

December 2015

Dear working Group Member,

### **Neighbourhood Plan Working Groups**

I write to you on behalf of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group, of which I am Chair. I warmly welcome you to the large family of Dore people who are working on the Neighbourhood Plan and I thank you for volunteering for this task.

As you will know if you attended the Dore Neighbourhood Forum at King Egbert School on 12 November, the Forum agreed to establish a Steering Group and 7 Working Groups to carry out the task of producing a draft Neighbourhood Plan to present to a future Forum meeting for the Forum's consideration and approval before putting it out for public consultation in Dore. The Forum must be one of the largest neighbourhood bodies in England directing the production of such a Plan and the Steering Group is of a mind to ensure that that sense of openness and inclusivity is spread throughout our drafting work.

I have been remitted to let you know how the Steering Group envisages your working Group carrying out its task.

First, what is that task? Well, the fortunate bit is that you don't have to start from scratch. Dore Village Society had begun work on a Neighbourhood Plan before the basis on which such work had to be carried out in accordance with the Localism Act and national guidance had emerged. We have an existing draft Plan and some of you will have contributed to this in the recent past. The guiding spirit in that work and the expert co-ordinator was David Crosby, a retired but highly experienced professional planner. Happily David is very much available to us again and, in addition to being a member of the Steering Group, he will initiate your first meeting and attend your meetings.

While the existing draft is your starting-point, it cannot be your automatic end-point. Now the DVS is officially constituted as a Neighbourhood Forum, we are obliged to start as if from scratch and re-open issues which earlier groups worked on. In essence a Working Group's remit is:

- *to review the text and recommendations made in the June 2015 draft plan in the light of comments made by the Forum meeting on*

*12 November 2015 and written comments subsequently made on that draft by both Sheffield City Council and the Peak District National Park Authority, consulting widely in the Dore community and re-considering the underlying issues, with the aim of producing for the Steering group by the end of June 2016 a new detailed draft of your section of the new Plan with clear recommendations as to planning Policies and planning Proposals.*

David Crosby will have helped you to schedule your first meeting in early January and will give you guidance on a number of matters, including:

- a list of the fellow members of your Group and their contact points and of members and contact points for the Steering Group and other Working Groups
- providing you with the texts of those parts of the existing draft Plan which cover your subject areas and any relevant comments from the Forum, Sheffield City Council and the Peak District National Park Authority, plus the Vision and Aims agreed by the Forum as a starting-point for each Working Group area.
- the distinction between Planning *policies* and Planning *proposals* and advice on what constitutes a viable planning policy
- the nature of the text which is needed to provide a reasoned rationale for your recommended policies and proposals

Your first task will be to choose a Chairperson and a Secretary. While the former could be David Crosby himself, if 7 or even a majority of Working Groups choose David, he risks being overwhelmed, so please try hard to choose your own Chair.

The Steering Group has asked me to make you aware of the following key guidance points about how your Group should proceed (which tend to confirm the importance of choosing a good Secretary):

1. It is essential that your Group carefully records its proceedings, including full minutes of meetings, records of materials reviewed and records of persons met, surveyed and interviewed. Without this record the Steering Group will have difficulty in monitoring your progress and the Forum will have difficulty in demonstrating that it has initiated a thorough, transparent, inclusive and valid process when that process is scrutinised by the Council, the National Park Authority and the Planning Inspectorate.

2. The Steering Group would like a monthly report on progress from each Working Group.
3. I must repeat that, however much work has gone before on a draft Plan, your Group must fully review what has been done but open out the information-gathering and debate afresh. Groups must think afresh for themselves.
4. One of your early tasks will be to determine who you intend to consult in the course of your work (eg. businesses in Dore centre; recreational groups; church groups; young persons' groups, etc) so that you can inform the Steering Group of what you intend. Those who you propose to consult will depend on your subject area, but I do want to stress to you that this is intended to be an inclusive exercise, so you should err on the side of consulting widely and you should always encourage external approaches from those with points to make.
5. Don't hesitate to co-opt new Group members with interesting perspectives to contribute or at least invite ad hoc oral or written contributions from associations or individuals, remaining conscious of the desirability of involving hard to reach groups. Always record who you have approached or who has approached you and what they have had to say.
6. Working Groups are asked – through their Chairperson – to achieve consensus wherever they can on their recommendations; but where a majority decision is reached, minority views should be minuted for the record.
7. You will be given further guidance on the deadlines for Dore to Door quarterly publications so that any information or requests which need to be publicised can be considered in good time for our local magazine.

The Steering Group wishes you well with your task and is available alongside David Crosby to help answer your questions.

Good luck,

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Chair of the Steering Group

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