



Draft
Terms of Reference
for
Area Partnerships (APs)

JUNE 2009

Introduction

Area Partnerships (APs) have been established for 5 geographic areas within the district defined by the boundaries of town and parish councils.

Purpose

The AP is the mechanism through which the Council works with local communities and partner organisations to make sure those local services meet local needs and that the voice of the community is heard within the service development process. It enables Councillors, residents and partners to come together to influence priorities and take decisions in the light of local needs and circumstances. It focuses on local actions to help the Council and its partners to tackle inequalities and narrow the gap between different areas. It also delivers locally agreed improvements that are important to communities within its area.

Principles

Members of the AP agree to work together to achieve the aims of the AP on the basis of the following principles:

- Mutual trust and respect
- Openness and transparency
- Effective communication and accountability
- Removal of barriers to equality of access and opportunity
- Effective performance management

Boundaries

An AP cannot alter its own boundary but must request permission from the District Council to vary any boundary.

The AP

There are two elements to the AP; the Forum, and the Board. Part A of this document introduces the Forum, and part B the Board.

PART A – THE FORUM

1. Function

a. Engagement – The Forum will provide a means:

- For the Council and partner organisations to engage in a meaningful, dialogue with people in their local communities.
- To build and shape local identity in order that communities can speak with a clear and strong voice.
- To promote community cohesion and support debate, ensuring that all voices are heard.
- To encourage local people to engage with the local democratic process and to be involved in shaping their communities.
- To recognise, celebrate and support the role and contribution of individuals in improving their communities.
- To streamline and focus cross-public sector consultation with local people.

b. Empowerment – The Forum will provide a means:

- To clearly communicate local issues and priorities to public sector partners, based on an analysis of local data and opinions, and to develop a shared vision for the local area.

- To involve local people in the way local services are planned and delivered and to assist partners to meet their duty to involve people in decisions, policies and services that may affect them or be of interest to them.
- To assist partners to effectively combine their efforts in a local area to improve local outcomes, narrow gaps between different areas of the District and improve quality of life.

c. Local Action – the Forum will provide a means:

- To involve people identifying and recommending resolutions to local issues through either:
 - By dialogue with service departments and Councillors with regard to influencing use of their delegated budgets.
 - Negotiation with the Council's partners.
- To support development of a focussed Annual Action Plan for an area, targeting the key issues that the AP will seek to resolve for a locality.

2. Equalities and Inclusion

The Forum will actively value the benefits of diversity and ensure that it operates in ways that ensure and promote fair treatment and equality of opportunity.

3. Accountability

The Forum will manage its affairs in ways that are clear and transparent and demonstrate proper accountability to the Council, partner organisations, stakeholders and the wider community through clear communication of its views and recommended actions.

4. Membership and terms of office

The Forum - The membership of the Forum will be open to all who live in, work in or represent any area within the AP boundary.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

a. Chair and Vice Chairs

- The Council will appoint a Chairman, the Board will appoint a Vice-Chairman. The Vice-Chairman should not be a District Councillor.
- Chairman and Vice-Chairs will be appointed annually.

b. The duties of the Chair will include;

- Chairing meetings of the AP Board and Forum ensuring that the meeting is able to conduct its business in an orderly and timely fashion. The Chair must ensure that all those entitled to do so may express their views and that the decisions taken by the meeting adequately reflect the views of the meeting as a whole.
- Acting as the focus for the AP and represent the AP at key events and act as media spokesperson where appropriate;
- Working closely with the AP Lead Officer to agree agendas and minutes for issue to Partners;
- Discussing reports and the direction of the AP with the Lead Officer and other relevant partners.
- Considering any criticisms or concerns Partners may have about the role or functioning of the AP, bringing them forward for discussion at a meeting of the AP if it is not possible to resolve them in any other way.
- If a vote is called for, then following the vote (in which the Chair can vote), the Chair will exercise a 'casting vote' in the event of a tie. If an emergency

decision is called for that does not allow time for a meeting to be called, the Chair will take the decision after consultation with the Vice Chair. This decision will be communicated to the rest of the Board as soon as it is taken.

6. Meetings

- a. The Forum will meet twice per year, prior to the Board meeting (preferably on the same day). It will be open to the public. Fifteen working days (Mon –Fri) notice will be given to invitees.
 - Quorum – There is no quorum for meetings of the Forum.
 - If neither Chair nor the Vice Chair are present at a meeting then those in attendance should agree a chair by nominating and seconding an individual who must agree (if more than one nominee then there should be a quick show of hands to appoint a chair for the meeting). If the meeting cannot agree to appoint a Chair then the meeting will be reconvened in seven days.
 - There is no set format for Forum meetings but agenda should include opportunities for those present to raise issues and make recommendations to the Board.
- b. Emergency meetings of:
 - The Forum may be called by a petition of 50 signatures from within the AP presented to the Chair.

7. Decision making

- a. Whilst the Forum has no formal decision making powers, decisions on its recommendations to the Board will be reached by consensus.
- b. If there is not a clear consensus, then a vote may be called for by the Chair on a show of hands. In this case a simple majority will prevail.

8. Finance

- a. The Forum does not have a budget, but can make recommendations to the Board as to how its budget is spent.

9. Engaging with communities of interest.

- a. Effective engagement with communities of interest will be a key role of APs. Each Forum will determine its own mechanism to engage with its neighbourhoods that best reflects local circumstances.
- b. In engaging with communities the AP will recognise the important role of town and parish councils and local community and voluntary groups.
- c. The AP will ensure that it engages with and considers the needs and priorities of communities of interest such as disabled people, Gypsy and Traveller communities, young and older people, lesbian, gay and bisexual individuals, faith groups and black and minority ethnic communities.

10. Complaints

- a. If any member of the AP Forum wishes to raise a concern they should do so at the next available Forum meeting.
- b. If a Forum member feels unable to do so because of the nature of the issue or the urgency of the matter they should contact the relevant AP Lead officer at:

AREA	NAME	CONTACT DETAILS
Upper Dales	Simon Fletcher	simon.fletcher@richmondshire.gov.uk or 01748

827009

A66	Colin Dales	colin.dales@richmondshire.gov.uk or 01748 827007
Central	Martin Garside	martin.garside@richmondshire.gov.uk or 01748 827010
The Garrison Lower Wensleydale	Tony Clark Callum McKeon	tony.clark@richmondshire.gov.uk or 01748 827002 callum.mckeon@richmondshire.gov.uk or 01748 827008

- c. If a complaint is made an acknowledgement will be made within five working days either:
- Outlining the procedure to be followed
 - Or an explanation as to why the complaint will not be dealt with by the AP.
- d. If a complaint either
- Concerns the Chair or the AP Lead Officer or
 - You believe your complaint was not dealt with properly by the AP; then the matter should be referred to:

Liz Smith, Deputy Chief Executive Liz.smith@richmondshire.gov.uk or 01748 827003

The complaints procedure of the Council will then prevail and you will be notified accordingly of its procedure.

11. Staff

The Forum will be supported by staff employed by the Council (Each AP will have a named Support Officer). This does not preclude other organisations locating staff within the AP team but they will act under the direction of the AP lead Officer

17. Review and alteration to the Partnership Arrangement

The AP will review this Partnership Arrangement on an annual basis. If any member of the Partnership identifies a need to amend any aspect of this agreement, they will notify the AP Lead Officer, who will raise the issue for discussion at the Board.

18. Dissolution

The Forum can only be dissolved by the Council.

PART B – THE BOARD

1. Function

a. Engagement – the Board will provide a means:

- For the Council and partner organisations to engage in a meaningful, dialogue with people in their local communities.
- To build and shape local identity in order that communities can speak with a clear and strong voice.
- To promote community cohesion and support debate, ensuring that all voices are heard.
- To encourage local people to engage with the local democratic process and to be involved in shaping their communities.
- To recognise, celebrate and support the role and contribution of individuals in improving their communities.
- To streamline and focus cross-public sector consultation with local people.

b. Empowerment – the Board will provide a means:

- To clearly communicate local issues and priorities to public sector partners, based on an analysis of local data and opinions, and to develop a shared vision for the local area.
- To involve local people in the way local services are planned and delivered and to assist partners to meet their duty to involve people in decisions, policies and services that may affect them or be of interest to them.
- To assist partners to effectively combine their efforts in a local area to improve local outcomes, narrow gaps between different areas of the District and improve quality of life.

d. Local Action – the Board will provide a means:

- To resolve local issues through either:
 - Direct action through use of its own funding or by means of engendering voluntary community action.
 - By dialogue with service departments and Councillors with regard to influencing use of their delegated budgets.
 - Negotiation with the Council's partners.
- To develop a focussed Annual Action Plan for an area, targeting the key issues that the AP will seek to resolve for a locality.

Overtime, the role of the AP may develop further to cover some performance issues.

2. Equalities and Inclusion

- a. The Board will actively value the benefits of diversity and ensure that it operates in ways that ensure and promote fair treatment and equality of opportunity.
- b. One Board member of the AP will take on the role of championing Equality & Diversity issues

3. Accountability

The AP/Board will manage its affairs in ways that are clear and transparent and demonstrate proper accountability to the Council, partner organisations, stakeholders and the wider community through clear reporting and effective communications of its performance, actions and decisions.

4. Performance Management and Review

- a. The AP will develop arrangements to manage its own performance in achieving its agreed priorities and actions, focussing on up to five key priorities in a financial year. These arrangements will be mindful of the Council's priorities as they relate to the AP, whilst recognising the need to balance them with local issues as evidenced by robust local engagement mechanisms and local performance data.
- b. To reflect the partnership nature of APs, a joint review arrangement will be put in place between partner organisations represented on the AP Boards and the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee to monitor their effectiveness. The review will focus on an APs impact on engagement, empowerment, local action and performance with suggestions for improvement as appropriate.

8. Membership and terms of office

- a. The Board - The membership of an AP Board will be open to three categories (the balance between the categories may differ depending on area):
 - Councillors
 - Partner Organisations
 - General Public
- b. Councillors
 - Any District Councillors whose Ward is within the AP can attend. Equally, any County Councillor whose area is within the AP area can attend. Up to one Parish Councillor will be invited to attend the Board – to be chosen from within the Forum..
 - If there are fewer than 3 Ward Councillors willing to take up positions on a Board, the remaining places will be made available to Town / Parish / County Councillors.
- c. Partner Organisations
 - These shall be represented by two people from the following organisations: North Yorkshire County Council; North Yorkshire Police NHS (or health sector organisation nominated by them); North Yorkshire Fire and Rescue, the Registered Social Landlord covering the most properties within the AP, the lead Voluntary and Community Sector infrastructure organisation covering the AP area
 - Partner organisations are expected to send an alternate if their main representative is unable to attend.
 - The Partner organisation representatives will have a standing place at the AP Board.
- d. Members of the Public
 - Members of the public must live in or work in the AP area. Work will include unpaid work. However, they cannot belong to more than one AP Board even if where they live and work may qualify them for membership of two different forums.
 - Members of the public wishing to stand for the AP Board must be a member of the AP Forum.
 - Members of the public will be selected to serve for four years on the AP Board.
 - One person will represent the interests of the local business sector or recognised business network (business association).
 - A process agreed by the Council will select this category of AP member

- There will be a maximum number of 2 members of the public on the Board
- Councillors cannot take up the position of a public representative on the Board.

Representation on each Board will be as follows:

1. UPPER DALES

Councillors (Ward, Parish, County)

Partner Organisations

Members of the Public/Business

Representatives

All Ward District Cllrs / County Cllrs &
1 x Parish Councillor

2 x representatives

3 (inc 1 business representative)

2. A66

Councillors (Ward, Parish, County)

Partner Organisations

Members of the Public/Business

Representatives

All Ward District Cllrs / County Cllrs &
1 x Parish Councillor

2 x representatives

3 (inc 1 business representative)

3. CENTRAL

Councillors (Ward, Parish, County)

Partner Organisations

Members of the Public/Business

Representatives

All Ward District Cllrs / County Cllrs &
1 x Parish Councillor

2 x representatives

3 (inc 1 business representative)

4. THE GARRISON

Councillors (Ward, Parish, County)

Partner Organisations

Members of the Public/Business

Representatives

All Ward District Cllrs / County Cllrs &
1 x Parish Councillor

2 x representatives

3 (inc 1 business representative)

5. LOWER WENSLEYDALE

Councillors (Ward, Parish, County)

Partner Organisations

Members of the Public/Business

Representatives

All Ward District Cllrs / County Cllrs &
1 x Parish Councillor

2 x representatives

3 (inc 1 business representative)

f. Cessation of Membership of AP Board

- If a Board member fails to attend for three consecutive meetings, even with apologies, then the Board may proceed upon the basis that the person has resigned and seek a replacement, unless that individual has received dispensation from the Board to be absent (e.g. for reasons of ill health or maternity).
- Any resignation must be in writing to the Chair of the AP and copied to the AP Lead officer.

g. Board Vacancies

- Partner organisation representation will be agreed through the Steering Group / Task Groups of the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP)
- When a public member resigns or is unable to continue duties the AP Board will select from a list of reserves to provide a replacement.

h. Non-voting co-optees

- Some APs may feel the need to engage some expertise outside of the Board membership so they will be allowed to co-opt up to three people to support the Board.
- Co-optees must stand down after 6 months, although they can be co-opted again.

9. Roles and Responsibilities

- a. Chair and Vice Chairs
 - The Council will appoint a Chairman, the Board will appoint a Vice-Chairman. The Vice-Chairman should not be a District Councillor.
 - Chairman and Vice-Chairs will be appointed annually.

- b. The duties of the Chair will include;
 - Chairing meetings of the AP Board and Forum ensuring that the meeting is able to conduct its business in an orderly and timely fashion. The Chair must ensure that all those entitled to do so may express their views and that the decisions taken by the meeting adequately reflect the views of the meeting as a whole.
 - Acting as the focus for the AP and represent the AP at key events and act as media spokesperson where appropriate;
 - Working closely with the AP Lead Officer to agree agendas and minutes for issue to Partners;
 - Discussing reports and the direction of the AP with the Lead Officer and other relevant partners.
 - Considering any criticisms or concerns Partners may have about the role or functioning of the AP, bringing them forward for discussion at a meeting of the AP if it is not possible to resolve them in any other way.
 - If a vote is called for, then following the vote (in which the Chair can vote), the Chair will exercise a 'casting vote' in the event of a tie. If an emergency decision is called for that does not allow time for a meeting to be called, the Chair will take the decision after consultation with the Vice Chair. This decision will be communicated to the rest of the Board as soon as it is taken.

10. Meetings

- a. The Board will meet at least 2 times per annum and five working days notice should be given of the details and business of the meeting. The Board meeting will be open to the public.
 - The Annual General Meeting of the AP Board will be the first meeting after every April 1st.
 - The public may be excluded, in whole or in part, if it is likely that in their presence information may be disclosed that has been requested to remain confidential or should remain so if they fall within the list under Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.
 - Quorum - No business shall be transacted at a Board meeting of the AP unless a quorum of at least three Board members are present.
 - If the Chair is not present then the meeting will appoint the Vice Chair. If neither Chair nor the Vice Chair are present at a meeting then those in attendance should agree a chair by nominating and seconding an individual who must agree (if more than one nominee then there should be a quick show of hands to appoint a chair for the meeting). If the meeting cannot agree to appoint a Chair then the meeting will be reconvened in seven days.

- The format for Board meetings should be as follows –
 1. Apologies,
 2. Minutes and Matters Arising
 3. followed by the relevant agenda to include a standing item on Local Issues brought to the attention of the AP Lead officer by residents or businesses for consideration at the Board (the Forum).
- c. Emergency meetings of:
 - Board will be arranged following a motion to the Chair signed by at least a minimum of 5 Board members.

11. Decision making

- a. It is expected that the decisions of the Board will be reached by consensus.
- b. If there is not a clear consensus, then a vote may be called for by the Chair on a show of hands. In this case a simple majority will prevail.
- c. Minutes of the AP Board will be made publicly available once they have been agreed as a true record.
- d. Conflict of Interest⁽¹⁾
 - Any member (councillor, partner or public) present at a Board meeting who has a conflict of interest in any item should declare that interest at the start of the agenda item and should leave the meeting until that agenda item has concluded.
 - Those who have a conflict of interest may be present to make presentations, answer queries and provide supporting evidence but should leave the meeting at the point the Chair deems that they have heard enough to reach a decision. Their leaving should also be recorded in the minutes
 - If any member fails to declare then they will stand accused of improper conduct as a member of the Forum or the Board. If the accusation is upheld then they will be barred from the AP and the Chair will write to the individual and any organisation that need be concerned.

12. Finance

[All finance will require a comprehensive set of criteria to be developed in consultation with the Council's Section 151 Officer]

- a. Each AP will have an Area Budget of £XXX to further the purpose of the Partnership and address the priorities identified by the AP Forum and set by the Board.
- b. The amount allocated in the Area Budget will be set annually by the Strategy Board. In doing so the Strategy Board will indicate the priorities for which the funding can be used to the APs. A budget is allocated to each AP on the basis that it will a) assist the Council in delivering its corporate priorities; and b) will support the local resolution of local issues and problems
- c. Each AP's budget will be allocated as follows:
 - 27% on the Council's corporate priorities
 - 53% on local issues and problems
 - 20% on grants
- d. No scheme approved by the AP may lead to ongoing revenue costs.
- e. Recommendations for profiled spend of the AP budget will be made by the AP Board to the Lead Officer. The Lead Officer will then make the decision to implement those recommendations under delegated powers. The Lead Officers

² Conflict of interest – where an individual, their close associates, immediate family organisation, business employer are affected by the matter being considered to the extent that a reasonable member of the public, with knowledge of the facts, would believe that their ability to judge the public interest is harmed or impaired.

and Co-ordinator will, in conjunction with the AP Chairs, discuss under spends and how they may be treated / reallocated.

f. The financial year of the Partnership shall commence on 1st April in each year and shall end on 31st March of the next calendar year.

13. Sub groups of the AP

- a. The AP, in conjunction with the Lead Officer, will have the power to set up task and finish groups to support its own work and to agree who should populate and Chair the task group.
- b. The AP should set up other arrangements to link in with LSP strategic arrangements.

14. Engaging with communities of interest.

- a. Effective engagement with communities of interest will be a key role of APs. Each AP will determine its own mechanism to engage with its neighbourhoods that best reflects local circumstances.
- b. In engaging with communities the AP will recognise the important role of town and parish councils and local community and voluntary groups.
- c. The AP will ensure that it engages with and considers the needs and priorities of communities of interest such as disabled people, Gypsy and Traveller communities, young and older people, lesbian, gay and bisexual individuals, faith groups and black and minority ethnic communities.

15. Complaints

- a. If any individual AP Board member or member of the AP Forum wishes to raise a concern they should do so at the next available Board or Forum meeting.
- b. If a Board or Forum member feels unable to do so because of the nature of the issue or the urgency of the matter they should contact the relevant AP Lead officer at:

AREA	NAME	CONTACT DETAILS
Upper Dales	Simon Fletcher	simon.fletcher@richmondshire.gov.uk or 01748 827009
A66	Colin Dales	colin.dales@richmondshire.gov.uk or 01748 827007
Central	Martin Garside	martin.garside@richmondshire.gov.uk or 01748 827010
The Garrison Lower Wensleydale	Tony Clark Callum McKeon	tony.clark@richmondshire.gov.uk or 01748 827002 callum.mckeon@richmondshire.gov.uk or 01748 827008

- c. If a complaint is made an acknowledgement will be made within five working days either:
 - Outlining the procedure to be followed
 - Or an explanation as to why the complaint will not be dealt with by the AP Board.
- d. If a complaint either
 - Concerns the Chair or the AP Lead Officer or
 - You believe your complaint was not dealt with properly by the AP; then the matter should be referred to:

Liz Smith, Deputy Chief Executive Liz.smith@richmondshire.gov.uk or 01748 827003

The complaints procedure of the Council will then prevail and you will be notified accordingly of its procedure.

16. Staff

- a. The AP will be supported by staff employed by the Council (Each AP will have a named Support Officer). This does not preclude other organisations locating staff within the AP team but they will act under the direction of the AP lead Officer
- b. The AP Lead Officer will also represent the AP at other meetings and is bound to ensure that where practicable they discuss such issues with the Board or the Chair but must give feedback at a Board meeting as to activities they have been involved with in the name of the AP.

17. Review and alteration to the Partnership Arrangement

The AP will review this Partnership Arrangement on an annual basis. If any member of the Partnership identifies a need to amend any aspect of this agreement, they will notify the AP Lead Officer, who will raise the issue for discussion at the Board.

18. Dissolution

The AP can only be dissolved by the Council.

Principles for meetings of the AP Forum and Board

Duration

- Most agendas/meetings should be timetabled to last no longer than 90 minutes without an intervening break. Meetings of the AP Board should aim to last no longer than two hours.

Agenda

- The Chair finalises the agenda beyond the set items but all have the opportunity to request items to be put on the agenda before it is sent out.
- Wherever possible tabling of agendas on the day of the meeting should be avoided. Good practice will be to give members at least 5 days notice of business of the meeting.

Protocol for All Meetings

- All attending are expected to abide by reasonable standards of behaviour. No shouting, swearing, threatening, accusing or other abusive behaviour will be tolerated.
- Everyone's viewpoint is to be respected.
- Everyone has the right to speak by indicating to the Chair his or her intent (usually by raising a hand). In most cases discussion should flow naturally but the Chair must ensure that all are given the opportunity to contribute and not the vociferous minority.
- The Chair does have the right to refuse any further discussion when a topic is either exhausted or reached a stalemate or the Chair has decided to move progress.
- It is the Chair's prerogative to call for a vote on any particular issue and he/she may seek a mandate from the meeting as to whether it will be a show of hands or a secret ballot.
- If an attendee oversteps the mark the Chair is entitled to ask for an apology and if an apology is not forthcoming has the right to insist that the person shall leave the meeting.
- Agreement is usually reached by consensus unless there appears to be 'no consensus' then a vote will be taken. All are expected to abide by a decision outside of the meeting and must not use another forum to undermine a decision taken at the AP.
- Conflicts of interest must be recorded