

## **Terms of Reference for Thirston Neighbourhood Plan**

### **Background**

The Thirston Neighbourhood Planning Steering Group (“the Group”) has been formed by Thirston Parish Council (“the Parish Council”) to manage the process for and prepare a draft Neighbourhood Plan for the Parish of Thirston. While the Parish Council is the ‘responsible (qualifying) body’ for the preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan (“the Plan”), the Plan is a document produced and owned by the community as a whole.

### **Responsibilities**

The Steering Group is an advisory body and as such will make recommendations to the Parish Council. The group will undertake the following:

- Prepare and implement a programme for producing a draft Neighbourhood Plan;
- Work with officers from Northumberland County Council to ensure that the Plan conforms to national and local policies;
- Ensure that all members of the community have the opportunity to be involved in the process through community consultation as far as practically possible and that all relevant information is published within the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group page of the Thirston Parish Council website;
- Liaise with relevant authorities and organisations to make the plan as effective as possible;
- Obtain evidence from which policies can be formulated for inclusion in the Neighbourhood Plan;
- Prepare a draft Neighbourhood Plan which is shaped and informed by the views of the local community and is revised as necessary following public consultation

The Parish Council has approved the creation of the Steering Group. All income to the Group, whether it is from the Parish Council’s precept, Neighbourhood Plan Grants or other sources of funding, and the Group’s expenditure shall be through the Parish Council’s accounts. The management of such funds and any expenditure will be subject to the internal control systems as laid out in the Parish Council’s Financial Regulations.

### **Membership**

The Steering Group will consist of members of the Parish, together with a number of volunteer and co-opted members from the community and support from the Parish Council.

The Chair will be appointed from the Group.

Councillor Hazel Lindley will attend meetings and report back to the Parish Councillors at Thirston Parish Council Meetings.

Members of the Steering Group must be willing to work together for the benefit of their Community. They must treat other members with respect and dignity and be prepared to consider views that are different from their own.

The Steering Group intends to encourage involvement by members of the community and so membership will be flexible, allowing additional members to be involved as required.

The Steering Group may invite other individuals to join to undertake various tasks or projects forming part of the Neighbourhood Plan process.

### **Meetings**

The Steering Group will arrange its own meeting schedule.

Full Steering Group meetings will be informal in nature and will be open to members of the public if they wish to attend.

The Steering Group may invite individuals or organizations to attend meetings to give advice on any relevant topic.

Minutes of Group meetings will be recorded and published on the Thirston Parish Council website.

### **Declarations of Interest**

Steering Group members must at the start of each Group meeting declare any interest, whether pecuniary or otherwise, in any items on the agenda, and are under a continuing obligation to make a later declaration should they realise that they do have an interest in the topic under discussion. Any such declarations will be recorded in the minutes.

### **Reviewing the Terms of Reference**

The Parish Council will be responsible for agreeing the Terms of Reference and any relevant amendments to them. The Terms of Reference will be reviewed periodically to ensure that they remain fit for purpose.