

TENDRING LOCAL STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP
Partnership Agreement and Protocol

1. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this Agreement is to establish a framework within which the Members of the Tendring Local Strategic Partnership can demonstrate their commitment to support and participate in the Partnership.

The Agreement and Protocol is not a binding contractual agreement and is intended to show commitment to the aims of the Partnership and the other members of the Partnership.

2. OBJECTIVES

- To promote equality and diversity and improve the quality of life for everyone who lives in, works in or visits Tendring.
- To strengthen partnership working to ensure that everyone is working in the same strategic direction, sharing resources, information and expertise to address key issues and local problems.
- To maximise the use of existing resources across all sectors and access additional funding and resources from local, regional, national and European sources for the benefit of Tendring.
- To develop a Sustainable Community Strategy for Tendring.
- To contribute to sustainable development, both locally, nationally and (where appropriate) internationally.
- To improve consultation methods across the area.

3. OUR GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- Create added value through focussing partnership working on those problems and issues which no one organisation can solve on their own;
- Aim for excellence through continuous improvement;
- Create a learning culture in how we do things;
- Encourage public engagement and participation;
- Promotion of equality and diversity;
- Work to create sustainable and cohesive communities;
- Stimulate a facilitating and enabling culture in our organisations; and
- Take into account the aims of other relevant strategies.
- Maximise the potential contribution of the voluntary sectors.

4. MEMBERSHIP

The Tendring Local Strategic Partnership is an inclusive forum to bring together partnerships and organisations based on good will and a shared common purpose.

It is agreed and understood that it is the “partnership of partnerships” in the area, with its membership drawn from the most senior decision makers. It is a non-statutory partnership.

At present it does not have a separate legal entity and cannot be an "approved body".

The Partnership operates strategically. Implementation will be through its Executive Board, Theme Delivery Groups and member organisations drawn from the community as required and agreed by the wider Partnership.

Individual partners will remain responsible and accountable for decisions about their own services and resources.

Where an individual partner has goals primarily set by central government, the Partnership will identify the appropriate contribution that its members can make to achieve those goals. Where local and regional or national priorities are not aligned - either in respect of specific outcomes or resource implications, the Partnership will seek the advice of Go-East.

Membership is open to any organisation and/or service provider in Tendring wishing to support the work of the Partnership and its aims. Taking on membership includes the acceptance of the responsibility to work within the terms of this Agreement and Protocol.

Membership is primarily aimed at organisations rather than at individuals who do not represent an organisation. However, the Partnership has a responsibility to actively involve under-represented groups and it may wish to involve specific individuals where they represent a minority interest or issue.

5. MEETINGS OF THE WIDER PARTNERSHIP

The wider Partnership will meet on at least one occasion annually at a Stakeholders and Community Conference.

6. THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

The Executive Board shall oversee the work of the Partnership and progress in meeting the targets set out in the Sustainable Community Strategy.

The Executive Board of the Partnership shall comprise members drawn from the public, private and community sectors and its working arrangements would need to include how the Chairs of the Theme Delivery Groups report progress on their areas of responsibility to the Board. The number of Theme Groups may vary from time to time depending on the number priorities in the Community Strategy and other priorities.

The member organisations of the Executive Board shall commit themselves to being represented at the most senior managerial level.

Only the named representatives from each organisation will be permitted to sit on the Executive Board. No substitutes will be allowed and Board Members will need to be required to attend at least half the meetings per annum.

Observers may attend meetings with the permission of the Chair.

7. COMPOSITION OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

The Executive Board is not a body which is elected by the public. The Partnership is a group of organisations from the public, community and private sectors who come together voluntarily to improve the quality of life of the residents of Tendring. The Executive Board is composed of representatives of the main public, community and private sector organisations and agencies that can make a difference to quality of life issues. Its membership is selected by the partnership members rather than elected by the public.

Government guidance and national practice recommends that the Board should include senior decision-making representatives from the principle local authorities – the District and County Councils, the Primary Care Trust and the Police. They are the largest public sector budget holders and can clearly bring benefit to local people through joint-planning.

The Council representatives on the Executive Board shall be the Leader and the Chief Executive of the Council and the County Council would also need to be represented at a senior officer and member level. It is recommended that the Primary Care Trust be represented by its Chief Executive Officer, and that the Police be represented by the District Commander.

The voluntary, charitable and community sector must be represented at the most senior level. It is recommended that the Chief Executive Officer of Tendring Community Voluntary Services agency should be included.

Senior representation from the business community is vital to the success of the Partnership. The private sector should decide how they wish to be represented through their business organisations.

The membership of the Board will be reviewed annually by each sector (public, private, community) involved in the Partnership.

The Executive Board will elect a Chairman and Vice-Chairman from amongst their number. These appointments will be subject to review every 12 months by the Board or earlier if either of these posts become vacant.

8. MEETINGS OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

Meetings of the Executive Board will be held at least quarterly or more frequently should the need arise.

The Executive Board shall require a quorum of half of its members to be present in order to make decisions on behalf of the Board.

There shall be written Agendas and Minutes for all meetings. Agendas will be circulated a minimum of five working days before the Board meeting and late items should only be tabled with the approval of the Chairman. Decisions which require a vote shall be by a show of hands based upon one vote per organisation represented on the Board and the Chairman shall have a casting vote in the event of a tie.

The Chairman shall be responsible for the conduct of all meetings and may adjourn the proceedings if so required.

If the Chairman is not present within ten minutes of the time fixed for the meeting or is unwilling or unable to act in the case of a conflict of interest, the members present will elect one of their number to act as Chairman for that meeting or item only.

All meetings will be held in public unless the Board determines to consider a matter in private in the interests of confidentiality or commercial sensitivity, for example.

9. SECRETARIAT

Administrative support will be provided by Tendring District Council until and unless the Executive Board shall decide to make other arrangements.

10. THEME DELIVERY

As with the Executive Board, the Theme Delivery Groups are not bodies elected by the public. The organisations who chose to involve themselves from the public, community and private sectors do so voluntarily to improve the quality of life of the residents of Tendring. The Delivery Groups are composed of representatives of public, community and private sector

organisations and agencies that can add value to work on the Theme(s) in question. Their membership is reviewed by the partnership members rather than elected by the public.

Meetings of the Theme Delivery Groups will be agreed as necessary to deliver on the actions identified in the relevant Action Plan of the Tendring Sustainable Community Strategy.

The Partnership has a responsibility to actively involve under-represented groups and it may wish to involve individuals on Delivery Groups where they represent a minority interest or issue.

Members of the Executive Board may also be involved in a Delivery Group if invited to do so by a Delivery Group Chair.

The Delivery Groups shall require a quorum of at least 60% of their total active/key membership to be present in order to make decisions on behalf of the Group.

11. SCRUTINY OF THE PARTNERSHIP

All members of the Partnership, the Executive Board and the Theme Delivery Groups shall abide by the extant and nationally recognised procedures, guidelines and standards for ensuring probity and good governance in public life.

The Executive Board shall report annually to the public at the Stakeholders and Community Conference at which any person or organisation may attend.

The Executive Board shall report annually to the full Council of the Tendring District Council. The purpose shall be to report on the progress and activities of the Partnership.

The District Council may scrutinise the work of the Partnership through its Community Leadership and Partnerships Committee.

12. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST & DISPUTES

Members of the Executive Board and the Theme Delivery Groups shall declare any financial, personal, business or organisational interest in writing and verbally at meetings and any such interest shall be declared in the minutes.

The minutes of meetings including any such declarations shall be available for public scrutiny at all times. The original documentation shall be available on request and the information shall be published or distributed electronically or in paper form.

The Executive Board shall scrutinise and make rulings on all declarations of interest as they arise. A declaration of interest may disbar a Member from participating in a project, or discussion if it is judged that the interest declared is prejudicial to the aims, objectives and spirit of the Partnership. Or, that such an interest can reasonably be judged to be mostly to the benefit of the individual or organisation making the declaration rather than mostly to the benefit of the Partnership.

13. OPERATIONS

The Tendring Sustainable Community Strategy will be the key document for the Partnership. Its broad principles, and identified themes objectives and actions, will provide the basis for the establishment of the Theme Delivery Groups to deliver policies and appropriate interventions meet agreed targets.

The Tendring Sustainable Community Strategy will be approved by the Partnership as a whole and individual member's organisations will need to endorse its contents.

Members are accountable to the Partnership, in terms of their responsibilities, to achieve the outcomes which flow from the Tendring Sustainable Community Strategy and for any other agreements made by the Partnership including in respect of the Essex Local Area Agreement.

Stimulating community interest and engagement during the preparation and on-going reviews of the Tendring Sustainable Community Strategy is of vital importance and the Board will need to ensure that this happens on a regular basis through a Communications Action Plan.

Public awareness will continue to be developed. This will include all meeting information being made public, promotional events and a dedicated website will be developed and maintained.

14. RESOURCES

All of the members of the Partnership will need to identify how they will support the Tendring Sustainable Community Strategy both in terms of general allocation of resources and in terms of the specific allocation of resources designed to support a project for which they are responsible, or involved in, but which is to be undertaken within the framework of the Strategy.

It is envisaged this may be through:

- Members of the Partnership giving general support to the partnership both through the commitment of staff time and where appropriate through the commitment of both revenue and capital resources. Where necessary it is intended that whenever such resources are made available, they are committed to be spent within the remit established by the Community Strategy.
- The Members of the Partnership may also, when appropriate, commit themselves to making available resources that would normally be spent by them in their own right in support of individual members' programmes, but where those programmes form part of the Sustainable Community Strategy it has been agreed that the partners will commit those resources through the Partnership.

At all times any funding or resource will still be the responsibility of the member organisation, reorganising the resource constraints in the voluntary sector. It is not proposed that the Partnership will have a budget or specific funding solely for the use of the Partnership. Existing resources or grants through normal working practice of the members will be the main source of funding. This will be reviewed as appropriate to meet the aims of the Sustainable Community Strategy.

Over time Members will need to consider the best way to support the work of the Partnership with dedicated staff and will help identify possible funding available from the Members and other sources.

This Agreement and Protocol records the need for flexibility, recognising that each of the Members will have different audit and public probity demands to satisfy. However, within those constraints, the Members agree to commit themselves to operating through the Tendring Local Strategic Partnership in accordance with the Tendring Sustainable Community Strategy.

15. OPERATING AGREEMENT

This Agreement and Protocol recognises the need to establish arrangements which will cover :

- the badging and promotion of the Tendring Local Strategic Partnership;

- the authorising of individual partners to speak on behalf of the Partnership through the Chair of the Executive Board;
- the issue of press statements and public relations material in relation to the activities of the partnership. This to be managed by the Board and Chairs of the Theme Delivery Groups; and
- establishing conventions on how the Members should distinguish between statements made on behalf of the Members acting in their own right and the members acting through the Tendring Local Strategic Partnership.

16. CONTRACTS

In the interests of simplicity any contracts with third parties, whether for employment, supplies or services, will be entered into by one of the Members, not the partnership as a whole.

If the partner entering into the contract is only willing to do so on the basis of financial support from any or all of the other partners, then no contract should be awarded until the financial support relied upon is agreed and set out in writing.

No partner has the power to commit any other partner to any expense unless expressly and specifically agreed.

Any partner holding funds provided by any other partner will maintain accounts and provide such information at any time as may reasonably be requested.

17. PROMOTING EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND SOCIAL INCLUSION

It is important that the Partnership is built upon the fundamental principles of inclusiveness and equality for all.

People suffer from social exclusion for a wide variety of reasons. For example, lack of income, lack of basic skills, social or cultural isolation, poor access to opportunities, services, facilities, material resources or information, and they may feel unable to change their situation. If a person is, for whatever reason, excluded in one or more of these ways then it is likely that no single organisation will be able to resolve all their issues.

The Tendring Local Strategic Partnership and the Community Strategy exist to join-up a range of responsibilities and actions across organisations in order to make a significant positive impact on people's lives.

Involvement in the Local Strategic Partnership must itself be open to all groups and bodies. People must not be precluded from being involved in its work because they are volunteers, lack income, or come from a minority group etc.

In undertaking its work the Partnership and its Theme Delivery Groups have a responsibility to:

- Not discriminate by reason of racial or ethnic origin, gender, disability, religious belief, colour, marital status, age or sexual orientation;
- actively involve hard-to-reach and under-represented groups in their meetings, events, projects and business; and
- operate in accordance with partners' equality and diversity action plans, targets and performance indicators to ensure progress is made.

18. REVIEW

The Partners are entering into this Agreement and Protocol so that they have a framework to oversee the development of the Partnership, the production of the Tendring Sustainable Community Strategy and its subsequent on-going review to meet government requirements.

The Partners recognise the need to keep the operation of the Partnership within this Agreement and Protocol under constant review. They recognise changes in legislation may amend the way Partners deliver services in the future. There is also an awareness of the constraints which are imposed through audit and central government on the spending programmes of many of the Partners. The Partnership will need to keep under review their financial position and objectives.

19. SHARING INFORMATION

It is agreed that, wherever possible, Partnership Members shall share information about their organisations, services and customers where that information is relevant to the aims and objectives of the Partnership and the Sustainable Community Strategy.

It is further agreed that where such information is confidential - for example for reasons of commercial, customer or client confidentiality - that partners seek to provide the information in such a form as to assist the Partnership while resolving those confidentiality issues.

Members shall at all times abide by the requirements of the Data Protection Act.

20. CHANGES AND ADDITIONS TO THIS AGREEMENT AND PROTOCOL

The Tendring Local Strategic Partnership Executive Board shall review this Agreement and Protocol annually.

The current version shall be publicly accessible on the Partnership website and be made available in hard copy.