

Littlebury Parish Council

Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group Terms of Reference

Date	Revision
May 2025	Adopted by Resolution at Parish Council Meeting on 14 th May 2025
May 2026	“Working Group” renamed as “Steering Group”
June 2026	Modified to a) refer to Littlebury Parish throughout, b) change membership from “at least 3 Parish Councillors” to “no more than 3 Parish Councillors”. Changes approved by Parish Council at meeting on 8 th June 2026.

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Littlebury Parish Council Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group

Terms of Reference

1. Introduction

Drafting and submission of a Neighbourhood Plan is the responsibility of Littlebury Parish Council. Accordingly, decisions as to the form and content of the Plan and the process of its preparation are also the responsibility of the Council. However, the Council will establish a Steering Group of Councillors and members of the community to assist in leading the development of a Neighbourhood Plan that is suitable for adoption by Uttlesford District Council or its successor as a statutory planning document.

2. Purpose and Powers of the Steering Group

The Steering Group will assist the Parish Council to produce a sound Neighbourhood Plan for Littlebury Parish that defines the planning policy priorities identified by the community and takes into account all representations made during the Plan-making process and has regard to all relevant existing plans and evidence. The Steering Group will be responsible for taking such actions as are considered necessary to progress the Plan, including carrying out the activities listed below:

- Produce a sound project plan which outlines all of the steps and associated timescales and resources necessary to produce a submission ready Neighbourhood Plan.
- Monitor progress against the project plan and report to the Parish Council at its meeting on a monthly basis to ensure effective progress.
- Keep under review the legislative requirements around Neighbourhood Planning to ensure the Plan meets all requirements
- Make recommendations to the Parish Council on resourcing the development of the Plan. This includes identification of appropriate consultants.
- Manage the gathering of evidence necessary to inform each of the issues within the scope of the Plan
- Identify and assess options available in respect of each issue
- Identify ways of involving the whole community and gather the views and opinions of as many individuals, groups and organisations in the community as possible.
- Prepare a Draft Plan for consideration by the Council and for a referendum of voters

3. Membership

The Steering Group will comprise of up to 10 members, of whom no more than 3 should be Parish Councillors. Community members shall be appointed by resolution of the Council and

must be aged 18 years or over. Membership of the Group should include residents of all three villages within the Parish. The Steering Group will elect the following:

Chair

Secretary

It may also elect a Vice Chair.

The Group may, at its discretion, set up sub groups to address specific issues.

The Steering Group may also recruit any number of volunteers, including those with particular relevant skills. Volunteers may attend meetings, participate in organised activities and contribute ideas, but will have no voting rights. On joining the Steering Group all Community members and volunteers must read and adhere to these Terms of Reference.

4. Meetings

The Steering Group will meet at least once a month. Notice of all meetings along with items to be discussed and associated documents will be sent electronically to all members at least three days in advance of the meeting by the Secretary. The Secretary will also record discussion at the meeting and produce a set of minutes and actions to be shared by the Steering Group and the Parish Council.

Decisions of the Steering Group will be decided by a simple majority vote. A quorum of 75% of the members must be present for a vote to be valid

5. Reporting

The Steering Group will report solely to the Parish Council. An update of activities should be provided monthly to the Parish Council 5 days in advance of its regular meetings. All reports, records of meetings and draft Plan documents must be submitted to the Parish Council, which alone will decide whether further release is appropriate.

6. Training

If necessary, appropriate training will be provided to members of the Steering Group. The costs of such training, if any, will be met by the Parish Council.

7. Insurance

Members of the Steering Group will be covered by the Council's liability insurance when engaged in activities related to development of the Neighbourhood Plan, so long as such activities are within the scope of these Terms of Reference.

8. Budget

The Parish Council will set and hold a budget for preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan and will apply for grants as appropriate.

All expenditures by the Steering Group must be authorised before actual costs are incurred and the Parish Council's normal procurement and ordering procedures adhered to. All orders will be placed and invoices paid by the Parish Council.

9. Code of Conduct

The Steering Group will abide by the Council's Code of Conduct.

The Steering Group as a whole is accountable to the wider community for ensuring that the Plan reflects their collective expectations and not those of individual members of the Steering Group. The Group will achieve this through applying the following principles:

- Work with mutual trust and respect, and combine their expertise,
- Engage in public consultation at key stages in the development of the Plan,
- Be clear when their individual roles or interests are in conflict. This includes but is not limited to ownership or tenancy of any land considered for development or that adjacent to it.
- Treat everyone with dignity, courtesy and respect regardless of their age, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, ability, or religion and belief; and
- Actively promote equality of access and opportunity.

In situations where interests and roles are in conflict they must be declared before the business is discussed. The conflicted Steering Group member will have no voting rights on that issue.

10. Dissolution of the Steering Group

The Parish Council will review membership of the Steering Group on an ongoing basis and may make changes as appropriate.

It is expected that the Steering Group will remain active until receipt of the Independent Examiner's report on the Neighbourhood Plan. However, the Parish Council reserves the right to dissolve the Steering Group at any time.