



Stisted Parish Council – Terms of Reference for 2025 Affordable Housing Working Group

1. Introduction

These Terms of Reference apply to the 2025 Affordable Housing Working group. Initial Objectives are shown below and can be amended as required by discussion and approval at a Parish Council Meeting

2. Membership

- Membership shall be appointed by the Parish Council and will consist of three individuals from the parish council and three co-opted members from the parish.
- Individual membership from the public can be rotated to different suitable members of the parish with agreement from the group and subject to staying with six members on the group.
- The working group shall appoint a Chair from the parish council representatives at its first meeting.
- Subject Matter Experts can be invited to join the group where relevant and are likely to include representatives from the Rural Community Council of Essex (RCCE) and from the Affordable Housing Partner once appointed.

3. Background

An Affordable Housing Needs Survey has been carried out with results presented to the village in February 2025. These results showed an identifiable need for 9 homes at the date of the survey. The Parish Council took a RESOLUTION on 5th March to start a project in response to the identified Housing Needs. This will eventually include the need to encourage interested parties to apply to join the Housing Register when it is clear that the project will go ahead with a suitable site.

4. Objectives

Overall objectives are:

- To investigate, research, and report on specific matters as directed by the Parish Council.
- To develop recommendations and proposals for consideration by the Parish Council.
- To oversee the implementation of agreed actions within the scope of the group's remit.

The first specific objective for this phase (see step 3 of the appendix) of the Project is:

1. For the current potential four proposed sites for Affordable housing, develop a set of criteria to use to help assess the suitability of each site
2. Visit each site to assess suitability
3. Develop method to gain views of village and conduct survey in village
4. Report to council with proposal for a village view of an acceptable site

Note that the Working Group can request that Council appoint an appropriate Rural Affordable Housing Provider at an early stage (see Step 4 of the appendix) if it is felt that they may be able to share valuable experience in assessing the suitability of a site

5. Delegated Powers

- Working groups have no decision-making powers unless explicitly granted by a resolution of the Parish Council. All key decisions must be referred to full council for RESOLUTION
- All decisions and expenditure proposals must be approved by the Parish Council before implementation.
- Working groups may liaise with external bodies and gather information but cannot commit the Parish Council to any agreement.

- Should the working group need to incur minor expenses, these should be approved by Council at the start and then claimed back – these could include mileage, cost of hiring a meeting room etc

6. Reporting to Full Council

- The working group shall provide regular updates to the Parish Council, either in writing or verbally at Parish Council meetings.
- Any recommendations or proposals requiring council approval shall be presented at the next appropriate Parish Council meeting. The proposal must be submitted one week prior to council meeting for the clerk to include on the agenda

7. Meetings and Minute Taking

- Meetings shall be held as required and agreed upon by the group members. It is not essential that these meetings are held in public and the working group will be responsible for finding suitable locations
- A record of meetings shall be kept, summarising discussions, actions, and recommendations. These do not need to be formal minutes and a member of the working group may take these notes.
- Minutes shall be submitted to the Parish Clerk and included in the Parish Council's records as required.

8. Review

- The Parish Council will review the remit and effectiveness of each working group at least annually.
- The Council reserves the right to amend or dissolve a working group as necessary.

What is a Rural Exception Site?

These are small sites within our parish that would not usually be considered for residential development. They are an exception to this because they provide affordable homes to meet the housing needs of the community in perpetuity. They are in fact tailor-made for rural communities.

There are generally 10 steps to developing these sites.

The steps may not follow the exact sequence in the diagram; some steps will run in parallel and others may occur in a slightly different order. The Parish Council has a role to play in all parts giving support and communicating with parishioners and encouraging their involvement

The Parish Council is setting up a working group to ensure residents views are considered at every stage

This whole process can take 2 to 3 years

Stisted has already started this process by conducting a Housing Needs Survey to establish the Identifiable need in November 2024 with results published in February 2025.

The results had sufficient information to establish need for 10 households:

This can be broken down as follows;

- Up to 4 affordable rented homes (4 x 1 bed)
- Up to 4 shared ownership homes (3 x 2 bed and 1 x 3 bed)
- One discounted market sale home (1 x 2 bed)
- One open market property (1 x 2 bed)

Therefore, the affordable housing need for Stisted would be for up to 9 homes.

The 10 steps to delivering a Rural Exception Site



Step 3 is the first key step for the working group and will include consultation with the parish. There will be final public consultation just before submission for planning permission

Step 4 is the responsibility of the Parish Council who will seek views from RCCE, the Working Group and any Housing Associations who tender for the project
Steps 5, 6 and 7 are primarily the housing association responsibility and will include confidential discussions with landowners regarding Heads of Terms and in assessing costs of the project to raise Finance

Step 7 will allow further opportunity for any members of the public (in and outside of the parish) to comment on any design and planning applications

