

Creating A vision for Droitwich Spa:

Droitwich Spa *Neighbourhood Plan*



..... Promoting Heritage, Health & Wellbeing

***** Approved constitution *****

Version 1 - January 2020

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Introduction

1. Aim of the Neighbourhood Plan

The Plan will seek to create a vision for all aspects of future development in Droitwich, and will reflect the views of the community as a whole. The creation of this Plan will be via an open process and backed by a robust evidence base.

The success of the development of the Plan will be reliant on community consultation and the voluntary work of the members of the Droitwich Neighbourhood Plan Group (comprising members of a Management Group and Management Group and topic-based Working Groups). The completed Plan will be subject to a public referendum and will not be made (i.e. adopted) until this process has been completed.

2. Scope

The Plan will:

- Create a vision for all aspects of future development in Droitwich, reflecting the views of the community.
- Support (and influence) the South Worcestershire Development Plan (SWDP) and provide policies on
 - How land within the Town boundaries should be used
 - where new homes and offices should be built,
 - what they should look like;
 - how green spaces must be protected or enhanced and
 - how new infrastructure is handled
- Additionally, the plan may include statements reflecting additional planning considerations that are not included in statutory Neighbourhood Planning but have been highlighted as key issues by residents of the town through consultation.

Thus, the plan will have two parts

- The components that have statutory weight, relevant to planning decisions and
- Components that are advisory but of keen interest to its stakeholders

The Plan should address an initial period of existence (equating to the current SWDP and proposals from the present SWDP review) and elements that can be forecast for the future. It will be maintained so that it is always current.

It will also ensure that adherence can be monitored effectively.

This Plan will be for the 'Neighbourhood Area' of Droitwich, as set out in the red line boundary plan, approved by Wychavon District Council on 11 January 2017.¹

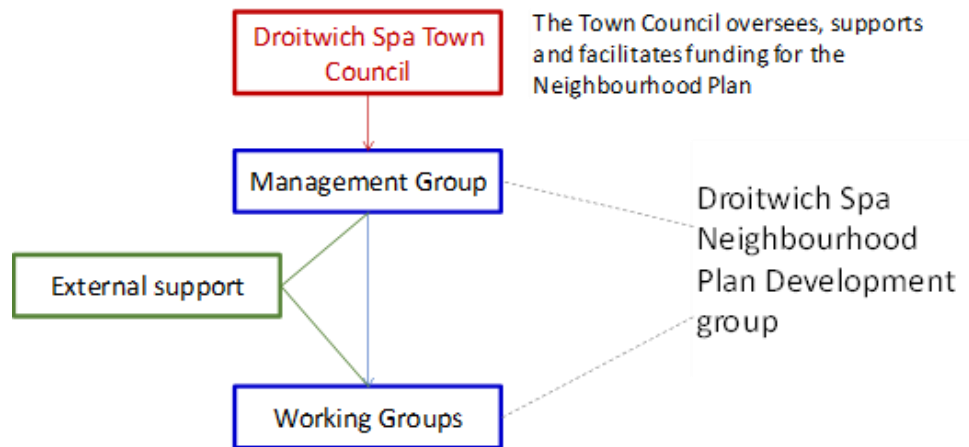
¹ The map of showing the town boundary can be found here:

<https://www.wychavon.gov.uk/documents/10586/0/Appendix+2+Droitwich+Spa+Neighbourhood+Area+Application+Map.pdf/ce1ae06c-551f-187a-49db-8bc78ea1d163>

Organisation of the Neighbourhood Planning Group

3. Structure

The Management Group has established an organisational structure to support the development of this Plan. This will consist of a Management Group and topic-based Working Groups and any other support organisation as required.



4. Composition

The Droitwich Spa Neighbourhood Plan Development Group will be formed by local volunteers who occupy, as an owner or tenant, land or premises in the Parish; live or work (as principal employment) in the Parish (referred to as Members in the remainder of this document).

5. Additional groups

Additional roles and Working Groups to support the work of the Droitwich Spa Neighbourhood Plan Group may be created by the Management Group. Examples may include an appointed 'Press Officer', 'teams or individuals to co-ordinate aspects of community engagement', survey development team, and tasks associated with web site development and communications.

The Management Group can create such roles and allocate them to an appropriate individual. All participants will be notified of the intention to create such a role and given the opportunity to put themselves forward for consideration.

6. Terms of reference

The Management Group will review these Terms of Reference throughout the project and may be amended as required. It may also make substantial amendments to the Project Plan and budget as required. Typically, Changes will apply to future stages of the project and be approved by DSTC at the end of the current stage. All Groups may review their membership from time to time.

7. Qualification of participants

Members of the Droitwich Spa Neighbourhood Plan Group should occupy, as an owner or tenant, land or premises in the Town; live or work (as principal employment) in the Town. If a proposed Member does not fit any one of these criteria, it would be advisable to ensure that they had appropriate interests in the Town such that they could add objectively to the process.

In the case of doubt or concern, the proposed Member is asked to contact the Chairperson. If the Management Group considers that the proposed Member is expected to add objectively to the process, then the proposed Member shall be permitted to join the Droitwich Spa Neighbourhood Plan Group.

The Management Group may also engage the input of people outwith these parameters where they have specific relevant skills and / or experience. Such input could include activities such as provision of local and national statistics, review of project accounts, consultation on planning regulations.

8. Conflict of interest

At the start of any meeting or as soon as possible thereafter, formal or otherwise, any member of the Management Group or Working Group meeting must declare any actual or potential conflict of interest that may be perceived as being relevant to any decisions or recommendations made at that meeting. This may include membership of an organisation, ownership of an interest in land which may directly or indirectly form part of the subject matter of the plan, one's employment status and any other matter likely to be relevant to the work undertaken by the Droitwich Neighbourhood Plan Group.

In the event that a matter of 'interest' should arise during the course of developing the Plan then the Member should bring it to the attention of the Management Group, in writing as soon as is reasonably practical.

Any of the matters of interest identified will not necessarily preclude a Member from participating in the development of the Neighbourhood Plan. It is simply a declaration of potentially competing interests, and to promote the objectivity of the persons involved. This also ensures transparency and honesty throughout the process.

9. Conduct

All Members of the Droitwich Spa Neighbourhood Plan Group shall treat other Members of the Group, and the community as a whole, with both respect and dignity, allowing Members to express their views without prejudice and interruption.

Behaviour that is causing a disruption to any meeting will result in the Group meeting being given the option to vote to remove the individual Member. This will be by simple majority vote by the Members of the Group present at that time. Such action will be reported to the Chairperson and Town Council.

Relationship with Droitwich Spa Town Council

10. **Role of the Town Council**
- In respect of the Droitwich Neighbourhood Plan, Droitwich Spa Town Council, as the responsible body under the Localism Act, has agreed² that it will:
- Support the preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan and ensure that complies with the Town Council's Financial Regulations as appropriate, subject to securing an agreed level of grant funding.
 - Support the Management Group³ to ensure that the Plan conforms to national and local policy, and is sound and robust enough to withstand independent examination. Outside professional expertise and aid may be sought to ensure that this objective is met.
 - Facilitate, if required, contact with the relevant statutory bodies or parties who must be consulted during the plan making process.
 - Carry out all statutory duties contained within the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulation 2012⁴ and engage with Wychavon District Council during the referendum process of the plan for which the principle authority is responsible.
 - Following the preparation of the draft plan submit the plan to the Local Planning Authority for inspection and independent examination.
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11. **Additional support from Town Council**
- The Town Council will also assist as follows:
- Provide the opportunity to publish minutes and information relating to the Neighbourhood Plan on the Town Council's website.
 - Storage of notes and minutes from Management Group in hard copy and electronic form so that they can be accessed by the public and form a full record.
 - Town Council web site to be used for the Neighbourhood Plan. Neighbourhood Plan Web site pages
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Management Group

12. **Purpose**
- The Management group will manage and plan the main activity for creating the Neighbourhood Plan using working groups who focus on agreed areas of activity. Working groups will report back to the steering group.
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13. **Responsibility**
- The Management Group will meet to set the strategic direction for Droitwich Spa Neighbourhood Plan Group, agree communications and progress reports to DSTC. The Management Group meetings will be the only forum in which substantive decisions are made regarding the development of the Droitwich Neighbourhood Plan for review and consideration by the Town Council.
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² Whilst a Neighbourhood Plan project was initiated with DSTC support, DSTC suspended work on it in September 2018 and this constitution is prepared on the assumption that a restart will be approved for the project to proceed.

³ This support comes in two ways – participation in the Management Group and the working groups creating the plan and, through council meetings, the review of progress reports and decisions on continuing the work (typically at the end of each phase of the project, agreeing the start of the next phase.

⁴ These requirements are largely concerned with communication; in practice DSTC will be involved in approving and facilitating the publication of communications prepared by the Neighbourhood Planning Group.;

14. Officers

The Management Group will elect a Chairperson, a Vice Chairperson, a nominated person from each Working Group, Secretary, Financial Officer, and such other person as agreed by the Management Group.

The role of the Chairperson of the Management Group is:

- To take forward the development of the Plan.
- To co-ordinate and conduct meetings of the Management Group.
- To maintain relationships with other sources, for example Wychavon District Council and keep Working Group leads updated.
- To ensure that the agreed timetable for the development of the Plan is maintained or revised as necessary.
- To develop community engagement, including web sites, surveys and public contact events in line with the overall objectives of the Plan. In practice, much of this may be delegated to Working Groups, so long as key decisions and communications are authorised through the Management Group.

To, along with the Vice Chairperson, act as a central point for the co-ordination and development of the Plan.

15. Operation

Management Group meetings shall be chaired by the Management Group Chairperson. If the Chairperson is not present, the Vice Chairperson shall chair the meeting. If neither is present, voting members shall elect a Chairperson for that meeting from amongst their number.

A public notice providing the date, time and location of each meeting will be displayed on the Droitwich Town Council Web-site and the Town Council notice board at least 7 days before the date of the meeting. An agenda will also be provided.

Minutes of the Meetings will be circulated to all members of the Management Group, as well as all Town Councillors. Minutes will also be published on the Town Council website.

The Management Group will respond to correspondence received from members of the public or other interested parties within 10 working days.

16. Attendance

The Management Group shall be quorate when five voting members are present. The voting members are the Chairperson (with a casting vote if necessary), Vice Chairperson, and the nominated person from each of the Topic Based Working Groups (this does not need to be the lead from each working group, simply the appointed representative for that meeting).

Attendance at Management Group meetings are by invitation. The Management Group meetings will be open to the public and take place at an agreed and published venue in Droitwich.

17. **Specific activities**

To achieve the aims set out above the Management Group will, with the support of the Working Groups as appropriate:

- 1) Create and work to a timetable and strategy for undertaking the development of the Plan.
 - 2) Promote the process of preparing the Plan to encourage participation and the submission of views and ideas.
 - 3) Management Group meeting dates will be organised by mutual agreement and will be published in advance. It is expected that the Working Groups will meet as and when it is appropriate for them to do so.
 - 4) Establish, monitor and co-ordinate Working Groups to contribute to all aspects of the development of the Plan.
 - 5) Engage with the Working Groups, when appropriate, on aspects of the evidence gathering, analysis and subsequent drafting of the Plan.
 - 6) Ensure the furtherance of the Plan by working to make the fullest and widest consultation with the community and, in so doing, contribute to the transparency and openness of the process.
 - 7) Analyse the views, ideas and proposals received during the process and use them to develop a community-led Plan.
 - 8) Gather additional evidence to assess the needs and aspirations of Droitwich Spa.
 - 9) Use new and existing evidence to support the content of the Plan.
 - 10) Produce a Plan consistent with and aligned to the South Worcestershire Development Plan, National Planning Policy Framework, Planning Practice Guidance, associated technical guidance and planning law.
 - 11) Draft and finalise the Plan.
 - 12) Keep the Droitwich Spa Town Council fully informed of progress.
 - 13) Support the Droitwich Spa Town Council during the referendum process.
 - 14) Review and coordinate engagement with, or consultation of, the community of Droitwich, developers, other stakeholders and/or other critical external parties.
 - 15) Appoint a treasurer and maintain accounts for funds spent from any source, and update the budgets accordingly
 - 16) Open bank account in Management Group's Name, 'Droitwich Spa Neighbourhood Plan Management Group' and fund transferred to DSTC when ready/agreed by the Council. Ability to access grants will be made via written agreement between DSTC and Chairperson.
 - 17) Research and undertake applications for funding and support that may be made available to Neighbourhood Plan groups.
 - 18) Obtain grant funding (provided by Locality) will be accessed via the Droitwich Spa Town Council, as required by current legislation.
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Working Groups

18. Working Groups

Based upon past experience, working groups could include:

- Planning, Housing and Infrastructure
- Review of Town Plan
- Heritage and Culture
- Business
- Sport and Leisure
- Highways and Transport
- Health, Social Care and Education
- Environment and Conservation
- Communications
- Project management

This list of working groups may alter from time to time and the constitution does not need to be updated to reflect these changes so long as they are noted in the minutes / notes of the meeting where these changes are effected and are subsequently available for public records.

19. Meeting schedule

The Working Group meetings will be held on an ad hoc basis in accordance with the requirements of each Working Group

20. Operation

Meetings of the Working Groups do not need to be held in public; however, they must record and provide notes of meetings which shall be provided to the Management Group on a regular basis.

21. Roles & Responsibilities

Supporting development of the Plan, Working Groups developing the Neighbourhood Plan will typically:

- 1) Gather existing evidence on the Groups' area(s)
 - 2) Assess existing evidence about the needs and aspirations of Droitwich Spa.
 - 3) Develop the evidence base with further research and studies as appropriate
 - 4) Provide minutes of meetings to the Parish Council Clerk for public record
 - 5) Work with the Management Group in the development of policies contained in the plan
 - 6) Participate in community engagement
 - 7) Present options to the Community
 - 8) Take feedback from the Community to advance the Plan.
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Winding-up

22. Dissolution of groups

Dissolving the Droitwich Spa Neighbourhood Plan Group

At the conclusion of the Droitwich Neighbourhood Plan project the Droitwich Spa Town Council and Management Group should discuss the future working of the Neighbourhood Plan Group. If the Management Group wishes to dissolve the Droitwich Neighbourhood Plan, the Group shall notify the Town Council.

Appendix - Declarations of Interest Guidance

- 1) The Management Group and Steering Group shall not be affiliated to any Political Party. It is accepted that individual members may be, but that this must be declared.
- 2) The Droitwich Neighbourhood Planning Project shall be run on an open basis, as an independent and objective activity, owing allegiance only to the community.
- 3) All Members of the Management Group and Steering Group must declare any personal interest that may be perceived as being relevant to a Project decision. A blank form should be completed at every meeting by all participants and dated.
- 4) Interests which arise in the interim must in the first instance be declared in writing to the Chair person. Interests do not include an individual's principle residence. This may include membership of an organisation, ownership of land or a business, or any other matter that may be considered to be relevant.
- 5) Any Member failing to do so shall be expelled from their Membership.
- 6) The above rules do not prevent any member of the public or stakeholder from making representations to the plan independently during the various points of consultation.

Appendix - Context

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| 1. District Council support | Wychavon District Council has made it clear that it supports ⁵ the preparation of local Neighbourhood Plans by parish and town councils that are interested in doing so. The District Council has provided a guide and protocol for those engaged in the Neighbourhood Planning process, which includes officer support during the preparation of the plan and support during the examination and referendum, where the Council will pay for this. |
| 2. Town Council support | In late 2016 Droitwich Spa Town Council (DSTC) took the decision to produce a Neighbourhood Plan under the terms of the Localism Act 2011. A Neighbourhood Plan (referred to as the Plan in the remainder of this document) is a community-led framework for guiding the future development, regeneration and conservation of an area. |

Change Log

Version	Date	Details
1.0	8 January 2020	Initial issue

⁵ <https://www.wychavon.gov.uk/documents/10586/0/Neighbourhood+Planning+protocol+2016.pdf/cb77ff79-3bc1-46d9-9e17-ab7f59f58d5f>