

Danbury Neighbourhood Plan Constitution/Terms of Reference

Name

1. The name of the group shall be the Danbury Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group, hereafter referred to as the Steering Group.
2. The 'qualifying body' for the purposes of producing the Neighbourhood Plan is Danbury Parish Council. The Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group, however is a stand-alone group which will seek help, guidance and support from the Parish Council to progress the plan. Danbury Parish Council will proceed the plan through statutes.

Purpose

3. The purpose of the group will be to produce a Neighbourhood Plan for the Danbury Neighbourhood Area.
4. The Plan will be produced with due consideration for the needs of all residents, businesses and other interested parties, both now and in the future.
5. The plan will seek to improve the social, economic and environmental well-being of the area and those residing in it.
6. The Steering Group shall achieve the following goals in partnership with the Parish Council and the City Council:
 - i. Produce a Neighbourhood Plan that is representative of local views.
 - ii. 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 on a number of aspects relating to the Neighbourhood Plan.
 - iii. Determine the types of surveys and information gathering to be used and be responsible for the analysis of the survey, the production and distribution of the final report.
 - iv. Liaise with the Neighbourhood Plan Coordinator to make the plan as effective as possible.
 - v. Effectively communicate findings, ideas and approaches for the Neighbourhood Plan to the Parish Council and the wider community.
 - vi. Identify support, resources and funding needed for stages of the process.
 - vii. Manage the decision making process in an open, transparent and accessible way.
 - viii. Identify areas or specific sites to accommodate the necessary development consistent with the emerging Chelmsford City Local Plan.
 - ix. Consider growth that is suitable for Danbury Parish as part of maintaining a sustainable, balanced and thriving community.
 - x. Liaise with the Neighbourhood Plan Coordinator to produce a plan that is consistent with National and Local Policies.
 - xi. Regularly report back to the Parish Council, for endorsement, on progress, issues arising and outcomes, via the Neighbourhood Plan Coordinator or where this isn't possible by a Parish Council Member.
 - xii. To take the plan to adoption by the City Council.

Roles and Responsibilities

7. The Parish Council Shall:
 - i. Employ the Neighbourhood Plan Coordinator.

- ii. Provide help, guidance and support to progress the plan.
- iii. Provide insurance to cover the activities of the Steering Group and volunteers, but Steering Group members, in liaison with the Coordinator and Parish Clerk, need to ensure that terms of the insurance are not breached.
- iv. Be responsible for applying for all grants, funding and for financial arrangements as set out under Finance in points 32-38 of this constitution.
- v. Submit the Neighbourhood Plan and Supporting Documents to Chelmsford City Council for checking, consultation and examination by the independent examiner.
- vi. Nominate Parish Councillors to be members of the Steering Group.

8. The Neighbourhood Plan Coordinator shall:

- i. Manage, support and coordinate the production of a Neighbourhood Plan that is representative of local views. Carry out effective research and consultation to support the Neighbourhood Plan process.
- ii. Advise the Steering Group to ensure that the plan is consistent with National and Local Policies and assist in the formulation of policies and best practice relating to production and submission of the Neighbourhood Plan.
- iii. Liaise with relevant authorities and organisations and report back to the Steering Group to make the plan as effective as possible, and to take the plan to adoption by the City Council.
- iv. Act as the Financial Coordinator for the steering group in conjunction with the Parish Clerk, who is the Responsible Financial Officer for Danbury Parish Council, and report back to the Parish Council on these matters.
- v. Regularly report back to the Parish Council on progress, issues arising and outcomes.
- vi. Identify sources of and apply for funding for the Neighbourhood Plan process on behalf of Danbury Parish Council.
- vii. Produce and monitor appropriate timescales and delivery mechanisms for the Neighbourhood Plan.
- viii. Provide administrative support of all Neighbourhood Planning activities and events including preparation of the agenda, attending meetings and preparing minutes.
- ix. Provide administrative support for Steering Group's communications strategy and to liaise with staff regarding the website.

9. Chelmsford City Council (as set out in Chelmsford City Council Statement of Community Involvement 2016) Shall:

- i. Provide a central point of contact for all communications with the City Council, to ensure matters are dealt with by the relevant service in a timely manner.
- ii. Assessment of any questionnaire issued by the group to ensure all relevant issues are included.
- iii. Share data and existing evidence base material.
- iv. Share information on key contacts and stakeholders, where appropriate.
- v. Provide technical support for mapping.
- vi. Advise groups during production of a proposal, particularly in relation to compliance with planning policy and other City Council policies, and whether its aims are met.

vii. Maintain an up to date web page on the City Council Website.

10. The Chair and Coordinator Shall act as spokesperson/press officer for the Steering Group.
11. Chair's emergency action: The Chair of the Steering Group may authorise items, that must be agreed/actioned/published between meetings but has no authority to approve financial items. Any items actioned in this way must be communicated to the group at the next meeting.

Steering Group Membership

12. Membership of the Steering Group shall be open to all people that live, operate a business or hold specific interest in the Danbury Neighbourhood Area and will be expected to exercise balanced consideration of the needs of all aspects of the local community. This will include Parish Councillors nominated by Danbury Parish Council.
13. At the first meeting, the Steering Group will elect a chairman.
14. The Neighbourhood Plan Coordinator shall provide administrative support by acting as Secretary and Financial Coordinator for the Steering Group.
15. A person shall cease to be a member of the Steering Group having notified the Chair or coordinator in writing of his/her or wish to resign.

Code of Conduct

16. Members shall adhere to the Danbury Parish Council Code of Conduct, the Expenses Procedures as drawn up by the Neighbourhood Plan coordinator, and declaration of interests. Members who fail to do so may be asked to leave the group by a majority vote of the Steering Group.
17. Copies of the Code of Conduct will be available via the Neighbourhood Plan Coordinator at all meetings.

Meetings

18. The Steering Group shall aim to meet monthly or as may be required. At least three clear days' notice of meetings shall be given to members by email to the member's last known email address.
19. All Steering Group Meetings should be open to the public. Members of the public may make representations, answer questions and give evidence at a meeting which they are entitled to attend in respect of the business on the agenda. The period of time designated for public participation shall not exceed 15 minutes unless directed by the chairman of the meeting. A member of the public shall not speak for more than 2 minutes, at the discretion of the chairman.
20. An annual rolling schedule of meetings will be made available to the public via notice boards/website as appropriate.
21. Agenda items should be agreed with the chairman at least five working days before a meeting. Whenever possible notices of meetings will detail what is going to be discussed. The agenda will be circulated at least three clear days before a meeting.
22. Every matter shall be determined by a majority of votes of the Group members present and voting. In the case of equality of votes, the chair of the meeting shall have the casting vote.

23. A Steering Group meeting shall be quorate if a minimum of five voting members are present. A working Party meeting will be quorate if a minimum of three voting members are present.
24. The Neighbourhood Plan Coordinator shall maintain minutes of each meeting to be made reasonably available to the members of the Steering Group within seven days of the meeting and to members of the public within fourteen days via website/notice boards as appropriate.
25. All agendas and minutes will be distributed electronically to a member's nominated email address.
26. The Working Groups shall meet as and when necessary for their Working Group area. At least three clear days' notice shall be provided for each Working Group meeting and discussion topics circulated with the notice.

Working Groups

27. Non-steering Group members may be co-opted on Working Groups. Involvement in the working groups shall be open to all people that live, operate a business or hold specific interest in the Danbury Neighbourhood Area and will be expected to exercise balanced consideration of the needs of all aspects of the local community.
28. The Steering Group shall appoint such working groups as it considers necessary to carry out the functions specified by the Steering Group. Each Working Group shall have a nominated chair, who will be a member of the Steering Group.
29. Working groups shall report back to the Steering Group as required.
30. Working Groups do not have the power to authorise expenditure on behalf of the Steering Group.
31. Working groups will be bound by the Terms of Reference set out for them by the Steering Group.

Finance

32. All grants and funding will be applied for by the Neighbourhood Plan Coordinator on behalf of the Parish Council and held by the Parish Council, who will ring-fence the funds for Neighbourhood Plan Development Purposes only.
33. Notification of all planned expenditure **must** be given to the Parish Council Responsible Financial Officer (Parish Clerk) before actual costs are incurred.
34. The Finance Coordinator shall keep a clear record of expenditure supported by receipted invoices and regularly review and update the budget in liaison with Parish Council Responsible Financial Officer (Parish Clerk).
35. Invoices will be made out in the name of the Parish Council who will pay them at their next scheduled Parish Meeting.
36. The Finance Coordinator in partnership with the Parish Clerk, shall draw up and agree the Steering Group procedures for volunteers who wish to claim expenses and the rates they may claim.
37. The Finance Coordinator will report back to the Steering Group and Parish Council on planned and actual expenditure.
38. Members of the community who are involved as volunteers with any of the Working Groups may claim back any expenditure that was necessarily incurred during the process of producing

the Neighbourhood Plan. This must be in line with the Expenses procedures and be agreed by the steering group in advance.

Changes to the Constitution

39. This constitution may be altered and additional clauses may be added with the consent of two-thirds of the Steering Group present and the agreement of the Parish Council.

Dissolution of the Steering Group

40. At the conclusion of the Neighbourhood Plan Process, the Parish Council and Steering Group should discuss the future working of the Steering Group. If the Steering Group wishes to dissolve, it must notify the Parish Council.

Upon dissolution of the Steering Group any remaining funds shall be disposed of by the Steering Group, in accordance with the decisions reached at an Extraordinary Meeting (called for that purpose) open to the public in the area of benefit. The full Parish Council should agree with any proposed dispersal and decide in the event of no meeting being called. No individual member or ex-member of the SG or Working Groups should benefit from the dispersal. The return of any unused funding given as grants to the Steering Group may need to be considered if this was part of the condition of the grant. Any unused monies given as funding from Danbury Parish Council must be returned to Danbury Parish Council.