



Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group

Terms of Reference

1. Purpose

The purpose of the Litton Cheney Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group is firstly to determine whether it is appropriate and necessary for a Neighbourhood Plan to be developed, and secondly, in the event that it is decided that such a Plan should be developed, to prepare a Consultation Draft Neighbourhood Plan which will then progress to Independent Examination, be the subject of a successful Community Referendum and ultimately be adopted by West Dorset District Council to become planning policy. If, at any point during this process, there is majority agreement that a Neighbourhood Plan should not be produced then, subject to the agreement of the Parish Council, the Steering Group will be dissolved.

2. Principles

- a. The Steering Group will engage the local community to ensure that the Plan is truly representative of the ambitions of the Parish of Litton Cheney. 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.
- b. 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.
- c. All decisions made shall be fully evidenced and supported through consultation with the local community.

3. Roles and Responsibilities

In order to achieve the above, the Steering Group will carry out the following roles

- a. Be accountable for steering and providing strategic management of the Neighbourhood Plan for Litton Cheney;
- b. Produce, monitor and update a project timetable;
- c. Produce a consultation and engagement strategy, showing how the public will be involved throughout the process;
- d. Regularly report back to the Parish Council for endorsement of decisions taken;
- e. Undertake analysis and evidence gathering to support the plan production process;
- f. Actively support and promote the preparation of the Litton Cheney Neighbourhood Development Plan throughout the duration of the project;
- g. Identify sources of funding;
- h. Liaise with relevant authorities and organisations to make the plan as effective as possible.
- i. 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.
- j. Consult as widely and thoroughly as is possible to ensure that the draft and final NDP is representative of the views of residents.
- k. Agree, subject to ratification by the Parish Council, a final submission version of the Litton Cheney Neighbourhood Development Plan.

4. Membership

- a. The Steering Group will be made up of a cross-section of volunteers from the community, including Parish Councillors. Effort will be made to seek representation from under-represented sections of the community.
- b. Membership of the Steering Group will be open to the public indefinitely, up to a maximum of 15 members.

5. Decision Making

- a. The Steering Group has full delegated authority from the Parish Council to deliver its plan-making functions up to and including publication of the Consultation Draft Plan. The Group will report bi-monthly 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 will remain 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.

6. Meetings

- a. The Steering Group shall elect a Chairman, Vice-Chairman and Secretary from its membership. If any of these positions should become vacant, the Group will elect a successor.
- b. Steering Group meetings will take place approximately two weeks prior to scheduled Parish Council meetings. The Chairman may also arrange additional meetings when deemed necessary. A minimum of seven members will constitute a quorum.
- c. At least three clear days notice of meetings shall be sent to members via email.
- d. Where possible, all meetings will be held at Litton and Thorners Community Hall. The dates of future meetings will be published in the Neighbourhood Plan pages of the Litton Cheney website.
- e. Ordinary meetings of the Steering Group and sub-groups shall be closed to the Public.
- f. An open meeting shall be held at least every 6 months. The Chairman may also arrange additional open meetings when deemed necessary.
- g. The Secretary shall keep a record of meetings and circulate notes to Steering Group members and the Parish Council in a timely fashion. Minutes shall be made publicly available in the Neighbourhood Plan pages of the Litton Cheney website.
- h. 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 simple majority vote will be required to support any motion. The Chairman shall have one casting vote.

7. Working Groups

- a. The Steering Group may establish working groups, made up of volunteers from the community, to aid them in any Neighbourhood Plan related work.
- b. Each working group shall be led by a member of the Steering Group.
- c. Members of the community will be encouraged to participate in the process at all stages.

8. Finance

- a. All grants and funding will be applied for and held by the Parish Council, who will ring-fence the funds for Neighbourhood Development Plan work.
- b. The Steering Group will notify the Parish Council, advising them of any planned expenditure before it is incurred.
- 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 Standing Orders 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

The Terms of Reference 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

The Steering Group shall be dissolved:

- a. If, at any time, there is majority agreement that a Neighbourhood Plan should not be produced.
- b. Once its objectives have been attained and/or when its members and the Parish Council consider its services are no longer required.
- c. 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 Litton Cheney Parish.