



Lakenheath Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group Terms of Reference

1. Purpose

Lakenheath Parish Council has resolved to produce a Neighbourhood Plan to cover the area within the Parish boundary. A Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group has been created to lead the project to successful completion.

- a. The main purpose of the Lakenheath Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group is to oversee the preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan for Lakenheath which will then progress to Independent Examination and a successful community referendum, and ultimately be adopted by District and County Councils to become planning policy.
- b. The Steering Group will engage the local community to ensure that the Plan is representative of the ambitions of Lakenheath. The Group will maximise support for the approach taken in the Neighbourhood Plan by ensuring high levels of community engagement throughout the plan-making process.

2. Principles

- a. That the Steering Group will undertake the process in a democratic, transparent, and fair fashion, encouraging widespread participation and giving equal consideration to opinions and ideas from all members of the community.
- b. All decisions made shall be fully evidenced and supported through consultation with the local community.

3. Roles and Responsibilities

In order to achieve this, the Steering Group will

- Be accountable for steering and providing strategic management of the Neighbourhood Plan for Lakenheath;
- Appoint a Consultant(s) with appropriate background and experience to advise and expedite the process;
- Produce, monitor and update a project timetable;
- Produce a consultation and engagement strategy, showing how the public will be involved throughout the process;
- Regularly report back to the Parish Council for endorsement of actions and decisions taken;
- Undertake analysis and evidence gathering to support the plan production process;
- Actively support and promote the preparation of the Lakenheath Neighbourhood Development Plan throughout the duration of the project;
- Identify and apply for sources of funding;
- Liaise with relevant authorities and organisations to make the plan as effective as possible.
- Gather data from a wide range of sources to ensure that the conclusions reached are fully evidenced and that the aspirations and issues of all residents are understood.
- Consult as widely and thoroughly as is possible to ensure that the draft and final Neighbourhood Plan is representative of the views of the community as a whole;
- Identify and recruit working groups to address specific areas of work;
- Establish such working groups as it considers necessary to carry out the functions specified by the Steering Group;

- Agree, subject to ratification by the Parish Council, a final submission version of the Lakenheath Neighbourhood Development Plan.

4. Membership

4.1 The Steering Group will be made up of a cross-section of volunteers from the community, including at least two Parish Councillors. Effort will be made to seek representation from under-represented sections of the community. Membership of the Steering Group will be open to the public indefinitely, with a maximum of 6 members. The appointed Consultant will be a non-voting member of the Steering Group.

5. Working Groups

Each working group will:

- tackle a specific issue, or set of issues, or the needs and opportunities facing a specific group of people within the community
- have a lead person nominated by the Steering Group.
- gather information and carry out consultations.
- Set out the timescale and estimated costs of gathering information and carrying out consultations.
- Appoint at least one member to attend the Steering Group meetings (those persons may already be members of the Steering Group). Each working group will be responsible for organising its own meetings and must provide a progress report to Steering Group meetings.

Members of the community will be encouraged to participate in the process at all stages.

6. Decision Making

a. The Steering Group has full delegated authority from the Parish Council to deliver its planmaking functions up to and including publication of the Consultation Draft Plan. The Group will report regularly to the Parish Council setting out progress on its work. The Parish Council will approve the Submission Draft Neighbourhood Development Plan prior to publication for consultation and independent examination.

b. The plan-making process remains the responsibility of the Parish Council as the qualifying body. All publications, consultation and community engagement exercises will be undertaken by or on behalf of the Parish Council with appropriate recognition of the Parish Council's position given in all communications associated with the project.

7. Meetings

a. Steering Group meetings will take place regularly, with frequency determined by issues or workload, but no less than six times a year.

- b. Where possible, all meetings will be held within the Parish. The dates of future meetings will be made publicly available via the parish council website with at least five working days' notice.
- c. The Steering Group will elect a Chair and Secretary from its membership to remain in those positions until the project is completed. If these positions should become vacant, the Group will elect an alternate.
- d. The Secretary shall keep a record of meetings and circulate notes to Steering Group members and the Parish Council in a timely fashion. Meeting notes shall be made publicly available on the parish council website.
- e. Decisions made by the Steering Group should normally be by consensus at Steering Group meetings. Where a vote is required each member shall have one vote. A minimum of 3 members shall be present where matters are presented for decisions to be taken. A simple majority vote will be required to support any motion. The Chair shall have one casting vote.

8. Finance

- a. All grants and funding will be held by the Parish Council, who will ring-fence the funds for Neighbourhood Development Plan work in a specific Bank account.
- b. The Steering Group will notify the Parish Council of any planned expenditure and produce a budget.
- c. Steering Group members and volunteers from any working groups may claim back any previously agreed expenditure incurred during any Neighbourhood Plan related work.

9. Conduct

- a. It is expected that all Steering Group members abide by the principles and practice of the Parish Council Code of Conduct including declarations of interest.
- b. Whilst Members as individuals will be accountable to their parent organizations, the Steering Group as a whole is accountable to the wider community for ensuring that the Plan reflects their collective expectations.
- c. The Steering Group will achieve this through applying the following principles:
 - i. Be clear and open when their individual roles or interests are in conflict;
 - ii. Treat everyone with dignity, courtesy and respect regardless of their age, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, or religion and belief; and
 - iii. Actively promote equality of access and opportunity.

10. Changes to the Terms of Reference

This constitution may be amended with the support of at least (two-thirds) of the current membership at a Steering Group Meeting and with the approval of the parish council.

11. Dissolution

- a. The Steering Group will be dissolved once its objectives have been attained and/or when at least (two- thirds) of its members and the parish or town council, consider its services are no longer required.
- b. The Steering Group will then dispose of any remaining funds held in accordance with any conditions imposed by the grant funders and in the best interests of Lakenheath Parish.