

## **Terms of Reference for the West Sussex Rural Partnership**

***We are committed to ensuring that we support and promote a living working countryside for West Sussex***

### **1. Aims of the Partnership**

The aims of the Partnership are to:-

- Bring together relevant organisations to provide coordination and leadership for rural interests that ensure the effective and efficient delivery of services for rural West Sussex.
- Champion rural interests across West Sussex.
- 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.
- Provide a rural-proofing role which influences and monitors the outcomes of the LAA and other strategies that have an impact on rural West Sussex.
- Work alongside and with the other spatial Partnerships in the County to further the interests of West Sussex.

### **2. Role of the Partnership**

The role of the Partnership is to:

- Monitor the progress and outcomes of appropriate rural delivery programmes, funded within the County.
- Pull together priorities for rural areas into the West Sussex Rural Strategy and agree priorities for action to be promoted locally and to regional and national bodies.
- Influence local, regional and national policies, strategies and the associated allocation of funding to support the rural priorities.
- Make the best use of available funding by discussion and partnership working between member organisations.
- Be the 'rural voice' with the Local Strategic Partnerships and other partnerships as required.
- Ensure that County-wide strategies are rural proofed and to actively participate in future refresh exercises at the County or District level as appropriate.
- Organise the West Sussex Rural Forum twice a year with the wider stakeholders, to discuss issues and assist in the development of new policies .
- Work with the Rural Connections Group to deliver economic initiatives and with other relevant officer groups areas as required.
- Provide regular reports and representatives to the West Sussex Public Service Board and the West Sussex Economy Skills and Enterprise Board.

### **3. Membership**

The membership of the Partnership is open to organisations that have an interest and influence in matters that affect rural West 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.

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 regularly (2 out of 4 meetings).

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 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:-

- West Sussex Association of Local Councils
- Action in rural Sussex
- West Sussex County Council
- One elected Member from each of the four rural district councils, Horsham, Chichester, Mid Sussex and Arun.
- NHS West Sussex
- The Children's Trust
- Adult Services
- The National Farmers Union (NFU)
- Land and Country Business Association (CLA)
- Federation of Small Businesses (FSB)
- One member from the three protected landscapes, e.g. South Downs National Park and Joint Committee (2010), High Weald AONB, Chichester Harbour Conservancy
- Business Link South East
- Sussex Police
- University of Chichester
- Chichester College
- One member from GOSE
- One member from SEEDA

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

### **Representation**

The Partnership will currently provide representation to the following:-

- West Sussex Economic Skills and Enterprise Board
- West Sussex Culture and Sports Board
- West Sussex Environment and Climate Change Board
- Rural Forum South east

The Partnership will consider additional requests for representation on an individual basis.

#### **4. Administration**

The Chairman and Vice Chairman will be appointed through a nomination and election process and the positions will be held for two years. This term can be renewed by agreement.

Action in rural Sussex will fulfil the role of managing the work of the Partnership and will 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 4 times a year. The Rural Forum meetings will be held 2 times a year.

#### **5. Decision making**

A quorum for decision making will be 33% of the membership of representative organisations as listed 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. Each organisation has one vote, regardless of how many people attend 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. If members cannot attend the meeting they can make representations to the meeting by contacting the secretariat in advance of the meeting who will pass these on to the Chairman, but they will not be able to vote. 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
- 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 West 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.