



Okehampton Town Council

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## Okehampton Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group

### Terms of Reference

#### **Purpose**

The Okehampton Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group (ONPSG) has been established by Okehampton Town Council (OTC) to develop an Okehampton Neighbourhood Plan (NP).

Okehampton Hamlets Parish Council (OHPC) gave permission on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2025 for the inclusion of the area that will be integrated into OTCs boundary following completion of a Community Governance Boundary Review in 2027.

The NP will be formulated through a process that will include engagement with the whole community, key stakeholders (eg landowners, business leaders and West Devon Borough Council (WDBC). ONPSG is accountable to OTC, the Qualifying Body able to produce a NP.

#### **Membership**

A minimum of two nominated OTC Councillors.

Membership is open to all members of the community who reside within the boundary of OTC and land within OHPC as referred to above.

Representatives from the Business community and Heritage are welcomed, together with a WDBC Ward member and the County Councillor, if available. The latter 2 will be in a non-voting capacity.

#### **The Role of the Group**

- a) Determine the overall scope and objectives of the plan, with approval of OTC
- b) Manage the process of preparing the plan
- c) Build and maintain links and good working relationships with WDBC as the Planning Authority
- d) Keep under review the legislative requirements of Neighbourhood Planning to ensure the plan meets the requirements
- e) Make recommendations to OTC on all aspects
- f) Engagement with the community and stakeholders
- g) Manage the gathering of evidence
- h) Identify and access options available in respect of each issue and prepare a draft plan for approval of OTC, and wider consultation
- i) Produce minutes, reports and documents relating to the plan
- j) Report to OTC at each of its monthly Full Council meetings

#### **Meetings and Conduct**

A member, not including the OTC Councillors, shall be appointed by the group to the position of Chairperson. No single member of the group has executive decision-making powers, including the Chairperson.

Voting will be based on a majority vote by show of hands of those present and entitled to vote. In the case of a tied vote the issue will be referred to OTC as the accountable body. The Chairperson, or any other member of the group, does not have any executive/decision making powers.

In order to be quorate, a minimum of three persons must be present. If the meeting is inquorate, business may proceed but no vote may be taken.

Meetings will be held as required and on dates and times suitable to the majority of Members.

All Members of the group shall declare any interests, defined as:

- Land ownership or land occupation with the Plan Area
- Land ownership (other than a residential dwelling) or occupation by an immediate relative
- Active negotiations to purchase development land within the Plan Area
- Business partnership or close links with a local developer
- Land ownership adjacent to or bordering a potential development site

A declaration of interest does not prevent an individual from voting, it does however reinforce the openness and transparency of the process. The Group will keep its own register of members interests which it must keep up to date and made publicly available.

Minutes of all meetings will be taken by a Member of the group and circulated to all Group Members and the OTC Town Clerk. Minutes will approved at the following meeting of the group and published.

Guidance, expertise and knowledge of Officers from WDBC, and others as may be approved by OTC, will be followed at all times during and for all aspects of the process.

All documentation received or produced by the group will be shared with OTC through the Town Clerk, and will be unconstrained by confidentiality restrictions other than obligations under Data Protection Regulations.

A NP page will be created on OTCs website where documentation and minutes will be published by OTC Staff.

### **Reporting to OTC**

The Group will report fully to Full Council in writing prior to its meetings, normally the last Monday of each month. This will be a standing item on the Full Council Agenda for the duration of the project. The report must be submitted to the Town Clerk at least 10 days prior to the date of the meeting.

OTC will confirm and agree as a minimum the work programme for the preparation of the plan, any interim proposals put forward for consultation with the public, the draft plan prior to community consultation and the final draft plan. Any plans for submission to WDBC will be made by OTC. OTC retains the right to scrutinise, comment and approve any aspects of the proposals and plans as it sees fit.

Copies of all documentation and information produced, received and held by the Group must be sent to the Town Clerk and be made available on request.

### **Resources and Finance**

Costs may arise for a number of reasons including the hiring of venues for meetings, preparation and circulation of printed materials, contracting of specialist help for aspects of the gathering of data and evidence, and production of the plan

In order to minimise costs OTCs facilities, or free to use unrestricted meeting places open to all members of the public, will be used. This excludes private residential addresses, including those of Members of the group.

OTC, being the accountable body and holder of relevant finances, will be consulted prior to all spending in accordance with its relevant policies and procedures. This includes the obtaining of quotations/tenders as may be required, and the issuing of instructions or orders relating to all financial transactions. For clarification this means that the obtaining of quotations, management of tenders, placing of instructions and orders will be undertaken by OTC staff in accordance with council policy.

Invoices, receipts and orders placed without the prior approval of OTC may not be reimbursed or paid and the group/Member that placed the order/made the transaction may be liable for its payment.

### **Conflicts and Complaints**

Where there are conflicts and complaints, OTC may resolve to step in and make decisions as necessary. If deemed necessary OTC will become the body through which all communication with other parties will be managed.

### **Data Protection**

The collection of data must be managed in accordance with relevant data protection legislation and in accordance with OTC policies and procedures.

On completion of the plan, and as may be required by OTC, all information must be handed over to OTC and removed from any other devices it may be held thereon.