

# **Audley Rural Parish Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group**

## **Terms of Reference– approved by ARPC 18 March 2021 and Steering Group 10 May 2021**

### **1. Purpose**

- a. The main purpose of the Audley Rural Parish Steering Group is to oversee the preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan for Audley Rural Parish in order that these will then progress to Independent Examination and a successful community referendum and ultimately be adopted by Newcastle Under Lyme Borough Council to become planning policy.
- b. The Steering Group will engage the local community to ensure that the Plan is truly representative of the ambitions of Audley Rural Parish. The Group will maximise support for the approach taken in the Neighbourhood Plan by ensuring high levels of community engagement throughout the plan-making process.

### **2. Principles**

- a. That the Steering Group will undertake the process in a democratic, transparent and fair fashion, encouraging widespread participation and giving equal consideration to opinions and ideas from all members of the community
- b. All decisions made shall be fully evidenced and supported through consultation with the local community.

### **3. Roles and Responsibilities**

In order to achieve this, the Steering Group will carry out the following roles :

- Be accountable for steering and providing strategic management of the Neighbourhood Plan for Audley Rural Parish
- Produce, monitor and update a project timetable
- Produce a consultation and engagement strategy, showing how the public will be involved throughout the process
- Regularly report back to the Parish Council for endorsement of decisions taken
- To undertake analysis and evidence gathering to support the plan production process
- Actively support and promote the preparation of the Audley Rural Parish Neighbourhood Plan throughout the duration of the project
- Identify sources of funding
- Liaise with relevant authorities and organisations to make the plan as effective as possible
- Gather data from a wide range of sources to ensure that the conclusions reached are fully evidenced and that the aspirations and issues of all residents are understood

- Consult as widely and thoroughly as is possible to ensure that the draft and final NDP is representative of the views of residents
- Agree, subject to ratification by the Parish Council, a final submission version of the Audley Rural Parish Neighbourhood Plan

#### **4. Membership**

- a. The Steering Group will be made up of a cross-section of volunteers from the community who live and work in the area, including representation from parish businesses and community organisations including schools and churches – see Appendix A.
- b. Effort will be made to seek representation from under-represented sections of the community.
- c. Membership of the Steering Group will be open to the public indefinitely, up to a maximum of 15 members. Once the number is reached the membership will be closed to any further applications.
- d. Membership is open to elected members for the area from the Parish, District and County Council including no more than 3 Parish Councillors (one per Parish ward).
- e. Applications (in writing or electronically) must be made to be present on the Steering Group.
- f. Membership will begin as soon as the application has been received, unless there are more applications than positions available at the time.
- g. If the number of applications exceeds the number of positions available, a secret ballot will take place at the next available Steering Group meeting to determine the membership. Individuals who wish to appeal against a refusal of membership shall have the right to be heard by the Steering Group, accompanied by another, before a final decision is made by the Steering Group. The Steering Group's decision will be binding.
- h. A list of members will be kept by the Membership Secretary.
- i. Ceasing to be a Member:
  - Members may resign at any time in writing to the Secretary and will no longer be eligible upon moving from or ceasing to work in the area.
  - Offensive behaviour, including racist, sexist or inflammatory remarks, will not be permitted. Anyone behaving in an offensive way or breaking the equal opportunities policy may be asked not to attend further meetings or to resign from the group if an apology is not given or the behaviour is repeated. The individual concerned shall have the right to be heard by the Steering Group, accompanied by a friend, before a final decision is made.

#### **5. Decision Making**

- a. The Steering Group has full delegated authority from the Parish Council to deliver its plan making functions up to and including publication of the Consultation Draft Plan. The Group will report monthly to the Parish Council setting out progress on its work. The Parish Council will approve the Submission Draft Neighbourhood Plan prior to publication for consultation and independent examination.
- b. The plan-making process remains the responsibility of the Parish Council as the qualifying body. All publications, consultation and community engagement exercises will be undertaken by or on behalf of the Parish Council with appropriate

recognition of the Parish Council's position given in all communications associated with the project.

## **6. Meetings**

- a. Steering Group meetings will take place as frequently as required and can be held remotely or physically within the Parish.
- b. The dates of future meetings will be made publicly available via the Parish Council website.
- c. The Steering Group will elect a Chair, Vice Chair, Treasurer and Secretary from its membership to remain in those positions until the project is completed. If these positions should become vacant, the Group will elect an alternate.
  - a. The Chair will preside over the meetings of the Steering Group.
  - b. The Vice-Chair will deputise for the Chair.
  - c. The Secretary shall take and circulate the draft minutes for approval at the next Steering Group. The Secretary will circulate all papers to Steering Group members and the Parish Council in a timely fashion. Minutes shall be made publicly available on the Parish Council website. The secretary shall be responsible for keeping records of members in accordance with Data Protection Act 2018.
  - d. Treasurer who shall be responsible for maintaining accounts and advising the Steering Group on its financial status.
- d. At least 3 clear days' notice of meetings shall be sent to members via email or an alternative agreed communication method.
- e. Decisions made by the Steering Group should normally be by consensus at Steering Group meetings. Where a vote is required each member shall have one vote. A minimum of at least one third and not less than 3 members shall be present where matters are presented for decisions to be taken. A simple majority vote will be required to support any motion. The Chairman shall have one casting vote.

## **7. Working/Focus Groups**

- a. The Steering Group may establish working/focus groups, made up of volunteers from the community to aid them in any Neighbourhood Plan related work.
- b. Each working group should have a lead person from the Steering Group.
- c. Members of the community will be encouraged to participate in the process at all stages.

## **8. Finance**

- a. All grants and funding will be applied for and held by the Parish Council, who will ring-fence the funds for Neighbourhood Plan work.
- b. Invoices must be addressed to Audley Rural Parish Council for payment and be presented to the Parish Clerk at least 10 days in advance of the next available Parish Council meeting.
- c. The Steering Group will notify the Parish Council, advising them of any planned expenditure before it is incurred.

- d. Steering Group members and volunteers from any working groups may claim back any previously agreed expenditure incurred during any Audley Rural Parish Neighbourhood Plan related work.

## **9. Conduct**

- a. It is expected that all Steering Group members abide by the principles and practice of the Parish Council Code of Conduct including declarations of interest.
- b. Whilst Members as individuals will be accountable to their parent organisations, the Steering Group as a whole is accountable to the wider community for ensuring that the Plan reflects their collective expectations.
- c. The Steering Group is independent and is not affiliated to any political or religious organisations.
- d. The Steering Group will achieve this through applying the following principles:
  - i. Be clear and open when their individual roles or interests are in conflict;
  - ii. Treat everyone with dignity, courtesy and respect regardless of their age, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, or religion and belief; and
  - iii. Actively promote equality of access and opportunity.

## **10. Equal opportunities**

- a. The Steering Group will not discriminate on grounds of gender, race, colour, ethnic or national origin, sexuality, disability, religious or political belief, marital status or age.

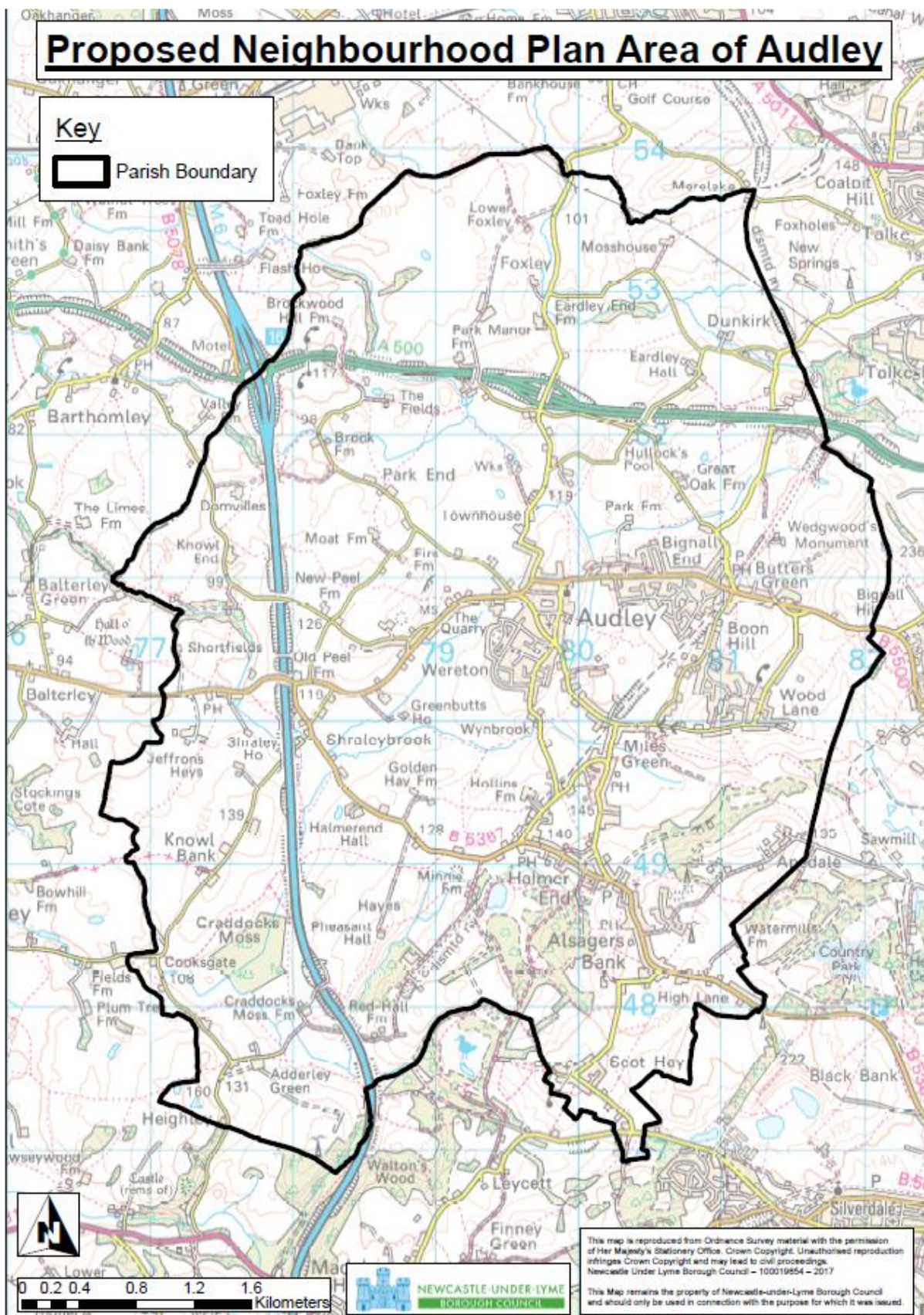
## **11. Changes to the Terms of Reference**

- a. This constitution may be amended with the support of at least (two-thirds) of the current membership at a Steering Group Meeting and with the approval of the Audley Rural Parish Council.

## **12. Dissolution**

- a. The Steering Group will be dissolved once its objectives have been attained and/or when at least (two-thirds) of its members and the parish council, consider its services are no longer required.
- b. The Steering Group will then dispose of any remaining funds held in accordance with any conditions imposed by the grant funders and in the best interests of Audley Rural Parish.

# Appendix A – Neighbourhood Plan Area





## Appendix B

### Audley Rural Parish Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group Membership Application Form

Your Name including title:		
Postal Address (Home, Employment or Community Group):		
Email Address:		
Telephone Number:		
Preferred method of contact:		
Member type – please tick ONE category: a. Individual who lives in the area b. Individual who works in the area c. Local Business representative d. Community Organisation representative e. Elected member of Parish, Borough Council or County Council		
If you feel you have relevant skills, knowledge, and attributes that you can bring to the Steering Group in relation to the production of the Neighbourhood Plan, please list them here:		
<b>Additional details which will help us ensure that the Steering Group represents all people in the Neighbourhood</b>		
<b>Gender (delete as appropriate):</b>		
Male	Female	Prefer not to say
Age Group (please tick):		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Under 18</li><li>• 18-24</li><li>• 25-34</li><li>• 35-44</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 45-54</li><li>• 55-64</li><li>• 65 and over</li><li>• Prefer not to say</li></ul>	

<b>Ethnic Origin – I would describe myself as (please tick):</b>
White or White British
Asian or Asian British: Indian
Asian or Asian British: Pakistani
Asian or Asian British: Bangladeshi
Asian or Asian British: Chinese
Asian or Asian British: Other Asian
Black or Black British
Gypsy/Traveller/Irish Traveller
Other Ethnic Group
Prefer not to say

**I agree to the privacy policy (below).**

The information you provide will only be used in relation to the Audley Rural Parish Neighbourhood Plan for the purposes of notifying you about Steering Group meetings and its' activities. It will be stored securely and deleted once the Plan is made. Data will be aggregated and anonymised for research and evidence purposes. The information you provide will only be used by the Steering Group and its' appointed Consultants. It will not be shared with third parties or used for marketing purposes in accordance with Data Protection Act 2018.

By signing you agree to your name being included in the membership of the Steering Group along with associated documents including minutes of the Steering Group and the (draft and made) Neighbourhood Plan which may be posted on publicly available sources such as local newsletters, local websites, local social media pages and parish noticeboards.

Signed :	
Name (in print)	
Date:	