

TERMS OF REFERENCE

1 Introduction

Pirton Parish Council produced a Village Design Statement that describes the qualities and characteristics people valued in the village and surroundings. Village Design Statements were incorporated into Planning Policy Guidance and as such Pirton's has played a part in planning decisions in the village since its adoption into Supplementary Planning Guidance by North Hertfordshire District Council in April 2003.

The Parish Plan is a more holistic appraisal of the needs of those who work and live in the village beyond planning policies. Any future Village Design Statements, or equivalents, would be produced as part of the ongoing work associated with developing a Parish Plan.

The Parish Plan will be an important local document that influences the work planned and carried out by other public sector agencies such as; North Herts District Council, Hertfordshire County Council, Police, Health, Education et al. This reinforces the fundamental need to enable everyone to contribute.

The aim of a Parish Plan is to set out a vision for the community. It can help to prioritise resources and provide important information to help influence the policies, decisions and actions of organisations such as the Parish Council, District and County Councils, police and health authorities, etc. It is a process by which the whole community can voice their opinions on what actions they wish to see taken in the future. Evidence from the Plan may also be valuable when applying for grants and funding to benefit the community. Ideally everyone who lives or works in the village will be involved in producing a Parish Plan because it is important that the work underpinning it is inclusive.

The work to produce a plan is an opportunity for the community to, influence a range of agendas across local government, make improvements locally and build a better community, not just for the present, but for decades to come.

One purpose of the Plan is to support the wider strategic aims espoused by local and national government, for example community cohesion, democratic engagement etc.

The Parish Plan cannot be a static document and will require review to ensure it remains relevant to those who live and work in Pirton.

The Parish Council will oversee the work of the Steering Group.

2 Mission/Purpose

The Steering Group will seek to engage with all those living and working in Pirton to develop a medium and long-term vision for the future of Pirton. It is intended that everyone living and working in the village will be able to participate in the development of the Plan. With the involvement of the community the Steering Group will identify the priorities affecting people's lives and will develop a plan to tackle them and influence the agendas of North Herts District Council, Hertfordshire County Council and other partners, for example, police, NHS, et al.

3 Aims / Objectives

In developing the Parish Plan the Steering Group will integrate their work with that of other agencies as appropriate and seek to improve people's experiences of living and working in the village.

As a result of developing the Parish Plan people should feel that they have been heard and enabled to influence decisions being made about village life. They should have a better knowledge of the village community and clearer understanding of the issues affecting us all.

The work to establish a Parish Plan will build towards gaining Quality Parish Council status.

4 Membership

Membership of the Steering Group is voluntary and has developed through advertised initiatives asking village residents to volunteer their services. Membership is open only to people who live or work in the parish of Pirton. The Steering Group may involve others as appropriate to support their work. Those involved in this way will have no decision-making powers in relation to the work of the Steering Group.

The membership may be fluid but cannot be allowed to become unwieldy and is to be capped at a maximum of twelve. Members wishing to leave/resign should notify the Chair in writing. The Steering Group may establish sub/working groups as appropriate to fulfil its remit. The current membership is listed at appendix 'A'.

The Steering Group will need to ensure several areas are addressed, for example:

- Data protection – to ensure that information recorded and retained is done so legally. The Parish Council arrangements will cover the work of the Steering Group
- Communication – to ensure the community is kept informed and involved
- Performance Management – how the work and progress are to monitored
- Risk management – to ensure that pitfalls are foreseen
- Equalities, Diversity and Human Rights
- Knowledge management – to ensure information is retained and transferred appropriately as work progresses and people move on etc

Members must declare any interest that conflicts with the work of the Steering Group or Parish Council business and withdraw from any decision-making forum involving such interest.

Members may be disqualified if their behaviour is such that it has become detrimental to the achievement of the aims and objectives of the Steering Group.

4.1 Liability

The Steering Group is a bona fide sub-group of the Parish Council and as such is covered by the Parish Council arrangements.

5 Outcomes / Outputs

The Steering Group will deliver a Parish Plan which is:

- a) Sustainable.
- b) Should help Pirton to feel its views have been heard.
- c) Should help Pirton to feel able to influence local decision-making.
- d) Should provide Pirton with a greater understanding of the issues of the village.

6 Delivery

The Steering Group will deliver a Parish Plan to the Parish Council who will assume responsibility for delivery with regular updates to citizens.

The Parish Plan will require assessment of its success and will have a performance framework associated with it to aid monitoring of delivery.

The Parish Plan will require review annually and refreshment as appropriate to ensure it continues to be current and relevant to those who live and work in Pirton.

7 Key Links and Drivers

There are links to many legislative, policy and strategy drivers and other fora that set the context and influence the agenda for the work of the Steering Group, for example see Appendix 'B' (not exhaustive/definitive).

8 Governance

8.1 Frequency of meetings

Meetings will be held at intervals of no less than two months at an appropriate venue.

8.2 Administration

Administrative support will be supplied by mutual agreement between members of the Steering Group.

Notes of meetings will be recorded and disseminated as required with a copy placed with the Parish Council and on the Parish Council website and other means as appropriate.

8.3 Roles

Chairperson – rolling Chair rotating every three months or longer by agreement of the Steering Group.

Treasurer – the Steering Group will work via the Parish Council arrangements.

Secretary – the Steering Group will appoint a member to act as secretary.

8.4 Quorum

The Chairperson, or nominated deputy, plus three other members, i.e. four in total.

8.5 Reporting

The Steering Group will report regularly, not less than quarterly, to the Parish Council, public and partner agencies on progress against the purpose, outcomes and tasks.

8.6 Finance

Financial transactions will be completed via the Parish Council.

8.7 Communication

The Steering Group will ensure that its work and plans are promptly and accurately reported publicly taking into account all issues about accessibility to information.

8.8 Budget / Resources

As the work develops funding opportunities will be sought.

Appendix 'A'

Current Membership

Hugh McConnellogue

Rita Norgate

Penny Pickens

Diane Bailey

Pam Waters

Steve Goodman

Sheila Millar

Rodney Marshall

Huw Evans

Sue Evans

Steve Smith (resigned 4 June 2009)

Appendix 'B' – Links to legislation, policy, strategy etc and other fora

Legislation:

- Human Rights Act 1998.
- Race Relations (Amendment Act) 2000.
- Local Government Act 1999 - Best Value.
- Local Government Act 2000.
- Data Protection Act 1998.
- Disability Discrimination Acts 1995 and 2005.
- The Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006.
- Equality Act 2006.
- Employment Rights Act 1996 (as amended by the Employment Act 2002).
- Sex Discrimination Act 1975.
- Working Time Regulations 1998.
- The Equal Pay Act 1970.
- European Union law.
- Sex Discrimination Act 1975.
- The Sex Discrimination (Gender Reassignment) Regulations 1999.
- Part-Time Workers Regulations.
- The Equal Opportunities Commission's Code of Practice on sexual harassment.
- The European Commission's Code of Practice on the Protection of the Dignity of Women and Men at Work.
- Civil Partnership Act 2004.
- Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007.
- Local Area Agreement (LAA).
- Public Service Agreements (PSA).
- Natural Environment & Rural Communities Act 2006 (NECRA).

Strategy and policy:

- 'Hertfordshire 2021' - Sustainable Communities Strategy.
- Quality Parish & Town Council Scheme.
- Hertfordshire Association of Parish & Town Councils.
- NHDC Plans.
- Community Development Foundation (CDF) guidance.
- Department for Rural Affairs (DEFRA) guidance.
- The Countryside Agency – guidance.
- Risk Management.
- Community Engagement Strategy.
- Equalities Impact Assessments.

Links to other Fora:

- Parish Council and relevant sub/working groups
- North Hertfordshire District Council
- Hertfordshire County Council
- Local Strategic Partnership
- Crime and disorder Reduction Partnership
- Health
- Education
- Children & Young People agenda
- Children's Services
- Adult Services
- Social Care
- Planning
- Police
- Regeneration / Economic Development
- Voluntary & Community Sector (VCS) / Third Sector