

Terms of Reference for Local Community Networks

1.0 Membership

1.1 Each Local Community Network will comprise of the following core membership:

- a) The elected Somerset Council Councillors representing the electoral divisions covered by the Local Community Network;
- b) An elected representative from each City, Town or Parish Council within the area covered by the Local Community Network;
- c) Representatives from the following groups or organisations:
 - a. Local Neighbourhood policing team;
 - b. Somerset National Health Service
 - c. Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service;
 - d. Education
 - e. Representatives from Voluntary, Community, Faith and Social Enterprise Organisations
 - f. Representatives from Businesses or Trade Groups

1.2 The core membership list will be classed as the voting members of the Local Community Network.

1.3 Each Local Community Network will support and encourage wider participation and engagement from additional attendees. This could include, for example:

- Local Community and Voluntary Sector Organisations
- Local Businesses or Trade Groups
- Housing Associations or Housing Officers
- Any other relevant local groups which could include youth groups, cultural organisations, environmental groups, older people's groups, disability groups, etc.

2.0 Purpose, Role and Function

2.1 The purpose of the Local Community Networks is to be the focus for the new Council for community engagement and development, within an ethos of local partnership working, looking to improve outcomes for residents through establishing strong connections between Somerset Council, our communities and our partners.

2.2 The Local Community Networks will have the following roles and functions:

- Establishing effective local community engagement and influence;
- Promote enhanced participation in democracy, active community decision making and scrutiny;
- Enhance collaboration by bringing together at a local level representatives from partner organisations, town, City and parish councils, community groups and others
- Ensure local influence over the Council and wider public service activity;

- Share information, ideas and solutions to enable services to be delivered to help meet local need;
- To inspire more responsibility for local place shaping;
- To identify evidence-based community priorities; across Economic, Social and Environmental issues;
- To create plans to reflect how the priorities will be addressed; and
- To identify and secure resource opportunities for local projects

3.0 What will the Local Community Network be responsible for?

3.1 The Local Community Networks will:

- Agree priorities and areas of focus for the local area on an annual basis
- Agree a tailored communication and engagement plan for actively involving residents and other local stakeholders.
- Allocate any funding obtained by the Local Community Network as appropriate, and in accordance with rules and guidance set out by the Council's Contract Procedure Rules and Standing Orders.
- Provide opportunities to ensure that the local community is able to respond to consultations in a timely manner.
- Provide opportunities to ensure good communications and information from Somerset Council, and partners, on local issues.
- Make recommendations to Somerset Council and/or other partners on funding local projects.
- Make recommendations to Somerset Council, and partners, on key local issues.
- Produce an annual report with a self-assessment of success in relation to delivery against the agreed priorities and areas of focus for the local area for the past 12 months.
- Hold an annual meeting to enable residents and local stakeholders to input into setting area priorities for the next 12 months and highlight local issues.

4.0 Funding

4.1 Each Local Community Network may receive funding as determined from time to time by the Council or partners. The LCN is also able to submit funding bids to organisations.

4.2 Where appropriate, Somerset Council will act as the Accountable Body for any external funding.

4.3 The Local Community Networks will allocate any funds in accordance with Somerset Council's Procedure Rules including the Financial Procedure Rules and Contract Procedure Rules.

5.0 Officer Support

5.1 Each Local Community Network will be supported by a dedicated officer from the Unitary Council and a Democratic Services Officer(s).

5.2 Local Community Networks can ask other officers (including external partners officers) to attend their meetings to discuss items of business on their agenda.

6.0 Order of Business

6.1 The order of business for the Annual Meeting and ordinary meetings of the Local Community Networks can be found in Appendix A

7.0 Chair

7.1 The procedure for the nomination of the Chair and Vice-Chair can be found in Appendix B.

7.2 The Vice-Chair will preside in the absence of the Chair and if neither is present, the Local Community Network will appoint a Chair from among its voting membership for that respective meeting.

7.3 The role of the Chair will include:

- a) Providing leadership to ensure that the objectives of the Local Community Networks are met.
- b) Ensuring that the voices of the local community are at the heart of the work of the Local Community Networks.
- c) Working with Officers to set the agendas and to ensure that any action points are picked up and dealt with
- d) Chair the meetings effectively to ensure that its business can be carried out efficiently and that all parties have an opportunity to input
- e) Ensure that the meeting is a forum for debate of matters of interest and/or concern to the local community
- f) Represent the Local Community Network at the quarterly meetings with the Executive Member and Scrutiny Chair(s)
- g) Produce an annual report on behalf of the Local Community Network which will be considered by the Executive

8.0 Voting

8.1 Local Community Networks will seek to reach decisions by consensus where possible, involving the core membership (listed in section 1.1). Prior to such a vote, the Chair may upon his/her discretion take an indicative vote of the representatives set out in section 1.3.

8.2 Where a vote is required then this will be by a show of hands of the voting membership present.

8.3 Where the vote is tied, the Chair of the Local Community Network shall have a second or casting vote.

8.4 However, on the occasions where a formal decision needs to be made this will be recommended to the Somerset Council Executive for consideration.

9.0 Quorum

9.1 Quorum will be 40% of the core membership (section 5.1) in attendance at the Local Community Network.

10.0 Meeting frequency and location

10.1 Local Community Networks will meet 6-8 times a year, however this is at the discretion of each individual LCN.

11.0 Access to Information

11.1 Local Community Network meetings will be held in public.

11.2 Agendas will be published on the Somerset Council website 5 clear days before the meeting

11.3 Draft minutes will be published on the Council website within 5 working days following the meeting.

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Appendix A

The order of business for the Annual Meeting of the Local Community Network

The Annual Meeting of the Local Community Network will take place annually based on the commencement date of the Local Community Network..

Items of business for the Local Community Network Annual Meeting will be:

- a) To elect the Chair of the Local Community Network
- b) To appoint the Vice-Chair of the Local Community Network
- c) To receive any apologies for absence
- d) Declarations of Interest
- e) Public Question Time
- f) Approve the minutes from the previous meeting
- g) To consider the Annual Report on the Local Community Network's work in the last 12 months
- h) To determine the priorities and areas of focus for the Local Community Network for the next 12 months
- i) To consider any other business set out in the agenda
- j) To agree the frequency of meetings
- k) To agree the schedule of meetings for the next 12 months

The order of business for ordinary meetings of the Local Community Network

Items of business for the ordinary meetings of the Local Community Networks will be:

- a) To receive any apologies for absence
- b) Declarations of Interest
- c) Public Question Time
- d) To approve the minutes from the previous meeting
- e) To receive updates on any action points from previous meeting(s)
- f) To consider any other business set out in the agenda

Appendix B

The procedure for the nomination of the Chair and Vice-Chair

Either the Chair / or Vice-Chair of the Local Community Network shall be a Somerset Council Councillor. The other position to be filled by a suitably trained and experienced chair nominated from the above board participants.

Election will take place annually at the Annual Meeting of the Local Community Network.

The Democratic Services Officer will call for nominations for the position of Chair of the Local Community Network.

Only voting board participants are able to make nominations. A nomination must be seconded to be valid

A board participant shall not be nominated in his/her absence without their written consent.

In the event of only one valid nomination being received, the person presiding will declare the nominated board participant elected.

In the event of two valid nominations, the Democratic Services Officer will ask for a show of hands for those board participants in favour of each nominated candidate and declare the candidate receiving the majority of votes (of the board participants present and voting) to be the winner.

In the case of an equal number of votes for the two candidates, a random electronic generator will be used by the Democratic Services Officer to determine the winner of the election and then declare the result.

In the case of three or more valid nominations being made, the Democratic Services Officer will call for a show of hands for each of the candidates. The Democratic Services Officer will then announce the candidate with the least number of votes and that candidate will be eliminated (in the event of a tie for the least number of votes, the Democratic Services Officer will use a random electronic generator to determine which candidate will be eliminated). A further vote shall be taken for the remaining candidates and after each vote the candidate with the least number of votes shall be eliminated until only two candidates remain and a final vote can be taken (following section 9.5 and 9.6 above).

The Chair and Vice Chair will hold office until the next Annual Meeting unless they resign from the position. In the event of a resignation, an election for the Chair and/or Vice-Chair will take place at the next available meeting.