**QUENIBOROUGH NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN STEERING GROUP: COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE**

**Introduction**

1. The following procedure will be adopted for dealing with complaints about the Queniborough Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group administration or its procedures. This procedure does not cover complaints about the conduct of a member of the Parish Council, which should, instead, be directed to Charnwood’s standards committee for investigation. (See below for contact details).
2. All formal complaints against the Queniborough Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group should be communicated in writing. Complainants will also be asked to confirm whether they want the complaint to be treated confidentially, although there is a legal requirement for the Queniborough Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group to release information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000. In such cases, all data will be anonomised so that individual data is protected.

**Receipt of the complaint**

1. Usually, the complaint will be sent to the Chair of the Queniborough Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group either by email or by post to the Parish office. (Contact details are set out below).
2. The Chair of the Queniborough Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group will acknowledge receipt of the complaint in writing within seven working days. This acknowledgement will confirm the next steps in the process.

**Investigating the complaint**

1. The Queniborough Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group will need to investigate the facts of the complaint and collate relevant evidence. In the first instance, the Chair will try to settle the complaint directly with the complainant. Where the complaint relates to the Chair’s own actions, then the Vice-Chair will be the first point of call. The Chair or Vice-Chair will report any complaint dealt with by direct action to the next meeting of the Queniborough Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group.
2. Where complaints cannot be dealt with directly, the full Queniborough Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group will adjudicate.

**Dealing with the complaint**

1. Where a complaint cannot be resolved by direct action, the Chair or Vice-Chair will report this to the next meeting of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group. The Chair or Vice-Chair will notify the complainant of the date on which the complaint will be considered, and will be offered an opportunity to explain the complaint to the Queniborough Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group orally.
2. The Queniborough Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group may defer dealing with any complaint if issues arise on which further advice is necessary. The advice will be considered and the complaint dealt with at the next meeting of the Queniborough Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group after the advice has been received.

**After the complaint has been decided**

1. As soon as possible after the decision has been made (and in any event not later than ten working days after the Queniborough Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group meeting), the Chair or Vice-Chair will write to the complainant on the Queniborough Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group behalf to confirm whether or not it has upheld the complaint. The Queniborough Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group will give reasons for its decision together with details of any action to be taken by the Queniborough Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group if this is appropriate.

**Right of Appeal**

1. In cases of serious complaint, and where a complainant is unhappy with the Queniborough Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group’s decision, an appeals process is available. It is expected that this will be used only rarely in very difficult cases. The appeals process will entail the complaint being referred to Queniborough Parish Council and dealt with under their complaints procedures.
2. The meeting will be held as soon as possible after the complainant has indicated that he/she is unhappy with the Queniborough Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group’s decision. The complaint will be dealt with at the next Parish Council meeting.
3. The decision arising from the appeal procedure will be communicated in writing to the complainant within ten working days.

**Contact Details**

Queniborough Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group

Chairman

Pam Jones

Email: pambelljones@yahoo.co.uk

By post: Parish Office,

Rearsby Road,

Queniborough, Leicester. LE7 3D

Adopted by Queniborough Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group on 2nd May 2017