

**CUMNOR PARISH COUNCIL**  
**Cumnor Neighbourhood Plan Refresh Working Party**  
**Terms of Reference**

**Issue history.**

- Issue 1 adopted 02/12/2024 minute 379/24.

**Purpose**

The Cumnor Neighbourhood Plan Working Party brings together representatives of Cumnor Parish Council with stakeholders and members of the local community. Officers from the Vale of White Horse District Council (VWHDC) and/or Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) will be invited to assist the group as required but will not be full members. The main objective of the Working Party is to manage the refresh of the current made Cumnor Parish Neighbourhood Plan 2021-2031.

**Role**

The role of the group is to:

- agree the governance structure for the project
- prepare and agree a project plan which complies with the legislative requirements for refreshing a neighbourhood plan
- gather data from a wide range of sources to ensure that the conclusions reached are fully evidenced and that the aspirations and issues of residents and other stakeholders are understood
- regularly report back to the Parish Council

**Membership**

Membership of the Working Party will consist of parish councillors, the parish clerk, residents of the parish and representatives of local organisations and businesses.

**Individual Members' Responsibilities**

The decisions made by the Working Party will undoubtedly require compromise and consensus building; consequently members should ensure they are:

- able and willing to make decisions and recommendations on behalf of the whole of the parish and are committed to helping to guide the refresh of the neighbourhood plan
- supportive and committed to the process and its implementation
- willing to work with the group, accommodating views that are different from their own, seeking consensus and accepting compromise to reach agreement on the issues before the group
- open minded and able to consider the whole picture, not seeking simply to promote sectional interests
- able to represent the group and its work in a positive light to the wider community
- prepared to work with other groups/agencies in a constructive way to achieve the best outcomes for the area
- attend all meetings or delegate a replacement in the event that they are unavailable
- assess existing evidence about the needs and aspirations of the Parish, commission any technical evidence
- consider progress reports and work undertaken and agree appropriate course of action
- agree a programme of community engagement at appropriate stages to ensure that the information gathered is representative of those living within Cumnor Parish
- undertake analysis, interpretation and reporting of the results from community engagement activities, ensuring that they inform decision-making (either directly, or within the aid of consultants)
- work positively with the VWHDC to ensure the plan is in conformity with relevant Local Plan(s)
- work positively with the district council in auditing the project plan or the use of any grant funding from the district council

**Chair and other Offices**

The Chair will be Councillor Chris Westcott. If Councillor Chris Westcott is unable to attend a meeting the Working Party will elect a Chair at the beginning of the meeting.

Councillor Chris Westcott will be responsible for dealing with any media enquiries and for keeping the parish council up to date with progress of the Working Party's work.

### **Substitutes**

If a member of the Working Party from a specified group ie VWHDC, OCC is unable to attend a meeting they should arrange for a substitute from the organisation they are representing to attend in their place..

Where no suitable substitute is available then representations or comments will be accepted via email. This should be submitted to the group no less than 3 days prior to the date of a meeting.

### **Commitment from District Council Officers**

District Council Officers will be performing in an advisory role and should seek to ensure that all recommendations or outcomes of this process are in compliance with current policies and/or strategies and are used to inform the future development of policies, strategies or direct implementation of work.

Other responsibilities include:

- initial advice and an introductory meeting to explain the process
- advice on an appropriate consultation strategy and how consultation should be recorded
- advice on the evidence needed to prepare the plan and details of statutory consultees
- a 'critical friend' role throughout the drafting of the plan, attending Working Party meetings where necessary to provide advice and support
- reviewing draft documents to ensure they meet the basic conditions
- advice and support dealing with the media and publicising your work
- bring in resources as required from other teams across the District Council to provide additional specialist advice
- identify best practice from elsewhere

### **Meetings**

The Working Party will meet regularly and will be held either in person within the Parish or online. The dates will be posted on the Parish website and will be open to the public.

The Working Party members will receive an agenda paper for meetings at least 3 days prior to the meeting.

Any documents which are to be considered prior to a meeting should be circulated at least 3 working days prior to a meeting.

Minutes of all meetings will be recorded and kept on file for reference, draft minutes of meetings will be circulated following each meeting after clearance by the Chair.

The quorum of the meeting must be half and not less than 3 members'.

### **Decision Making**

All members of the Working Party, will have an equal vote in agreeing recommendations to make to the Parish Council.

Recommendations made by the Working Party should normally be by consensus at group meetings. If this is not possible then recommendations will be taken by vote, with each member present having one vote, and a simple majority will be required to support a recommendation.

A minimum of half (and not less than 3 members) must be present to enable recommendations to be taken.

The Chair shall have the casting vote.

All expenditure requirements shall go before the full Parish Council

The project plan will contain key gateways which will act as stop/go decision points. These decision points will be identified in the project plan and will be put forward to the full Parish Council.

Stepping down from the Working Party should be made in writing to the Chair.

### **Conflicts of interest**

Working Group members should declare an interest where there is a potential financial or pecuniary benefit to themselves, or their company / organisation arising from the recommendations of the group.

### **Finance**

1. All grants and funding will be applied for and held by the Parish Council, who will ring-fence the funds for NDP work.
2. The Working Party will request approval from the Parish Council for any expenditure.

### **Conduct**

1. It is expected that all Working Party members abide by the principles and practice of the Parish Council Code of Conduct including declarations of interest.
2. the Working Party as a whole is accountable to the wider community for ensuring that the Plan reflects their collective expectations.
  - i. The Working Party will achieve this through applying the following principles:
  - ii. Be clear and open when their individual roles or interests are in conflict;
  - iii. Treat everyone with dignity, courtesy and respect regardless of their age, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, or religion and belief; and
  - iv. Actively promote equality of access and opportunity

### **Changes to the Terms of Reference**

This constitution may be amended with the support of at least two-thirds of the current membership at a Working Party meeting and with the approval of the Parish Council.

### **Dissolution**

The Working Party will be dissolved once its objectives have been attained and/or when half of its members and the Parish Council consider its services are no longer required. Cumnor Parish Council will then dispose of any remaining funds held in accordance with any conditions imposed by the grant funders and in the best interests of Cumnor Parish.