

## **BEARLEY LOCAL PLAN GROUP TERMS OF REFERENCE**

### **1. Introduction**

In 2021 Stratford-on-Avon and Warwick District Councils commenced work to produce a new South Warwickshire Local Plan (SWLP) to cover their combined geographic area.

In order to progress any required responses to the plan which take into account the views of local residents, Bearley Parish Council took the decision on 2<sup>nd</sup> Dec 2024 to set up a committee to focus on the SWLP, reporting to the Parish Council, and made up of at least two Parish Councillors and a number of local residents. The Bearley Local Plan Group (the Group) was formed as an advisory group to the Parish Council, with final decisions on any responses or recommendations being made by the Parish Council.

The Group will work to the following Terms of Reference (ToR). The ToR shall be published on the Bearley Village website. Any changes to the ToR shall be drafted by the Group for approval by the Parish Council prior to implementation.

### **2. Roles and responsibilities – Bearley Local Plan Group**

Key tasks of the Group are to:

- a) Monitor the progress of the SWLP, drafting representations as appropriate/necessary for approval and submission by the Parish Council.
- b) Engage the local community to gather views on the SWLP. Consider for example public meetings, leaflet drops, questionnaires.
- c) Publish meeting minutes on the Bearley Village website.
- d) Identify and liaise with relevant organisations and stakeholders, including neighbouring communities.
- e) Identify specific skills and knowledge within the community that may assist with the Group's work.
- f) Identify any professional expertise outside the community that might be needed, e.g. planning consultancy, legal representation. Recommend engagement of such expertise to the Parish Council.
- g) Consider the formation of working groups to work on specific tasks, the results of which to be fed back to the Group (see Section 7).
- h) Draft representations to any planning applications within the Parish that may have implications for the SWLP for approval and submission by the Parish Council.
- i) Regularly report to the Parish Council on progress, informing of any potential changes in programme or budget requirements.

### **3. Roles and responsibilities – Parish Council**

The Parish Council will:

- a) Ensure links between the Parish Council and the Group are maintained through a standing SWLP item on the Parish Council agenda whereby the Group can report on progress and receive on-going endorsement via a Parish Council minute.
- b) Minute all Parish Council decisions in relation to the Group and SWLP and make these publicly accessible in a timely manner through the Bearley Village website.
- c) Hold budget responsibility (see 6 below).
- d) Support the Group throughout the process providing sufficient assistance and financial resources to ensure the plan is prepared in accordance with the project programme and that overall expenditure falls within the budget set by the Parish Council. This includes, but is not limited to:

- ☑ Facilitating an open and transparent process by advertising/publishing all the Group meetings, agendas and minutes on the Bearley village website.
- ☑ Supporting the Group efforts to engage and consult with the local community throughout the process.
- ☑ Appointing any relevant external expertise to assist the process identified as necessary by the Group and approved by the Parish Council.
- f) Ensure appropriate insurance is in place for all the Group activities.

#### **4. Membership of the Group**

- a) The Group will be formed primarily from local residents. Two Parish Councillors will be members of the group. Membership may also be open to other interested parties, such as local businesses based within the Parish.
- b) Members of the Group will declare any personal interest that may be perceived as being relevant to any decisions or recommendations made by the Group, such as ownership of potential development land. Any member deemed to have a conflict of interest shall not be eligible to vote in any decisions taken by the Group and shall not hold position of Chair.

#### **5. Chair / Secretary**

- a) At the first meeting the Group shall elect a Chair. The Chair shall:
  - ☑ Run the Group meetings, including preparation of a draft agenda. If the Chair is not present at a meeting the Group shall elect a temporary Chair from amongst members present.
  - ☑ Act as the link between the Group and Parish Council.
- b) At the first meeting the Group shall elect a Secretary. The Secretary shall:
  - ☑ Co-ordinate the work of the Group.
  - ☑ Take minutes of all meetings, noting, amongst other things, decisions taken and actions with responsible persons and indicative timescales. If the Secretary is not present at a meeting the Group shall elect a temporary Secretary from amongst members present.
  - ☑ Circulate minutes in a timely manner to all the Group members and, following agreement of the Group members present at the meeting, the Parish Council for publication in accordance with 3(d) above.

#### **5. Frequency, Timing and Procedure of Meetings**

- a) the Group will as a minimum meet every two months.
- b) Meetings shall normally be held at 7.00pm at an appropriate venue such as the Village Hall.
- c) All the Group meetings shall be open and may be attended by local residents and other interested parties to observe or, by invitation only, participate in the proceedings.
- d) The Group members shall be informed of meetings and the draft agenda at least 7 days prior to the meeting by email, unless an alternative communication method is agreed with individual members.
- e) Public notice of meetings, together with a draft agenda, shall be made 3 days prior to the meeting through the Bearley Village website and noticeboards.
- f) A rolling schedule of meetings will be set in place following preparation of a project programme and made publicly available via the Bearley Village website and noticeboards.
- g) The Group will be deemed to be quorate if (i) a minimum of 5 members that are eligible to vote are present; and (ii) of those eligible to vote at least half are local residents. If inquorate, meetings may proceed but any decisions will require future ratification by the Group when a quorum can gather.

- h) Any decisions taken by the the Group will be carried forward if more than 50% of members voting are in favour. The Chair will have the casting vote in instances where there is no majority.
- i) All decisions will be advisory only and require endorsement of the Parish Council.

## **6. Finance**

- a) The budget will be set by the Parish Council.
- b) All grants and funding will be applied for and held by the Parish Council who will ring fence the funds for Local Plan purposes only.
- c) Accounts related to the Local Plan shall be open to the Group and wider public.
- d) The Group shall report planned expenditure to the Parish Council and the Parish Council shall regularly review and update the budget.
- e) Costs should normally be incurred directly by the Parish Council, for example, hire of the village hall or appointment of external expertise.
- f) If expenditure is to be incurred by any Group member and claimed back from the Parish Council, for example for postage, this shall be agreed in advance and supported by receipts.

## **7. Working Groups**

- a) The Group may form Working Groups to undertake various aspects of the work undertaken by the Group
- b) Each Working Group shall work to the ToR drafted by the Group and approved by the Parish Council.
- c) Each Working Group shall have a lead person to organise the work of the Working Group and regularly report to the Group including through a standing item on the Group agenda.
- d) Membership and purpose of each Working Group will be regularly reviewed by the Group.

## **8. Dissolving the Bearley Local Plan Group**

- a) If the Group wishes to dissolve before the conclusion of the Local Plan project it must notify the Parish Council in writing.
- b) At the conclusion of the Local Plan project the Parish Council and the Group shall discuss the future working, if any, of the Group