



East Sussex Rural Partnership Terms of Reference

1. Aims of the Partnership

The aims of the Partnership are to:-

- Bring together relevant organisations to provide coordination and leadership for rural interests to ensure the best delivery of services for rural East Sussex.
- Champion rural interests across East Sussex.
- Ensure effective and efficient delivery of publicly funded rural programmes.
- Reflect the broad range of interests from economic, social and community and environmental viewpoints and to provide a platform for discussion of different interests and perspectives.
- Influence and monitor the outcomes of the LAA and other strategies that have an impact on rural East Sussex.
- Work alongside other organisations and partnerships in the County to further the interests of East Sussex.

2. Role of the Partnership

- Ensure that the East Sussex LAA and other high level East Sussex strategies are rural proofed both at a technical level and by involving rural people in their development.
- Act as a lobbying group to influence regional and national strategy, policy, allocation of funding and the delivery of rural services
- Link with Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs) and other similar partnerships to put forward the rural case and ensure collaboration over projects where possible.
- Report to the East Sussex Assembly on how delivery of the LAA is progressing in rural areas and to recommend improvements in delivery
- Pull together priorities for rural areas from the organisations represented and agree priorities for action to be promoted to regional and national bodies, e.g. GOSE, SEEDA, DCLG, DEFRA, Natural England and the Commission for Rural Communities(CRC).
- Improve efficiency of partnership working in rural East Sussex with a view to making better use of available funding
- Organise 2 meetings of East Sussex Rural Forum each year, as the wider rural stakeholder group, with a very broad and diverse range of rural interests represented on it.
- Provide regular reports and representatives to the East Sussex Assembly, the Rural Forum South east and other partnerships as appropriate.

3. Membership

The membership of the Partnership is open to organisations that have an interest and influence in matters that affect rural East Sussex. Eligible organisations may be admitted to membership by majority vote of the Partnership, subject to the total membership of the Partnership not exceeding thirty.

The schedule of members will be reviewed formally at least once a year and this review will bear in mind the need to reflect the balance between economy, social and community and environmental interests as well as the Public, Voluntary and Community Sector and Private sectors.

It is important that members share the decision making and commit to making a positive contribution to the Partnership. Regular attendance is vital and representatives on the Partnership should have sufficient seniority within their organisation to facilitate the formulation, development and delivery of solutions. The Partnership can decide to remove any member, particularly if they fail to attend meetings or keep in contact regularly .

The membership may co-opt other members as they consider appropriate; such members will not be eligible to vote. Membership is with the organisation rather than the individual and can be defined for Local Authorities as elected member and / or officer (see also voting arrangements below section 6).

Requirements of Partnership members

- Ability and enthusiasm to help further the aims of the Partnership and to act in the interests of the Partnership
- An understanding of the needs and challenges of rural East Sussex
- Responsibility to communicate the work of the Partnership within their own organisation and more widely as required
- Ability to commit up to ½ day per quarter plus attendance at the 2 Rural Forum meetings in the year

The membership list of the Rural Partnership is as follows:-

- East Sussex Association of Local Councils
- Sussex Police
- Action in rural Sussex (AirS)
- East Sussex County Council
- Each of the three rural District Councils, Lewes, Wealden, Rother
- South Downs Joint Committee / South Downs National Park
- High Weald AONB
- WARR Partnership
- Plumpton College
- East Sussex PCTs
- The Children's Trust
- Adult Services
- Federation of Small Businesses (FSB)
- National Farmers Union (NFU)
- The Land and Country Business Association (CLA)
- Natural England
- The Environment Agency
- GOSE
- SEEDA

The membership list will be reviewed at least once a year.

Representation

The Rural Partnership has representation on

- The East Sussex Strategic Partnership
- The Rural Forum South East

The Partnership will elect members to other bodies as requested and agreed by the Partnership

4. Administration

The Chairman will be appointed through a nomination process and the position will be held for three years. This term can be renewed by agreement.

The Partnership will appoint a chairman for individual meetings should the appointed Chairman be unable to attend.

Action in rural Sussex will fulfil the role of organising body and provide the secretariat. As such it will manage the financial resources that the Partnership secures for meetings and the delivery of the work programme.

Meetings will be held at least quarterly.

5. Decision making

A quorum for decision making will be 33% of the membership of representative organisations as list above. Items on the agenda will be discussed even if the meeting is not quorate.

Each organisation can send a substitute representative to attend in the event that their nominated representative is unable to attend.

Should decisions require a vote, each organisation has one vote, regardless of how many people from that organisation are attending the meeting.

Members will declare any organisational conflict of interest on agenda items at the start of the meeting.

Decision will be made at meetings by a vote of members present and carried by a majority.

In the event that decisions are required before the next meeting, it will be canvassed by email and made by the Chair, with the support of the secretariat and any others who are so identified.

Officer groups or working groups can be given delegated responsibilities by the Partnership. These must be clearly stated in the minutes of the relevant meeting. Such groups will report to the Partnership as agreed.

6. Principles

- All individuals and organisations within the Partnership work as equals, with their contributions being equally regarded.
- The Partnership will operate on a basis of openness and transparency, actively involving key players, including public, voluntary and community
- The Partnership will focus on strategic issues which require a Countywide or supra-district response, especially matters which are not already dealt with by other partnerships or where County level delivery or co-ordination can reduce duplication of effort or save resources. In doing this the Partnership will avoid creating any duplication with existing partnerships.

- The Partnership will play a key strategic role in establishing shared objectives and priorities, and agreed actions and milestones with an emphasis on achieving improved outcomes and opportunities for communities within East Sussex.
- The Partnership is committed to ensuring that individuals are not being disadvantaged because of where they live, their race, gender, disability, age, sexual orientation or religion and faith. Account will be taken of the statutory requirements set out in the legislation, which addresses unlawful discrimination and promotes equality, diversity and community cohesion.

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