

Dawlish Neighbourhood Plan – Delivery Structure

The Town Council Role

The Town Council is a 'qualifying body' under the Localism legislation and the only body that can prepare a neighbourhood plan for any or all of its 'parish area'. The Town Council has decided it will be best served by establishing a local neighbourhood planning team - a Steering Group to co-ordinate the work of preparing a draft plan; supported by a set of volunteers that have the time, enthusiasm and dedication to undertake the many tasks that are required as part of the neighbourhood planning process.

The Town Council has agreed:

- *to delegate responsibility for preparing the neighbourhood plan to a wider group, but retain responsibility for taking the key decisions and managing the finances associated with the plan's preparation*
- *a timetable and delivery structure for the neighbourhood plan (a Project Plan)*

Plan Management and Delivery

The overall 'project' must remain under the umbrella of the Town Council and the important decisions must be taken by the Town Council. It is important therefore to establish just what the relationship is between the neighbourhood planning team and the main body of the Town Council. This has been done by an approved set of **Terms of Reference**. This defines and describes the composition and purpose of the Dawlish Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group.

Although the Steering Group has representation from town councillors, it was important that wider representation was sought from the community, as the goal of the 'project' is to create a neighbourhood plan that reflects the vision and aspirations of the entire community.

Now the Steering Group is in place, it is important to spread the load and share responsibilities. To function properly the Group needs firm leadership, a **Chair** and **Vice-Chair**, and requires someone to undertake **secretarial duties** and **administration**. The process to be undertaken is set out in an approved **Project Plan**, which will require **monitoring**. So as to make good progress, the Steering Group is advised to allocate the leadership of the various key tasks or topics to members of the Steering Group. A **skills audit** may help this process and also identify possible training needs.

The Role of Working Groups

There are many people in your community that do not want to sit in a formal management/steering meeting but would still be willing to lend a hand in preparing a neighbourhood plan for their area. The working-group model of plan delivery has proven successful in several places. As required a **task group** or a **topic group** could be established by the Steering Group and led by a member of the Steering Group. Other members of these 'working' groups could be recruited from a pool of volunteers with the requisite interest, skills or experience to help with the task. Examples of task groups are: **survey** team, **research** team and **publicity** team. Examples of topic groups are **land supply**, **housing need** and **community facilities**. Allocating leadership and other duties needs to be thought through carefully so as not to over-burden people; at the same time, do not set up working groups for the sake of it, but ensure that they are set up to focus on specific tasks and only if required. The Project Plan identifies what tasks are required and when. The need for topic or focus groups will become apparent as the work and 'debate' progresses.

(For information the Cullompton NP Steering Group has helped establish the following 'focus groups' which meet regularly to debate issues and provide both an advisory and scrutinising function: Arts and Culture Focus Group, Heritage and Conservation (Town Team), Environment Focus Group and the, newly established, Sport and Recreation Focus Group.)

Proposed Delivery Structure

