

East Suffolk Community Partnerships - Terms of Reference

Community Partnerships (CPs) are an innovative way for the Council, partners and communities to work together to 'bring ideas to life' by taking a local approach to local priorities, following the creation of East Suffolk Council (ES), with larger wards and fewer (55) Councillors.

1. Form and Membership

- 1.1** There will be eight Community Partnerships (CPs), covering the whole of the ES Council area, based on groupings of communities, and using the ES ward boundaries as the building blocks. A plan showing the area of each CP is attached to these terms of reference. The CPs will report to the CP Board and the ES Cabinet.
- 1.2 The core voting membership of each CP will be drawn from the following pool dependent on the priorities of the CP (which means that each CP's membership will vary as some sectors or individuals may not be included as voting members, although they could be included as non-voting interested bodies/people):
- The ES Councillors for the CP area (between 4 and 14 Councillors)
 - The Suffolk County Council (SCC) Councillor(s) for the CP area (to sit on whichever/however many CPs best fit their SCC Division)
 - 2 representatives (from each Town Council in the CP area)
 - A representative from at least one Parish Council/Meeting for each of the individual ES wards within the CP area
 - A representative from Suffolk Police
 - A representative from Great Yarmouth and Waveney CCG or Ipswich and East Suffolk CCG (whichever serves the CP)
 - At least two representatives from the Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise sector (VCSE) nominated and supported by Community Action Suffolk
 - At least one representative from the business community
 - At least one representative from the youth community
 - A representative from Lowestoft Rising, Leiston Together or Felixstowe Forward, in the CPs covering Lowestoft or Leiston or Felixstowe.
 - At least one of the core members to be a 'rural champion' – representing and championing the views and needs of rural communities
- 1.3 Core voting members of the CP will be expected to;
- live, work or trade in the CP area,
 - have sufficient authority to speak for their organisation/partnership and
 - report back to their organisation/partnership on the activities of the CP.
- 1.4 The quorum for any meeting of the CP will be a minimum of 6 voting members of the CP. The membership of the CP will be reviewed annually in May, following the District or County Council elections (where applicable). If there is not a quorum present at each meeting of the CP, it will not be able to make any decisions at that meeting.

2. CP Principles

- Involve local councils, public services, communities, voluntary sector organisations and businesses in planning and delivering joined up services that meet local needs
- Make the best collective use of our assets and resources
- Base decisions on data and intelligence about local places
- Identify, understand and address deprivation, disadvantage and hidden needs and consider how CP decisions impact on both rural and non-rural areas
- Champion, represent and influence on behalf of East Suffolk and the eight Community Partnerships

3. Role of the CPs

3.1 CPs will:

- a) focus on cross cutting issues for which no one organisation is solely responsible
- b) hold an annual CP workshop, ideally including representatives of the wider community of the CP area to set or confirm the priorities for that CP, which are based on local data and knowledge
- c) develop an annual work plan to address the CP priorities for the coming year, and support delivery of the ES Strategic Plan
- d) address the CP priorities and identified gaps in service provision using a solution-focussed and problem-solving approach
- e) monitor and adapt their agenda in response to emerging issues affecting the CP area or a wider area in ES, including issues raised through Youth Voice and other sources of community intelligence
- f) report quarterly to the CP Board, and annually to the ES Cabinet, on progress against their priorities, and provide such other verbal/written reports to other organisations or partnership bodies, as requested.
- g) develop proposals for expenditure against the annual budget of £25,000 per CP and seek authorisation for actual expenditure from the ES Cabinet Member for Communities
- i) bid for additional funds from the ES Strategic Budget and from other external sources in order to deliver the priorities of the CP
- j) create Task & Finish/Working Groups as required to explore specific issues/priorities in greater detail
- k) conduct or commission research into policy or service delivery issues affecting the CP area
- l) actively support and send representatives to participate in the CPs Annual Forum
- m) ensure that all decisions have given due regard to the direct and indirect impacts on rural areas

4. Chair and Vice Chair of CPs

4.1 Each CP will be chaired by an ES Councillor for the CP area, appointed by the Leader of East Suffolk Council. This Councillor will (a detailed Job Description is available);

- fulfil this role until such time as they are replaced by the Leader of East Suffolk Council
- sit on the East Suffolk CP Board
- provide a strong sense of purpose and direction to the CP
- drive the CP's annual work programme
- work alongside a range of Officers including the Communities Officer, Communities Manager and other Communities Team members, Head of Communities and the Partnerships Manager.

4.2 The Vice Chair will be elected annually by the members of the CP and will deputise for, and take decisions on behalf of, the Chair in their absence.

5. Meetings of the CPs

5.1 CP Meetings will be by invitation but held in public and their style will be inclusive and interactive. Wherever possible they will be organised to problem solve (for example workshop style) rather than as formal meetings.

5.2 The “Municipal Year” for CPs will align with the financial year so will run from April to March and meetings will normally be held at least three times each year, although additional meetings may be called by the Chair as necessary, on at least five clear working days written notice. Task and Finish Groups may be established in order to progress Community Partnership business between CP meetings.

5.3 The dates of each CP Meeting will be agreed in advance by the CP and they will be held at a suitable venue within the CP area or remotely using video conferencing facilities.

5.4 Any member of the CP may request that an item be included on the agenda for a meeting. The meeting papers will be sent out by electronic mail (or post if necessary to those without internet access) to all members of the CP no later than five clear working days before the meeting.

5.5 Agendas and action points arising from each meeting will be recorded and published on the Community Partnership pages of the ESC website.

6. Voting

6.1 The aim at each CP meeting will be to reach decisions by a consensus with all core voting members of the CP being eligible to vote, and each will have one vote, indicated by a show of hands. The Chair of the CP will determine when there is no consensus and therefore an issue should be put to the vote. However, it is suggested that any funding matters should generally be voted on formally with core voting Members stating their vote verbally. Whichever method is used, a majority vote of those present and voting will prevail. The Chairman of the CP will have a casting vote.

7. Financial Accountability

7.1 The ES Council will operate as an accountable body for the eight CPs and the CP Board. The budget for each CP will be allocated against agreed priorities (unique to each CP) and clear criteria (the same for all eight CPs) which will be agreed at the first meeting of the CP each year. These are designed to ensure that this funding is not used for purposes beyond the ES Council’s powers, or the law, and that projects supported align with the ES Council’s Strategic Plan.