



Trawden Forest Parish Council Neighbourhood Plan Review Steering Group

Terms of Reference

1. Purpose

The Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group (the “Steering Group”) is established by Trawden Forest Parish Council to guide the development of the review of the adopted 2018 Neighbourhood Plan in conjunction with O’Neill Homer Ltd Consultants.

The Steering Group will provide research, advice, and recommendations to the Council, but all formal decisions remain the responsibility of the Council.

2. Authority

- The Steering Group is **advisory only** and has **no power to commit the Council to spending or policy decisions**.
- The Steering Group may make recommendations to the Council on:
 - Draft policies and proposals;
 - Public consultation arrangements;
 - Engagement and community involvement;
 - Evidence gathering for the Neighbourhood Plan.
- The Steering Group operates under the direction and oversight of the Council.

3. Membership

- The Steering Group will consist of:
 - Up to 5 **Parish Councillors**
 - Up to 4 **members of the public**, appointed for their local knowledge, skills, or interest in the Neighbourhood Plan
- Members will be appointed by resolution of the Council.
- Membership may include representatives of local organisations or businesses if agreed by the Council.

- **Membership commitment:** until replacement plan adopted
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4. Chair

- The Steering Group shall **elect a Chair from among its members.**
 - The Chair may be a **councillor or member of the public.**
 - A councillor or the Clerk shall act as the **Council Liaison** to ensure accountability and maintain formal reporting channels.
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5. Meetings

- The Steering Group will meet **as required** to progress the Neighbourhood Plan.
 - A **quorum** shall be **3 members**, including at least one councillor.
 - Meetings may be held **in person or virtually.**
 - Notes of meetings will be **recorded and submitted to the Council** as a report or minutes.
 - Meetings are **not formally open to the public**, unless the Steering Group chooses otherwise, but consultation and engagement events must be public.
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6. Roles and Responsibilities Steering Group Members

- Act in the **best interests of the community.**
- Contribute to research, consultation, and drafting proposals.
- Declare any **conflicts of interest.**

Chair

- Convene and chair meetings of the Steering Group.
- Ensure discussions are inclusive, transparent, and focused on objectives.
- Report to the Council regularly on progress and recommendations.

Council Liaison (Clerk or Councillor)

- Provide guidance on **legal, financial, and procedural matters.**
 - Ensure Steering Group activity aligns with Council policies and statutory requirements.
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7. Reporting

- The Steering Group will submit **regular updates** to the Council, including:
 - Meeting notes and actions;
 - Recommendations requiring Council approval;
 - Progress on consultations and evidence gathering.
 - The Council retains the **final decision-making authority** on all matters, including adoption of draft policies.
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8. Code of Conduct

- Councillors must follow the **Council Code of Conduct**, at all times.
 - Members of the public are expected to follow the same standards of **respect, integrity, and transparency**.
 - All members must declare any **personal or financial interest** in matters under discussion.
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9. Review

- These Terms of Reference will be **reviewed annually** by the Council or as required to reflect changes in legislation or the needs of the Neighbourhood Plan process.
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10. Adoption

- Recommended to be adopted by Trawden Forest Parish Council at its meeting in March 2026
 - Any amendments require **Council approval**.
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This ToR ensures:

- Public involvement is formally recognised.
- Legal accountability stays with the council.
- Chairing by a non-councillor is explicitly permitted.