



WHITTINGHAM, CALLALY & ALNHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group

Neighbourhood Plan - Committee, Working Group, or Steering Group?

At the last meeting there was some discussion about whether the Neighbourhood Plan (NHP) group should be set up as a formal committee or an informal working group.

It is also common in Neighbourhood Planning to use the term Steering Group for the group that drives the project forward. This is essentially the same as a Working Group, but with a more project-focused name.

Here is a comparison:

Committee	Working Group / Steering Group
Formal part of council	Informal advisory group
Subject to Local Government Act 1972 rules	Flexible, informal, no statutory rules
Meetings must be public, with published agendas/minutes	Can meet informally; council controls decisions
Membership mainly councillors	Can include councillors, residents, others
Makes decisions under delegated powers	Makes recommendations; council decides

Recommendation:

Neighbourhood Planning is most effective when community-led. The Steering Group model allows resident involvement and flexibility, while the Parish Council retains all formal decision-making.

A draft Terms of Reference for a Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group is provided below for council approval.



WHITTINGHAM, CALLALY & ALNHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Draft Terms of Reference
Whittingham, Callaly & Alnham Parish Council
Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group

1. Purpose

The Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group will lead the development of a Neighbourhood Plan for the parish, ensuring it reflects community aspirations and complies with legal requirements. The Steering Group will report to and be accountable to Whittingham, Callaly & Alnham Parish Council.

2. Status

The Steering Group is an informal Working Group of the Parish Council. It has no delegated decision-making powers. All decisions and formal submissions remain the responsibility of the Parish Council.

3. Membership

Membership will be agreed by the Parish Council. The Steering Group may include Parish Councillors, residents, and others with an interest in the Neighbourhood Plan. The Group will elect a Chair from its members.

4. Meetings

Meetings will be informal. The Steering Group may meet as required to progress the Plan. Progress updates will be provided to the Parish Council and shared publicly where appropriate.

5. Responsibilities

- Engage with residents and stakeholders
- Gather evidence to inform the Plan
- Draft content and recommendations for the Neighbourhood Plan
- Liaise with Northumberland County Council and other bodies as needed
- Ensure the Plan meets statutory requirements and reflects community needs
- Report to the Parish Council and seek approval at key project stages

6. Reporting

The Steering Group will provide regular progress reports to the Parish Council and submit draft documents for council approval.