

Toddington Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group

Terms of Reference

1. Purpose

The Toddington Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group (NPSG) is established to lead the development of a Neighbourhood Plan (NP) in accordance with the Localism Act 2011. The NPSG will work independently, but with the active support of the Parish Council (PC) to engage with the community, gather evidence, and prepare a plan that reflects local aspirations while aligning with national and local planning policies.

2. Objectives

The NPSG will:

- Guide the process of developing the NP with the intention of completing the project by the end of 2027. The NPSG will monitor the activities of the various Working Groups (WGs) with the intention of completing all WG activities within the intended timescale of the NPSG project timetable.
- Engage with residents, businesses, and interested stakeholders.
- Gather and assess relevant data and evidence.
- Draft policies and proposals for the plan.
- Ensure compliance with legal and regulatory requirements.
- Oversee consultation and community engagement activities.
- Work collaboratively with the PC, Local Authority and other relevant organisations.

3. Membership & Roles

a) Composition

The group shall initially consist of 9 core members, including representatives from the PC and the local community. If circumstances require changes to the core membership, then assuming at least five members remain and the main roles and responsibilities can be effectively maintained, the NPSG can continue – but must adhere to the principles of these ToR.

b) Roles and Responsibilities

- Chairperson: Leads meetings, represents the group, and liaises with the Council.

- Vice Chair: This role will be appointed on a meeting by meeting basis if the Chair is absent and will have the same responsibilities of the appointed Chair for that meeting.

- Secretary: Manages records, agendas, and minutes for the NPSG

- Working Group Lead: For each Working Group (WG), there will a Chair who will replicate the responsibilities of the NPSG Chair. It is envisaged that there will be six WG's:

- Environment and Green Spaces

-Transport and Infrastructure

-Social, Education and Welfare

-Local Economy and Business

-Communications and Engagement

-Housing

Other Working Groups and roles may be appointed or agreed upon as and when required.

4. Decision-Making

- Decisions of the NPSG shall be made by consensus or a majority vote.

- A quorum of 5 members is required for decisions – unless the core membership of the NPSG reduces, in which case, and with the agreement of the PC, a revised Quorum will be agreed to.

- The Chair shall have a casting vote in the event of a tie.

5. Meetings

- NPSG Meetings will be held regularly. It is acknowledged that the regularity of meetings (both NPSG meetings and WG Meetings) will be determined by relevant activities, but will be intended to comply with the desired outcome of creating a NP within the stated timeframe.

- NPSG Agendas and Minutes will be published and made available to the community in a manner determined NPSG.

- NPSG Agenda's will be issued by The Chair one week before the scheduled meeting, and Minutes will be issued of each meeting within one week of the meeting date.

- The group will report regularly to the Parish Council, with the intention that The Chair will attend PC Meetings as a Member of the Public to keep the PC updated on progress. When the Chair is not available, a PC NPSG member will deputise.

- Working Groups will meet regularly, each having a Lead role and be responsible for their agenda, administration and notes of meetings. Working Groups should meet with the intention of reporting on their activities before the scheduled meeting of the full NPSG meetings.
- The NPSG Chair and WG Chairs will determine the Standing items for respective agenda's.
- Any other Business will be a Standing Agenda item at all NPSG meetings and WG meetings as determined by The Chair/Lead.

6. Community Engagement

The NPSG and WG Lead(s) will develop strategies for informing and consulting the community and other relevant and interested groups and organisations. Public meetings, surveys, online engagement and any other agreed formats will be used to gather input. Transparency and openness will be maintained throughout the process.

7. Finance, Resources & Planning

- The NPSG and WG's may apply for grants and funding as appropriate.
- Financial decisions (where monies are requested from the PC Precept) will require approval from the Parish Council, and will comply with any delegated or agreed authority levels.
- Records of expenditure will be maintained – and be kept by the PC.
- Any Grant Funding obtained by the NPSG or WG'S will be reported to the PC who will record and monitor expenditure as deemed necessary. WG's will keep records of income and expenditure.
- The financial activities of the NPSG and WG's will be monitored and recorded by an appointed member of the NPSG.

8. Review & Amendments

These Terms of Reference can be reviewed periodically. Amendments require agreement from both the Steering Group and the Parish Council.

9. Conflict of Interest

Members of the NPSG and WG's must declare any Pecuniary Interests at the beginning of each financial year.

9. Dissolution

The Steering Group will be dissolved once the Neighbourhood Plan is completed and adopted, unless otherwise agreed.

Reviewed and Agreed by the PC:

5/3/25 (v2)