

Barrowden and Wakerley Neighbourhood Plan Group

Terms of Reference

1. Background

In 2014 discussions were held between the residents of Barrowden and Wakerley, Rutland County Council, Barrowden Parish Council and Wakerley Parish Meeting in light of the Government's proposed changes to the planning system, enabling communities to produce a Neighbourhood Development Plan.

It is intended that this process will enable communities to actively influence land use and development, as part of the statutory planning process.

The Barrowden Parish Council and Wakerley Parish Meeting felt this would provide an opportunity to shape future development in the area whilst safeguarding and enhancing what is valued. Following various discussions and meetings a Neighbourhood Plan Group was established to oversee the process of preparing a NDP, within the context of the Rutland Local Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework.

2. Purpose

The Neighbourhood Plan Group's purpose is to design, implement and oversee the Neighbourhood Development Plan process in order that this will then progress to Independent Examination and a successful community referendum and ultimately be adopted by Rutland Council and become part of the statutory planning policy.

3. Principles

- That the Neighbourhood Plan Group will undertake the process in a democratic, transparent and fair fashion, allowing opinions and ideas to be put forward by all.
 - That the Neighbourhood Plan Group will give or encourage those who live in the two parishes the opportunity to inform and shape the process e.g. through taking part in the consultation process.
 - That the Neighbourhood Plan Group will make this a positive and constructive process. That ultimately it is intended to take a holistic approach that will improve quality of life and strengthen the community.
- Steering group members accept the following principles:
- a) A steering group which is open and transparent and welcomes new membership
 - b) An inclusive consultation and plan making process
 - c) Active participation by members
 - d) Robust evidence gathering
 - e) Actions based on evidence of consultation
 - f) The NDP must have regard for the National Planning Policy Framework and the strategic policies of the adopted Rutland Council Local Plan

4. Tasks and Activities

- Work with the Barrowden Parish Council and Wakerley Parish Meeting and ensure that they are fully informed throughout the process, and appropriate decisions referred to them when applicable;

- All key decisions must be mutually agreed by the Neighbourhood Plan Group, Barrowden Parish Council and Wakerley Parish Meeting – hence the need to ensure communication is effective and appropriate;
- Prepare a project plan to set out how they will create a NDP;
- The project plan should contain a timeframe to focus activity and to aid planning;
- Publicise the intention to produce a NDP, to inform and engage the community, and publicise all subsequent activities and progress;
- Meet regularly to agree actions and discuss issues that arise, in order that the process is dealt with in an efficient and timely manner;
- Gather baseline information;
- Establish and understand the needs of residents and what their long term vision or aspiration is;
- Decide upon and, if required, set up sub-groups (or theme groups) to gather statistics, information and views, subject to this being agreed and delegated by the full Neighbourhood Plan Group;
- Liaise with residents, partners and stakeholders throughout the development of the NDP;
- Consult as widely and thoroughly as is possible to ensure that the draft and final NDP is representative of the views of the residents;
- Analyse the available information to prepare the draft and final NDP;
- Produce notes/minutes from Neighbourhood Plan Group meetings and circulate to Barrowden Parish Council, Wakerley Parish Meeting and Neighbourhood Plan Group members (and others as agreed to be appropriate e.g. Rutland County Council support staff);
- Set up a mechanism to inform interested residents of progress e.g. regular updates by email/Parish Magazine/Parish Council website and encourage residents to sign up to this;
- Actively publicise the draft NDP prior to the Referendum;
- Agree financial arrangements and budget with Barrowden Parish Council and Wakerley Parish Meeting.

5. Membership of Neighbourhood Plan Group

- The Neighbourhood Plan Group should consist of no less than 8 Members;
- Barrowden Parish Council and Wakerley Parish Meeting must be represented on the Neighbourhood Plan Group;
- Members must reside in or adjoining one of the two parishes.
- A person living outside the parish but running an established local business may be invited to join, subject to there being no conflict of interest;
- The Neighbourhood Plan Group shall be quorate when at least six of the signed up members attend;
- Rutland Council officers or Councillors, as well as other agencies appointed by the Council to support the process cannot be voting members of the Neighbourhood Plan Group but are welcome to attend meetings and contribute to the discussions.

6. Roles within Neighbourhood Plan Group

The Neighbourhood Plan Group shall elect a Chair, Treasurer and Secretary. If the Chair and Vice Chair are unable to attend a meeting then a temporary Chair (selected from the Neighbourhood Plan Group members) will be elected for that meeting. The Secretary will take notes/minutes from the meeting, record main decisions and action points; and make available to the public these and any relevant information as appropriate.

7. Neighbourhood Plan Group Meeting Arrangements

- The Neighbourhood Plan Group (and sub or theme groups) shall meet regularly and as necessary;
- The public are welcome to attend and can observe the meeting and speak at the Chairpersons discretion

- Dates and times of meetings shall be posted on the Barrowden Parish Council website normally at least 7 days in advance of the meeting.
- Decisions from sub or theme groups should be relayed back to the full Neighbourhood Plan Group for ratification and/or information;
- From time to time other stakeholders or interested parties may be invited to attend a specific Neighbourhood Plan Group meeting to give a presentation and/or discuss their interest in the proposed NDP;
- A list of Neighbourhood Plan Group members and contact details shall be maintained on the Barrowden Parish Council website.
- Details of, and any changes to, the Neighbourhood Plan Group membership will be notified to the Barrowden Parish Council and Wakerley Parish Meeting.

8. Finance

- Expenditure to be agreed by majority decision by the Neighbourhood Plan Group.
 - Finance decisions will need to be recorded in the minutes and notified to the body holding the funds.
 - The Neighbourhood Plan Group will seek funds from all appropriate sources to deliver key elements of the NPD process including from DCLG, via Locality. Funds so received will be held by Barrowden Parish Council to the account of the Group.
 - Expenditure must fall within the level of funds held by the Barrowden Parish Council for the purpose of the NDP who will supply financial updates to the Parish Council.
- If expenditure is desired in excess of the funds available, this will need to be decided upon and agreed by the Barrowden Parish Council.

9. Conflicts of Interest

- All members of the Neighbourhood Plan Group must declare any pecuniary interest that may be perceived as being relevant to a decision of the Neighbourhood Plan Group. This may include membership of an organisation, ownership of land or a business, or any other matter that may be considered to be relevant. Such declarations are to be recorded and publicly available.
- Any of the matters of interest identified will not preclude a Member from participating in the development of the Neighbourhood Plan. It is simply a declaration of potentially competing interests, and to promote the objectivity of the persons involved. This also ensures transparency and honesty throughout the process.
- All members of the group recognise that, while they may represent a particular group in the community, their role is to move forward the NDP in a way that benefits the whole community.
- Having declared an interest, that member shall not take part in a discussion or vote on the related issue. In the event of disagreement, the decision of the Chair shall be binding.
- Organisations and businesses may assist in the production of the Neighbourhood Plan and may contribute to the cost of producing it. Details of any donations or assistance must be made publicly available and must not influence the recommendations of the Plan.
- Group members also accept the following principles in conducting their role (known as the Nolan Principles as recommended by the Committee of Standards in Public Life 1995)

Selflessness: Holders of public office should take decisions solely in terms of the public interest. They should not do so in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends.

Integrity: Holders of public office should not place themselves under any financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organisations that might influence them in the performance of their official duties.

Objectivity: In carrying out public business, including making public appointments, awarding contracts, or recommending individuals for rewards and benefits, holders of public office should make choices on merit.

Accountability: Holders of public office are accountable for their decisions and actions to the public and must submit themselves to whatever scrutiny is appropriate to their office.

Openness: Holders of public office should be as open as possible about all the decisions and actions that they take. They should give reasons for their decisions and restrict information only when the wider public interest clearly demands.

Honesty: Holders of public office have a duty to declare any private interests relating to their public duties and to take steps to resolve any conflicts arising in a way that protects the public interest.

Leadership: Holders of public office should promote and support these principles by leadership and example.

10. Changes to the Terms of Reference

Any amendments to the terms of reference may be made at a Neighbourhood Plan Group meeting and agreed by the majority of the Neighbourhood Plan Group members. Amendments to be notified to the Barrowden Parish Council and Wakerley Parish Meeting.

11. Dissolution of the Group

The members will agree by a majority vote at a Neighbourhood Plan Group meeting, to call a Special General Meeting for the sole purpose to dissolve the group.

Upon dissolution of the group any remaining funds shall be returned the source of the funds as appropriate, e.g. Barrowden Parish Council, Locality, etc. No individual member of the group shall benefit from the dispersal.

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Chair,
Neighbourhood Plan Group.

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Chair
Barrowden Parish Council

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Chair
Wakerley Parish Meeting