

Warborough & Shillingford Neighbourhood Planning Steering Group

Terms of Reference

BACKGROUND

The parish of Warborough (including the hamlet of Shillingford) was designated as a Neighbourhood Area on 1 March 2016. Following an independent examination and a positive referendum result the Warborough and Shillingford Neighbourhood Plan (WSNP) was adopted as part of the district council's development plan on 11 October 2018.

In accordance with the made plan, it must be periodically reviewed. This Steering Group is designed to conduct said reviews, and to assist the Parish Council in planning matters on an ongoing basis. This set of Terms of Reference defines, *inter alia*, the role, responsibilities and operation of the Steering Group.

OUTLINE ROLE OF THE GROUP

The role of the group is twofold. In relation to review of the WSNP:

- prepare the outline process for reviewing the WSNP, producing a project plan which complies with the legislative requirements for reviewing a neighbourhood plan
- agree the governance structure for the project e.g. any working groups and what their specific responsibilities will be
- promote the process of reviewing the WSNP to encourage community participation, including through periodic public meetings and consultations
- agree a budget, how this will be funded and managed including appointment of specialist consultants or advisers
- manage working groups, ensuring they have clear scope of work related to their responsibilities and the project plan
- liaise with and incorporate advice from relevant governmental and industry bodies
- liaise and collaborate constructively with the Parish Council, reporting progress regularly and referring stage-gate decisions to them
- submit a draft version of the reviewed plan to the Parish Council for approval for regulation 14 consultation

After the plan has been reviewed, the group may:

- review and provide representation to the Parish Council on local planning applications
- review and provide representation to the Parish Council on relevant

reviews and legislation affecting planning in the community

LEGISLATIVE STANDING OF THE GROUP

The **Steering Group** has been set-up by the Parish Council in accordance with its powers under the Local Government Act 1972 (LGA 1972) which allow the Parish Council to form committees, sub-committees and working groups. The **Steering Group** has been set-up to operate outside LGA 1972, meaning that it is exempt from the requirements of formal committee structures, and thus operates in a non-executive manner. The Parish Council has thus not discharged their function to the **Steering Group** but will consider the group and its work in an advisory capacity.

MEMBERSHIP OF THE GROUP

The Warborough and Shillingford Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group brings together representatives of Warborough and Shillingford together with stakeholders and members of the local community. Officers from the South Oxford District Council will be able to assist the group but will not be full members. The Steering Group will have the autonomy to seek advice from relevant advisory bodies.

Membership of the Steering Group will consist of representatives of the community, though not all those who wish to assist need be full members with the associated commitment that will require. The Steering Group will aim to incorporate a wide group of parishioners, encompassing different views, a broad cross-section of interests and skills and diversely distributed across the parish, either on the Steering Group as members or assisting with specific project elements, relying on both previous and new members.

Membership will be initially composed of the Parish Council appointed representatives to the Steering Group in concert with previous members of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group (who will automatically be included). They will then ask members of the community to volunteer to join the Steering Group, though there will be a natural limit to the number of formal member roles to ensure the group is broadly representative, has the right balance of skillsets, and management of the Steering Group does not become unwieldy. The Parish Council will be advised on a timely basis of any changes in personnel. The group may form working groups to undertake various aspects of the work involved in reviewing the WSNP.

As the ultimate responsibility for submitting the plan lies with the town or parish council, parish council representation on the Steering Group is not essential but advisable to ensure the smooth progress of the plan (two PC representatives is desirable).

Current members (to be updated from time to time as and when changes occur) include:

Name	Organisation
L Kosobucki	Original WSNP SC member, Chair
K Croudace	Original WSNP SC member, Deputy
R Pullen	Original WSNP SC member, PC representative from 4.1.23
L Eaton	Original WSNP SC member, WI
S Taylor	Original WSNP SC member
T Hill	Local resident, from 3.2.23
M Bicknell	Local resident, from 3.2.23
Megan Hanson	PC representative and Treasurer from 4.1.23-9.6.23; 6.10.23-12.1.24; 4.6.25-; co-opted from 12.1.24-4.6.25
S Ash (co-opted)	Local resident, from 3.2.23
B Searle (co-opted)	Local resident, from 3.2.23
J Roe	Original WSNP SC member (resigned 9.2.23)
E Jones	Original WSNP SC member (resigned 1.1.24)
N Meadows	PC representative 9.6.23-6.10.23
T DeWolf	Local resident, from 3.2.23-12.11.23
H Close	Local resident, from 3.2.23-31.01.25
E Keene	Treasurer, co-opted from 3.11.23-12.1.24, PC representative from 12.1.24-4.6.25

INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS' RESPONSIBILITIES

The decisions made by the group will undoubtedly require compromise and consensus building; consequently, members should ensure they are:

- committed to helping to guide the review of the WSNP
- supportive and committed to the process and its implementation
- able to commit sufficient time and energies to the regular attendance at meetings and carrying out of associated workstreams
- willing to work with the group, accommodating views that are different from their own, seeking consensus and accepting compromise to reach agreement on the issues before the group
- open minded and able to consider the whole picture, not seeking simply to promote sectional interests
- able to represent the group and its work in a positive light to the wider community
- prepared to work with other groups/agencies in a constructive way to achieve the best outcomes for the area
- where they represent a body/organisation, able and willing to make decisions and recommendations on behalf of that body/organisation

Where a member represents a body/organisation and is unavailable to attend a meeting they will endeavour to delegate a replacement to attend on their behalf.

SPECIFIC RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE STEERING GROUP

The responsibilities of the Steering Group include:

- assess existing evidence about the needs and aspirations of the Parish, commission any technical evidence, e.g. housing and infrastructure needs to support the development and review of the neighbourhood plan, and identify gaps
- consider progress reports and work undertaken and agree appropriate course of action
- agree a programme of community engagement and public consultation at appropriate stages to ensure that the information gathered is representative of those living within Warborough and Shillingford
- undertake analysis, interpretation, and reporting of the results from community engagement and public consultation activities and ensuring that they inform decision-making (either directly, or with the aid of consultants)
- ensure that any planning related documentation complies with the district councils Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) and is appropriate for adoption.
- ensure consultation with and co-operation from key stakeholders to ensure the deliverability of the project and of proposals included in the final plan
- promote the appropriate development of Warborough and Shillingford in accordance with the WSNP
- work positively with the district council to ensure the plan is in conformity with the adopted development plan
- work positively with the district council in auditing the project plan or the use of any grant funding from the district council.

CHAIRMAN AND OTHER OFFICES

The Steering Group will appoint/elect a Chairman and Deputy Chairman from the Group members. Both the Chairman and Deputy should remain in that position following their election until completion of the review. The Steering Group retains the ability to alter its own membership and leadership.

The Chairman or in their absence the Deputy will be responsible for dealing with any media enquiries. The Steering Group will provide appropriate representatives to report to the Parish Council at public meetings.

MEETINGS

The group will meet regularly throughout the review of the WSNP. The dates and regularity of meetings will be set by the group depending on the stage of the process and workload. In accordance with the set-up of the Steering Group to operate outside LGA 1972 rules, they do not have to hold all meetings in public with associated notification and recording requirements.

In accordance with best practices, the Steering Group will seek to hold a series of engagements with the parish, likely some remotely and some in person.

The Steering Group members will receive an agenda and any documents for consideration at meetings at least 3 days prior to the meeting.

Minutes of all meetings will be recorded and kept on file, draft minutes of meetings will be circulated to the Steering Group following each meeting after clearance by the Chair or, in their absence, the Deputy Chair. Approved minutes will be published as soon as practicable.

Minutes, which are the responsibility of the Steering Group, will record decisions made and may also elaborate on discussion points. Minutes are only challengeable by meeting participants.

DECISION MAKING

A minimum of four members must be present to enable decisions to be taken. Decisions made by the Group should normally be by consensus at group meetings. If this is not possible then decisions will be taken by vote, with each member present having one vote, and a simple majority will be required to support a decision. The Chair, or in their absence the Deputy Chair, shall have the casting vote.

In accordance with its set-up outside the LGA 1972, the Steering Group cannot make “decisions” on behalf of the Parish Council. It may, of course, in the manner of all working groups, make wide-ranging operational decisions. Those decisions considered significant stage-gates in the process, will be referred, with recommendation, to the Parish Council to be debated at a public meeting. In this way, though much of the work of the Steering Group will be carried out in private, those decisions considered most significant in the process will be taken in public by the Parish Council. These stage gates will be identified by the Steering Group, including its Parish Council appointed representatives, as the review develops. The Parish Council will incorporate identified stage-gates in their meeting agendas as requested by the Steering Group, and work with the Steering Group to ensure they are appropriately recorded.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The Steering Group and its members should act, deliver and review the Neighbourhood Plan at all times in accordance with the Nolan Principles, which are:

- Selflessness;
- Integrity;
- Objectivity;
- Accountability;
- Openness;
- Honesty; and
- Leadership.

Steering Group members should declare an interest where there is a potential financial or pecuniary benefit to themselves, their family or their company / organisation / body arising from the decisions or recommendations of the group.

Any such conflicts shall be kept on record by the Parish Clerk via a Conflicts of Interest register, and stored in the same manner as minutes and other relevant paperwork.

Members with a conflict shall not be entitled to vote on a decision related to such conflict, but may participate in discussions.

FINANCE

The Steering Group shall appoint a Treasurer who shall monitor spending of the group, within the budget made available to the Parish Council. The administration of any expenditure shall be conducted through the Parish Council with the assistance of the Parish Clerk.

DATA PROTECTION

The Steering Group will ensure that it processes any personal information in accordance with the UK GDPR. The Steering Group will follow the same policy as the Parish Council in relation to data protection (this is available on the Parish Council website), though a précis is included below for information.

Collecting some personal information may be necessary as part of community engagement. The Steering Group will not disclose personal information without the consent of the subject unless required to by law. Details will be held only for as long as is necessary for the purposes of the development and review of the Neighbourhood Plan.

Individuals can find out if the Steering Group hold any personal information by making a 'subject access request' under the UK GDPR. If the Steering Group do hold information about you they will:

- give you a description of it;
- tell you why they are holding it;
- tell you who it could be disclosed to; and
- let you have a copy of the information in an intelligible form.

Please make any such request in writing to: [insert email] providing your contact details, a brief description of the information you require and enclose proof of your identity.

If at any time you feel that the Steering Group has failed to meet these standards then please contact our chairman.

REVIEW OF THE GROUP

Following completion of the review, it is envisaged the Steering Group will perform an ongoing advisory role relating to planning. It may be that some members and volunteers will wish to fall away after completion of the more onerous review work, and as a subsequent review arrives, membership may ramp back up.

The Steering Group may choose to formally disband should its members so wish and should make such representations to the Parish Council. Should the Parish Council wish to review or discontinue the role of the Steering Group, it will do so in conjunction with the members extant at that time.

These Terms of Reference will be reconsidered for revision and updated as necessary, on the instigation of the Steering Group or Parish Council.