

Process for appointing a community based chairperson for Area Partnerships

East Lothian Partnership

Following discussions at each of the 6 Area Partnerships across East Lothian this paper outlines the process that will be undertaken across the county to seek nominations and appoint a community based chair for each Area Partnership.

Call for Applications:

An open call for applications to chair each of the Area Partnerships will be issued on the 11th May 2015.

Applications will be sought from people aged 16 and over resident in each ward. Applicants do not have to be existing members of an Area Partnership, however applications from members will be encouraged.

The call for nominations will be issued by Local Community Planning staff at East Lothian Council on behalf of each Area Partnership and will include:

- The direct notification of all Area Partnership members
- A press release issued by the ELC Communications department, supported by distribution through ELC's social media channels
- A public notice in the East Lothian News and East Lothian Courier – for publication 15/5/15
- Promotion through a newsletter for each Partnership
- Local distribution of information by Area Partnership members and associated networks.

The application process:

Prospective applicants will be directed to contact the relevant Area Partnership and request an application pack which will include:

- a role and responsibilities description for the position of Chairperson;
- an application form asking about their background, connections with the local community and reasons for wanting to become chairperson
- the Area Partnership information sheet and Role and Remit document
- the code of conduct for members
- the newsletter for the relevant Area Partnership

Applications for membership will be returned to Local Community Planning staff at East Lothian Council by post or email.

Applications will close on the 1st June 2015.

Process for electing a chairperson:

Short-listing: if more than 5 applications are received to Chair an Area Partnership the application forms will be sent to all MEMBERS* for short-listing.

** For this purpose Members will be taken to be those people confirmed as full members of the Partnership on the date applications close.*

Members can choose to share this decision with their substitutes, or delegate the responsibility to them, however only 1 response will be accepted for each membership place.

Interviewing: will take place by the members of the Area Partnership.

- Ideally this should take place at the next meeting of the Area Partnership however, when the existing meeting schedule would mean a significant delay in appointment, it is recommended that a Special Meeting of the Area Partnership is called in June/July to undertake this interviewing process.

Short-listed candidates will be invited to speak at a meeting of the Area Partnership.

- It is recommended that each candidate is given up to 5 minutes to address the Partnership, followed by 5 minutes for questions. This process would be managed by the existing chairperson.

Voting: the chairperson will be elected by the MEMBERS* of the Area Partnership on the day of the interviews.

** For this purpose Members will be taken to be those people confirmed as full members of the Partnership on the date applications close.*

Members can choose to share this decision with their substitutes, or delegate the responsibility to them, however only 1 vote will be accepted for each membership place.

- Voting will take place via a secret ballot – with a voting paper supplied to all members.
- Voting will take place through a preferential voting system with members asked to indicate their 1st, 2nd and 3rd preference (where the number of candidates allows).
- Voting papers will ask the member to identify the group they are representing so that their eligibility to vote can be confirmed.
- If both the member and their named substitute are unable to attend the meeting where the interviews take place they can register their vote on the basis of the written applications or give their proxy in writing to another Partnership member.
- Voting papers will include the option of abstaining from the vote but should still be returned to acknowledge the member has participated in the process.
- Voting papers should be returned to Local Community Planning staff (in person or via email) by midnight on the day of the vote.
- The vote will be confirmed as valid if a quorate number of members participate.
- The results of the vote will be announced the next working day.

Appointment of the Chair:

The Chairperson of each Area Partnership will initially be appointed for 2 years, following that period a Chairperson would be elected each year at the Annual General Meeting.

- A retiring chairperson can remain a member of the Area Partnership, even if they are not representing a specific group, if their co-option is agreed by the majority of the members at that time.
- If the Chairperson needs to step down during the initial 2 year period it would be up to the members of the Area Partnership to appoint a suitable replacement until the next AGM.

Once appointed it is expected that the elected Chairperson would begin a process of transition with the interim Chairperson, supported by the Area Manager and Local Community Planning staff.

- It is recommended that the Chairperson formally takes up their post at the first AGM of each Area Partnership – intended to take place between June and September 2015 – however it is up to each Partnership to identify an appropriate point for this handover based on their own meeting schedule.

The Chairperson will be a full member of the Area Partnership. As chairperson they will also have the authority to act on the Partnership's behalf if/when the views of the membership cannot be ascertained.

- It is recommended that if an existing member is appointed to the post that they step down from representing their organisation on the Partnership and their group nominates a new member. This would allow their group to retain their existing influence within the Area Partnership without placing an additional burden on the Chairperson.
- It is recommended that a Vice Chairperson is further appointed from within the membership to chair meetings and represent the Area Partnership if the Chair is unavailable.