

The Constitution

In February 2004, the Wealden Local Strategic Partnership adopted a formal constitution which set down the roles and responsibilities of each Partner together with some basic rules about how decisions should be made. Changes over time, together with the natural evolution of partnership working, necessitated a revision in November 2008.

The constitution sets out the purpose and objectives of the Local Strategic Partnership, its powers and authority, the roles and responsibilities of Partners and the rules governing its operation.

1. Name

1.1. The Name of the Partnership shall be the Wealden Local Strategic Partnership (hereafter LSP).

2. Description

2.1. This Constitution applies to the LSP and any Sub-Groups established to undertake specific activities.

3. Aims and Objectives

3.1. The aim of the LSP shall be to work with partners and stakeholders to improve the quality of life in Wealden District, in line with the vision set out in the Wealden Sustainable Community Strategy.

3.2. The objectives of the Partnership shall be:

- To set the overall strategic vision for Wealden by developing a sustainable community strategy for the district, and to secure partners' commitment and action to deliver the vision;
- To ensure coherence with actions and plans set out in 'Pride of Place' the integrated Sustainable Community Strategy for East Sussex;
- To bring about the strategic alignment and integration of plans, partnerships and initiatives within Wealden, and across relevant administrative boundaries, consistent with partnership aims and objectives;
- To implement and further develop the Wealden Sustainable Community Strategy to meet local needs and priorities;
- To influence mainstream service delivery;
- To streamline strategic decision making, ensure community engagement and to provide effective monitoring to ensure the policies and plans of partners have the desired impact;

4. Powers

4.1. The Partnership is an unincorporated body and has no legal powers. It will operate as a collaboration of agencies and function through the legal frameworks of individual members.

4.2. Wealden District Council will act as lead partner and discharge its obligations under the Local Government Act 2000 and the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007.

5. Membership

5.1. The Members of the LSP will reflect key sectors and interests in Wealden and shall reflect a balance between the Public, Private, Community, Voluntary, Faith and Special Interest sectors. The Partnership may from time to time review its membership in full meeting and regulate this as it sees fit. Membership shall comprise of the following:

Public Sector - Twelve (12) representatives

Four (4) District Council cross-party members, one of whom shall be the Leader of the Council;

One (1) County Council representative;

Three (3) representatives from town and parish councils (to represent north Wealden, south Wealden and Wealden towns) to be nominated by the Wealden District Association of Local Councils;

Two (2) National Health Service representatives, one from the appropriate Primary Care Trust, and one representing the Health Improvement Partnership covering the Wealden area;

One (1) Police representative;

One (1) Fire and Rescue Service representative.

Community, Voluntary and Faith Sectors - Four (4) representatives

One (1) from the rural voluntary sector and up to three (3) from the wider community and faith sectors.

Private Sector - Two (2) representatives

One (1) nominated representative from the Business sector;

One (1) nominated representative from the Agricultural sector.

Special Interest - Seven (7) representatives

Two (2) Environment representatives;

One (1) Education representative;

One (1) Housing representative;

One (1) Leisure/cultural representative;

One (1) Highways representative;

One (1) Infrastructure provider.

Co-options

The Partnership shall be able to co-opt up to two (2) additional members to the partnership as and when the need arises. There shall be no upper limit on the number of people co-opted to serve on sub-groups (see 7.8 below).

5.2. The Partnership may from time to time invite representatives from other organisations, who shall not be members of the Partnership, to attend and speak but without voting rights.

5.3. Meetings of the Partnership will not be formal public meetings unless otherwise determined by the Board. The Partnership may invite observers as it sees fit to attend meetings of the Partnership Board.

6. Roles and Responsibilities

6.1. All Partners will seek to act co-operatively, be open and honest, value others' contributions and learn from each other in seeking to achieve the objectives of the LSP.

6.2. The Partners shall be required to:

- Include relevant elements of the Sustainable Community Strategy and its accompanying action plan in their own business plans or equivalent;
- Take reasonable steps to ensure that their contribution is genuinely representative of their organisation and/or sector by engaging in two-way communication on key issues;
- So far as is practicable, attend all meetings of the partnership or send a substitute (see 7.5 below);
- Participate in reviews and projects as required, including attending meetings of any relevant Sub-Groups;
- Contribute, financially or in kind (precise details to be agreed between the LSP and the Partner's organisation) to the costs associated with running the Partnership and implementing the Sustainable Community Strategy;
- Appoint a Chairman from among their number. The term of Chairman will run for two years;
- Appoint a vice-chairman. The vice-chairman shall normally be the leader of the District Council. However, if the position of Chairman is already held by a member of Wealden District Council the vice-chairman shall come from another organisation;
- Appoint Theme Champions from among their number. Appointments will be reviewed as necessary.

6.3. The Chairman shall be required, in addition to their responsibilities as a Partner, to:

- Chair meetings of the LSP;
- Act as the focus for the LSP and its work in relation to the Sustainable Community Strategy;
- Represent the LSP at key events and promote the LSP and its values wherever possible;
- Liaise where necessary with chairs of other LSPs in the region
- Work closely with the Lead Partner (see 4.2 above) to:
 - Agree agendas and minutes for issue to Partners
 - Discuss reports and the direction of the LSP
 - Agree the workload priorities of the LSP
- Consider any criticisms or concerns Partners may have about the role or functioning of the LSP, bringing them forward for discussion at a meeting of the LSP if it is not possible to resolve them in any other way.

6.4. Theme Champions, in addition to their responsibilities as a Partner, shall be required to:

- Act as the focus and lead for the relevant theme of the Sustainable Community Strategy and, as necessary, coordinate work undertaken to meet the objectives within that theme;
- Liaise as necessary with representatives with interests in the relevant theme and encourage wider partners to undertake projects which help to meet the objectives in the Sustainable Community Strategy;
- Monitor, update and be accountable to the LSP for any relevant theme targets in the Action Plan.

7. Proceedings of the Partnership

7.1. The Partnership shall regularly, and at least once every three calendar years, review the appropriateness and balance of its membership in order to meet the development and delivery requirements of the Sustainable Community Strategy.

7.2. If a member of the Partnership changes to a different employer, relocates, or loses their honorary position or paid post, their membership of the LSP will cease with immediate effect. The appropriate nominating organisation/sector will be asked to fill the vacancy as soon as is reasonably practicable.

7.3. Should the LSP consider it necessary to terminate the membership or official role of an individual for good and sufficient cause, for example, persistent non-attendance, it may so resolve, acting by a two-third majority of the members voting at a relevant meeting of the LSP. If any member is removed from the LSP, the appropriate nominating organisation/ sector shall be asked to appoint a new member.

7.4. Except where the constitution provides otherwise, a decision of the LSP should be reached by consensus. Should consensus not be possible, a vote may be taken at the discretion of the Chairman. Should a vote be necessary it shall be resolved by a simple majority of those voting at the meeting. If the votes are evenly split, the Chairman shall have the casting vote, even where the Chairman has not voted in the first round.

7.5. Any member of the LSP who is unable to attend a meeting may nominate a suitable named substitute to represent that member.

7.6. Subject to service of reasonable notice to all members, the LSP may meet together for the dispatch of business, adjourn and otherwise regulate its meetings as it sees fit. However, it shall meet not less than three times in each calendar year.

7.7. No binding decisions will be taken at a meeting of the LSP unless a quorum of members is present. A quorum shall be one third of the total membership.

7.8. The LSP may establish Sub-Groups to undertake specific projects or tasks as it sees fit. The composition (including any co-opted members), remit, powers, reporting arrangements and authority of any such Sub-Groups shall be determined by the LSP.

8. Financial Year

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

9. Wider Partners

9.1. The Partnership shall engage with the wider community not less than once in each calendar year, either through a Plenary Meeting or by other means.

10. Changes to the Constitution

10.1. This constitution may be changed by a resolution passed by a simple majority of members present and voting at a meeting of the LSP. Where practicable, the notice of the meeting must set out the terms of the changes proposed.