

Process for appointing a community chairperson for Area Partnerships

Some ideas for discussion

The framework for establishing Area Partnerships, which was approved by East Lothian Partnership and East Lothian Council, states that:

- The interim Chair of the Partnership will be a senior East Lothian Council official;
- A Chair of the Partnership will be appointed by the Area Partnership at an annual public meeting;

Working from this, and building on discussions that have been taking place across the different Area Partnerships, the following suggestions have been compiled as a basis for discussion about how we move forward with appointing a community based chair for the Partnership.

1) That the position of Chair of the Area Partnership is open to existing members of the Area Partnership and others within the community.

This would allow others who are not already involved in the Partnership, but who may have the time, skills and local knowledge needed to take on this leadership role, to consider coming forward.

2) That the role of Chair is advertised widely in each ward area as a voluntary post with an open application process.

A draft outline of the Role and Responsibilities of the Chairperson is attached for comment.

3) That the importance of an impartial chair is recognised.

Therefore if an existing members seeks and is appointed to the post that they step down from representing their organisation on the Partnership and their group nominates a new member.

4) That applications are assessed by the members of the Area Partnership and the decision on who to appoint is made by the members.

This could be achieved through a vote by all formal Partnership members based on written applications or you may feel there is a need for applicants to speak and/or present to the Partnership.

5) That the new Chair formally takes up their role at the first public Annual Meeting of the Area Partnership (c. June - Sept 2015).

This meeting would also be an opportunity for the wider community and local groups to hear about the work of the Partnership and comment on the draft Area Plans.

6) That the Chair is appointed initially for 2 years.

After that period Chairs would be elected at the Annual Public Meeting.

7) That the Chair is a full voting member of the Area Partnership, invested with the authority to act on the Partnership's behalf if/when the views of the membership cannot be ascertained.

8) That a Vice Chairperson is appointed from within the membership to chair meetings and represent the Area Partnership if the Chair is unavailable.

DRAFT Role and Responsibilities of the Chairperson of an Area Partnership

- a) To retain an overview of the Role and Remit of Area Partnerships and focus the work of the Partnership on these objectives.
- b) To show creative and active leadership to meet the challenges which people and communities face in their ward area and help maximise the opportunities which arise.
- c) To chair all business meetings of the Area Partnership, delegating this responsibility to the Vice Chairperson if necessary.
- d) To uphold the Code of Conduct adopted the Partnership and hold members to this standard of conduct.
- e) To liaise with Community Planning Staff and the Area Manager in the preparation of agendas for Area Partnership meetings, based on the Area Plan and emerging local issues.
- f) To approve meeting minutes etc prior to distribution.
- g) To be the principle point of contact for the Area Manager in relation to monitoring and reporting on progress in delivering on Area Plans and continuous service improvement in the area.
- h) To retain an overview of the work of sub-groups / working groups associated with the Area Partnership.
- i) To work with Community Planning Staff and the Area Manager to facilitate requests made by Partnership members for information, reports and updates from service providers.
- j) To represent the Area Partnership at a Strategic Partnership level or on other business if required.
- k) To be a key point of contact for members of the public and local groups wishing to engage with the Area Partnership or propose an item for the agenda.
- l) To report performance to communities in the ward area at least once a year.

Person Specification

Essential:

- Local knowledge and an understanding of the priorities, concerns and assets within the ward area
- A commitment to reducing inequalities within and between communities
- A commitment to community service
- Leadership skills and the ability to inspire confidence and trust across local communities
- Good communication and negotiation skills
- Ability to act impartially in the interests of the wider public
- Experience of chairing meetings involving a wide variety of stakeholders
- *Time, patience and a sense of humour...*

Desirable:

- Understanding of public service administration
- Understanding of the principles underpinning Community Planning
- Awareness of the priorities and outcomes contained in the East Lothian Plan: SOA 2013-23