



Old Woughton Parish Council Planning Working Group Terms of Reference

Reviewed and adopted May 2026

1) Purpose and Status

- a) The Planning Working Group (PWG) is established by and accountable to the Full Council and operates in accordance with the Council's Working Group Terms of Reference.
- b) The PWG is an advisory and task-focused working group with no delegated powers.
- c) It has no delegated authority to bind the Council, take decisions on behalf of the Council, commit expenditure, enter into contracts, or issue formal statements without prior approval of the Full Council (or the Clerk where delegated).
- d) The Full Council may amend the remit, membership, or duration of the PWG at any time.
- e) The Full Council may dissolve the PWG at any time.
- f) The PWG shall report to Full Council and submit recommendations for formal decision.

2) Membership

- a) Membership of the PWG shall be agreed by the Full Council at the Annual Meeting of the Council and shall comprise a minimum of three elected Councillors unless otherwise agreed by Council.
- b) The Full Council may approve the co-option of non-councillor members in an advisory capacity where specialist planning, heritage, environmental, or highways expertise would benefit the Group. Co-opted members have no voting rights and may not commit the Council to any financial or contractual arrangements.
- c) The Clerk (and/or Responsible Financial Officer) may attend meetings as required to provide advice, continuity, and administrative support but is not a member of the PWG.
- d) Membership shall be recorded in the Council's Roles and Responsibilities matrix and reviewed annually.

3) Chair / Lead Councillor

- a) The PWG shall appoint a Lead Councillor (and may appoint a Deputy) from among its elected members.
- b) The Lead Councillor shall act as the main point of contact between the PWG, the Clerk, the Full Council, and external planning bodies (where approved).
- c) Where the Lead Councillor is unavailable, another PWG member shall deputise.

4) Meetings

- a) The PWG shall meet on an ad-hoc basis as required to fulfil its remit and in line with planning consultation timescales.
- b) Meetings may be convened by the Lead Councillor, the Clerk, or at the request of the Full Council.
- c) The quorum for a PWG meeting shall be two elected Councillors.

- d) PWG meetings are not public meetings and do not require formal agendas or minutes; however, brief written notes of actions and recommendations shall be maintained to support reporting to Full Council.
- e) The Council's Code of Conduct applies to all Councillors participating in the PWG.

5) Public and Press

- a) As a Working Group, the PWG does not meet in public and is not subject to public access rules.
- b) Any confidential, sensitive, or personal data discussed shall be handled in accordance with the Council's policies on confidentiality, data protection, and information governance.
- c) Members of the public shall not attend PWG meetings unless expressly invited by the Full Council for a specific purpose.

6) Reporting

- a) The PWG shall provide written recommendations to Full Council on planning applications, appeals, and related matters within the relevant consultation timescales.
- b) Reports shall clearly set out:
 - i) the application or matter considered;
 - ii) relevant planning policy considerations;
 - iii) material planning considerations raised by consultees; and
 - iv) the PWG's recommended response to the Local Planning Authority.

7) Scope of Work and Responsibilities

The PWG supports the Council in responding to planning matters affecting the Parish. This includes:

- a) Reviewing planning applications and associated consultation responses received by the Council and ensuring that material planning considerations are properly considered.
- b) Preparing draft recommendations for the Parish Council's formal response to the Local Planning Authority on applications for planning permission.
- c) Preparing draft representations on behalf of the Parish Council in respect of planning appeals.
- d) Identifying potential breaches of planning control or enforcement issues and recommending to Full Council whether representations should be made to the relevant authority.
- e) Keeping under review the Council's planning consultation procedures and recommending updates to Full Council where improvements are identified.
- f) Considering any other planning-related matters referred by Full Council.
- g) Ensuring that, following formal approval by Full Council (or action taken under the Council's Scheme of Delegation in urgent cases), the Clerk communicates the Council's representations in writing to the Local Planning Authority or other relevant body within statutory timescales.
- h) Ensuring that urgent matters arising between Full Council meetings are handled in accordance with the Council's Scheme of Delegation (including any specific delegation to the Clerk relating to planning matters).
- i) Ensuring that all correspondence and formal communications with the Local Planning Authority and other bodies are conducted via the Clerk wherever practicable.
- j) Where agreed by the PWG, authorising individual members to make factual enquiries (not representations) to inform the Group's recommendations; members must not act individually or present personal views as those of the PWG or the Council.

8) Review History

May 2026 New Terms of Reference adopted