The Working Group is a sub-committee of the Parish Council and will ensure that relevant consultation takes place so that the plan accurately represents the views of the village's residents and stakeholders.

Task and Activities

The working group will:

- Determine the overall scope and objectives of the plan
- Manage the process of preparing the plan
- Prepare and monitor a project plan to ensure effective progress.
- Report regularly to Odell Parish Council
- Build and maintain links with the Local Planning Authority to ensure that Odell's Neighbourhood Plan meets the statutory requirements and is consistent with Bedford Borough's Local Plans
- Engage with the local community and manage the gathering of evidence necessary to produce policies to meet the scope of the plan
- Identify and assess the available options for each issue and prepare a draft plan for wider consideration
- Produce and make available minutes, reports and documents relating to the plan

Roles and Membership of the Group

The Working Group will aim to have at least 6 but not more than 10 members, including up to 2 Parish Councillors. Members will be Odell residents or stakeholders with a direct interest in the Parish, such as business owners or landowners.

The group will elect a Chair and will appoint, from amongst its members, leads for specific activities, as required. For example, there may be leads to produce and update: - minutes and key documents, a project plan, a communications / engagement plan and a website, housing matters, environmental matters etc.

Meeting Arrangements

The group will meet at least monthly, and more frequently when required to progress the work in a timely manner. Decisions made by the group should normally be by consensus. Where a vote is required each member shall have one vote and a minimum of three members shall participate in meetings where a vote is taken. A simple majority will be required and the Chair shall have one casting vote.

The Working Group is accountable for ensuring that the plan reflects the interests of the village community as a whole. The group will be open and transparent, publishing minutes of its meetings and documents summarising the evidence it has gathered to support the policies in its draft plan. It will meet the following principles: -

- Work with mutual trust and respect, and combine members expertise
- Be clear when their individual roles or interests are in conflict
- Consult with the Parish Council on key issues and on the draft plan, so that it can fulfil its responsibilities to oversee the work of the group
- Treat everyone with dignity, courtesy and respect regardless of their age, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, ability, or religion and belief
- Actively promote equality of access and opportunity