

Proposed Terms of Reference for Local Area Forums

Local Area Forums: Draft Revised Terms of Reference

1 Purpose

- 1.1 To provide an opportunity to support public service consultations and community engagement at a local level, promote and extend community empowerment in the area and seek feedback or champion solutions on issues raised.
- 1.2 To disseminate information to local communities and partners and to feedback information from local areas to organisations providing local services.
- 1.3 To agree the key local priorities for the local area, identified through consultation and engagement with local communities and partners.
- 1.4 To make recommendations to the County Council on the allocation of Local Priorities Funding.

2 Legal Status

- 2.1 Local Area Forums are informal meetings convened by the County Council to which all County Councillors, District Councillors and Parish and Town Councillors (appointed as representatives by their local Council) within the area are invited to participate as members.
- 2.2 With respect to County Council matters, decisions of LAFs are advisory. As such they are not binding on the County Council, although the Council will endeavour to honour these recommendations unless there is a fundamental reason why this should not be so. However, as advisory bodies, if less than 51% of the core membership of the LAF attends a meeting, the Council may take this into consideration.
- 2.3 Where the detailed Terms of Reference as outlined below are silent, by convention the Standing Orders of the County Council's Constitution will guide the conduct of LAF meetings.

3 Membership

- 3.1 Membership includes all County Councillors, District Councillors and Councillor representatives of Local Councils in the LAF area.
- 3.2 The number of representatives per Parish and Town Council may be determined by each LAF.
- 3.3 The LAF may invite other bodies or individuals into the membership at the discretion of the Chairman.
- 3.4 Substitutions are permitted.
- 3.6 Each Council's representative is responsible for reporting back on the LAF meeting to their organisation to ensure decisions are actioned and information flow maintained. Where the LAF Membership includes more than one representative from an organisation, this responsibility will be undertaken by a named representative.

4 Chairmanship

- 4.1 As the convenor of the meetings, the County Council has reserved the right for its Cabinet Member for Community Engagement to appoint the Chairman and Vice Chairman of each LAF.
- 4.2 The Chairman of the LAF will be a member of the County Council.
- 4.3 The Vice Chairman will be nominated by the Chairman and confirmed by the Cabinet Member for Community Engagement.
- 4.4 The Chairman and Vice Chairman will be appointed for four years in line with the County Council term of administration and will be confirmed at the first meeting following the County Council elections. The Cabinet Member for Community Engagement may rescind appointments within the four year period.
- 4.5 The Vice Chairman will preside in the absence of the Chairman and if neither is present, the LAF will appoint a Chairman from among the Forum members present for the purposes of that meeting.

5. Frequency

- 5.1 Frequency of LAF meetings may be agreed locally by each LAF but will meet no more frequently than four times a year.

6. Public Participation

- 6.1 LAF meetings will be open to the public and press.
- 6.2 LAF meetings will allow a maximum 20 minute period (longer at the Chairman's discretion) for public questions and comments and receipt of petitions at each meeting. Members of the public will be encouraged to submit their questions in advance of the meeting to receive a full answer.
- 6.3 Members of the public may speak on particular agenda items at the discretion of the Chairman.
- 6.4 Other bodies or individuals may be invited to attend specific meetings for a particular meeting.

7. Agenda

- 7.1 The Chairman will be responsible for the content of LAF agendas. All members of the LAF may submit agenda items which will be included at the discretion of the Chairman.
- 7.2 LAF agendas will be published online via the County Council's website giving at least 5 clear working days before the meeting.
- 7.3 Minutes will be published on the County Council's website within 15 working days of the meeting.

8. Voting

- 8.1 All members of the relevant LAF are full voting members of the Forum and only Members of the Forum can vote.
- 8.2 Subject to point 3.1 above on the core membership of each LAF, each LAF is able to locally determine the exact membership rules. As all full members of each LAF are full voting members, the means that eligibility to vote will be locally determined.
- 8.3 The membership of each LAF (and thereby voting eligibility) must be agreed as a standing item on the agenda of the first meeting following the County Council Election every 4 years.
- 8.4 If the relevant LAF fails to reach a view at this first meeting on the membership of each LAF (and thereby voting eligibility), then the Chairman of the relevant LAF has discretion to determine the rules.

8.4 A record of each LAF's locally determined membership rules will be published in the minutes of the meeting and consolidated into an overall document published on the Council's website to ensure transparency.

8.5 Simple majority voting by those eligible to vote will take place, and the Chairman of the meeting will have the casting vote in the case of a tie.

9. Officer Support

9.1 The County Council will provide administrative and policy support for the LAF.