

<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Community Engagement Framework – Consultation Feedback</b>		
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	<b>21 October 2008</b>		
<b>Report of:</b>	<b>Director of Strategy &amp; Governance</b>		
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	<b>Name:</b>	<b>Emma McDermott (senior policy development officer) &amp; Angie Greany (Community Development Commissioning Officer)</b>	<b>Tel: 29-3944/5053</b>
	<b>E-mail:</b>	Emma.mcdermott@brighton-hove.gov.uk/angie.greany@brighton-hove.gov.uk	
<b>Wards Affected:</b>	All		

### FOR GENERAL RELEASE

#### 1. SUMMARY AND POLICY CONTEXT:

1.1 Following a report to Overview and Scrutiny Commission in July on the development of a Community Engagement Framework by the 2020 Community Partnership this report provides the Commission with feedback on the consultation and the emerging content of the Framework.

#### 2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

2.1 To comment on the key messages from the consultation and suggested practical solutions (set out below) for consideration / incorporation in the final version of the Framework included at Appendix 5 of this report.

#### 3. RELEVANT BACKGROUND INFORMATION/CHRONOLOGY OF KEY EVENTS:

3.1 As part of the development of the Community Engagement Framework by the 2020 Community Partnership the Overview and Scrutiny Commission was consulted at its meeting on 15<sup>th</sup> July 2008.

3.2 The purpose of developing the Framework is to determine a common understanding and approach to community engagement across all members of the 2020 Community Partnership. This common understanding will include:

- clarifying the role and meaning of community engagement
- establishing a set of standards for community engagement applicable to all partners
- identifying Partnership priority actions that will improve the planning and delivery of community engagement, particularly regarding the quality and the co-ordination of activity

- 3.3 The Stronger Communities Partnership will be responsible for implementing and monitoring the Framework. This will include developing a more detailed action plan to take forward the priority actions identified in the framework. Appendix 4 gives the terms of reference for the Stronger Community Partnership.
- 3.4 The 12 week consultation period on community engagement finished on 5<sup>th</sup> September. A wide range of community and voluntary groups, public bodies and partnerships in the city were consulted through a variety of means. Appendix 1 provides a summary of the process.
- 3.5 The **over-arching messages** were that community engagement should:
1. enhance peoples lives and be fulfilling
  2. provide opportunities for all
  3. improve services and support better use of resources
- 3.6 The **key issues** raised by respondents can be summarised as follows:
- a) Information**  
Keep engagement clear, timely and jargon-free. Keep messages simple and relevant. Be open and keep an honest dialogue. Use a range of methods i.e. Community Radio, word of mouth – written material can be too long and inaccessible for some.
- b) Areas of influence (what can/can't be influenced?)**  
(Linked to no.1) Be clear about processes, do not raise unrealistic expectations and offer clear information and explanations as to why certain things can or do not happen following public input.
- c) Two way dialogue (Communication)**  
Must be two-way process with feedback being important – people want to know how they have changed/improved things. More realistic timeframes for consultation are needed to allow this to happen. A joined up and co-ordinated approach is needed with improved guidance and support for those producing information/communications.
- d) Support for a co-ordinated approach**  
(Linked to above) Statutory sector partners need to work more closely together. Greater communication between officers and members, other public bodies and senior level management were highlighted as essential. Simultaneous requests for involvement stretches and stresses many groups, raising feelings of concern and anxiety at being unable to represent their groups' interests at the appropriate time and place. In the worst case, such pressure gives a perception of being 'managed out' of the process because public responses are a nuisance or difficult to handle.
- e) Resources and training (individuals and organisations in public and third sector)**

Commitment to long-term funding for voluntary and community organisations and for community development. This was viewed as critical to the success of community engagement. Plus training and development that mixes sectors and organisations up. Training and support to all partners that improves skills and knowledge and builds strong relationships and better understanding between different people and organisations.

**f) Creative approach to partnership working (not “usual suspects”)**

Public bodies should take a more creative and flexible approach and not rely on the usual routes, representatives or individuals to deliver outcomes. People expressed a need for more “informality” and the use of existing links that groups have and the provision of resources to facilitate this kind of reaching out – work to involve people in different ways, looking at good practice to improve people’s experience of getting involved – strengthening and sustaining these relationships. Expand and broaden representation with more practical ways to engage – importance of community buildings both in terms of ownership and potential engagement tools.

**g) Feeling at home and feeling safe (more control/taking responsibility)**

There was lots of commentary and feeling expressed about the importance of feeling that you are a part of the community, and how people feel this builds or contributes to community cohesion, people’s willingness to engage and people feeling and being empowered. Clear message that improving the other 6 issues would have direct impact on this.

**3.7 Practical Solutions**

In response to the issues raised respondents were asked to suggest practical solutions. Following discussions at various consultation meetings/events it became apparent that respondents thought there was some ‘basic activity’ that the 2020 Community Partnership members should be getting right and some potential ‘new activity’ that could be explored. The basic activity recognises that there is good community engagement happening in the city but that there is a lack of consistency, quality control and sustainability. The new activity recognises that there is potential additional activity that could be happening in the city.

<b>Suggestions for Basic Activity</b>
Ensure an introduction to and explanation of the Framework is part of new staff induction in public bodies and community and voluntary organisations
Include engagement skills, knowledge and experience in job descriptions and person specifications as a matter of course for relevant posts
Produce a guide (or identify a place) where clear information and advice is accessible to all organisations to follow when carrying out community engagement work and activities

Secure long-term partnership funding for community development work across the city
Promotional work with businesses - encourage and support local businesses to actively support and be involved in their local community
Enforce the research governance protocol - public bodies to use an agreed method for carrying out research
Develop a common policy for supporting community representatives (reward & recognition) - public bodies to have an agreed and consistent approach
Publish and keep up-to-date a database of the type, the results and the impact of the consultations
Publish and keep up to date a 'get involved' webpage on the 2020 Community Partnership website - information that provides up-to-date links and information about how residents can get involved across all public agencies and linked to the community and voluntary sector
Secure long-term partnership funding for Stronger Communities Partnership
Develop a policy on how public services will be co-ordinated in neighbourhoods
Develop a community workers network with an annual conference
Establish a review and evaluation process for all engagement initiatives undertaken by public bodies that allows all partners to learn from good practice and mistakes
Recognise and resource where necessary new or alternative groups that have stronger representational abilities or support appropriate existing groups to improve their representation on public body forums and city-wide partnerships
Develop a partnership funding strategy that recognises the long-term role of the community and voluntary sector in enabling community engagement especially with chronically excluded groups and neighbourhood based communities

**Suggestions for New Activity**

Support the development of community anchors (independent multi-purpose community led organisations in neighbourhoods)
Trail an 'Ask the Executives' annual public meeting where citizens can come and ask the Chief executives of the Council, Police and Primary care Trust questions
Run an annual 'get involved' campaign culminating in an celebration event of active citizenship and with 'active citizen' information available all year round in public buildings
Explore opportunities for more innovative ways to share information with the public and communities, for example community radios, on street internet service points
Develop a cross sector training and development – that involves residents, community groups, public bodies employees and councillors learning together
Explore the opportunity for a communications hub for public bodies – through which they share information and co-ordinate their communications with residents
Develop a volunteering scheme for public sector employees (in the voluntary and community sector)
Support to councillors to be community champions through the provision of ward budgets and staff support
Support the development of community buildings as a neighbourhood resource for use by the community and service providers equitably
Explore the transfer of assets, such as community centres to community groups. where there will be a long-term benefit to the community
Develop an on-line participation tool that supports two-way dialogue between citizens and public organisations starting with the council

### **3.8 Feedback on the Aims of the Framework and the Standards for Community Engagement**

3.8.1 In addition, to feedback on key issues respondents were asked to comment on the proposed vision and objectives for the Framework. The overarching message was that the vision and objectives whilst acceptable were too complicated and duplicated, making the purpose of the document unclear. Therefore the proposal is to have a set of key aims for the Framework which reflect the issues about community engagement. Appendix 2 outlines the proposed aims of the Framework based on the consultation feedback.

3.8.2 With regards to Standards for Community Engagement the key message from respondents was that the suggested Standards were comprehensive and understandable. However, many respondents commented on the 'flexibility' standard which focused on ensuring any engagement activity was flexible and could be tailored to different communities needs. Respondents suggested that it should have a stronger reference to equality of opportunity and explicit recognition that some communities and individuals face additional barriers to being involved and this should be concerned and addressed during any engagement activity. Appendix 3 is the proposed Standards for inclusion in the final version of the Framework.

#### **4. CONSULTATION**

4.1 See appendix 1 for timetable and details of consultation on the community engagement framework. The timetable also provides details of the next steps for signing off the Community Engagement Framework.

#### **5. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:**

##### Financial Implications:

Except where specified that funding needs to be secured in the long term, it is anticipated that actions can be achieved through the prioritisation of staff resource, linkage and co-ordination of existing activities and partnership working. Proposed actions include securing long-term partnership funding for community development work and the Stronger Communities Partnership.

Specific financial implications will be identified and addressed through the development of the detailed action plan.

5.1

*Finance Officer Consulted: Anne Silley*

*Date: 01 October 2008*

##### Legal Implications:

The proposed approach to community engagement set out in this report will assist the Council in meeting the new "duty to involve" which will come into force on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2009. Section 138 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 requires authorities to take those steps they consider appropriate to involve representatives of local persons in the exercise of any of their functions, where they consider that it is appropriate to do so. This is in addition to existing statutory consultation requirements in relation to specific issues.

5.2

*Lawyer Consulted: Elizabeth Culbert*

*Date: 03 October 2008*

##### Equalities Implications:

5.3 An overarching message from the consultation was the need to ensure that all engagement activity provide opportunities for all. Within the Standards included in the community

engagement framework is one specifically on equality and diversity. In addition, several of the actions proposed will improve the practice of organisations and groups carrying out community engagement. A rapid impact checklist was completed on the consultation document for the development of the framework and a full equality impact assessment will be carried out on the final version.

#### Sustainability Implications:

- 5.4 The development of the framework has a direct link to the achievement of the four priorities in the UK's Sustainability Plan – sustainable communities using engagement and partnership to reduce poverty and environmental degradation. The Framework will provide clear standards for any engagement activity undertaken to achieve this priority,

#### Crime & Disorder Implications:

- 5.5 The development of the framework is being guided by a sub-group of the 2020 Community Partnership on which the Police, the Crime Disorder Reduction Partnership and the Partnership Community Safety Team are represented. The framework will reflect the engagement priorities of these three areas.

#### Risk and Opportunity Management Implications:

- 5.6 The framework establishes a common approach to and understanding of community engagement across the LSP partners. It establishes a set of standards for engagement that will drive up the practice of all partners. It helps to ensure a co-ordinated approach to community engagement which will make better use of resources and avoid duplication. Critically, the adoption and implementation of the Framework will ensure that the council is in a strong position to meet the new duty to involve which is due to come into effect in April 2009.
- 5.6.1 The risks are ensuring that both statutory agencies and communities have the capacity and skills to meet the standards of the framework, and that expectations are managed with regard to the changes the framework will bring about in the first year (2009/10). In the first year the Framework will focus on achieve embedding the standards and delivering key actions.

#### Corporate / Citywide Implications:

- 5.7 The framework has implications city-wide as it has been commissioned and will be adopted by the 2020 Community Partnership and therefore apply to all the members of the Partnership. Consequentially it will have implications for all Directorates within the Council.

## **SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION**

### **Appendices:**

1. Community Engagement Framework Development Timetable
2. Aims of the Framework
3. Community Engagement Standards
4. Stronger Communities Partnership Terms of Reference
5. CEF Final Draft October 2008
6. Draft Consultation Report



## Appendix 1

### Community Engagement Framework – Development Timetable Summary

#### Background

A great deal of work has already taken place since the 2020 Community Partnership (the Local Strategic Partnership) set up a short-life Working Group, in April this year, to take this work forward -

- The Working Group has met four times and has one more meeting planned
- Meetings have been held with the Community & Voluntary Sector Forum Representatives on the Working Group to plan and deliver community and voluntary sector engagement
- Meetings have been held with a wide range of individuals, groups, partnerships and agencies

The timetable below shows the key activities that have taken place and the deadlines for decision making.

WHAT HAS BEEN HAPPENING	WHEN
<p>Circulation of consultation document to wide range of stakeholders as identified by the Working Group:</p> <p>MPs, MEPs, CVSF membership, LSP board, Public Service Board, managers of all LSP partnerships, all elected members, neighbourhood action groups, local action teams.</p> <p>12 week consultation period starting 16<sup>th</sup> June and ending 5<sup>th</sup> September</p>	16 <sup>th</sup> June
<p>Framework discussed at/presented to the following events/meetings/groups:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Councillors seminar (Members of Conservative, Green, Labour and Liberal Democrat parties present)</li> <li>○ Council tenants session (representatives from across the city -</li> <li>○ Community workers conference (council, primary care trust and voluntary and community sector workers)</li> <li>○ Stronger Communities Partnership meeting and annual conference</li> <li>○ BHCC overview &amp; scrutiny commission</li> <li>○ 2020 Community Partnerships: Learning Partnership, Crime &amp; Disorder Reduction Partnership, Arts Commission, Advice Strategy Services Group, Strategic Housing Partnership, Economic Partnership</li> <li>○ Public service board</li> <li>○ Children &amp; young peoples consultation &amp; communication group</li> </ul>	June – September

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Sussex Partnership Trust</li> <li>○ City employment skills group</li> <li>○ BHCC community safety forum</li> <li>○ Mosaic 'bring a dish' day</li> <li>○ Local action teams - Bevendean</li> <li>○ Neighbourhood actions groups/forums: Turner, Eastern Road, Hangleton &amp; Knoll, Bristol Estate, Portland Road &amp; Clarendon,</li> <li>○ Adult learning group and Neighbourhood learning in deprived communities group</li> <li>○ Advice services network</li> <li>○ Adult social care transformation group</li> <li>○ Racial harassment forum executive panel</li> <li>○ Refugee community groups meeting</li> <li>○ Domestic violence forum</li> <li>○ Older persons council and pensioners forum</li> <li>○ Youth consultants</li> <li>○ Community development managers group</li> <li>○ Black and minority ethnic community partnership</li> <li>○ BHCC departmental management team meetings</li> <li>○ BHCC workers forum, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender; Black and minority ethnic; and Disabled workers</li> <li>○ Community and Voluntary Sector Forum e-Dialogue</li> <li>○ Sussex Community Interpreting website</li> </ul>	
Deadline for consultation responses	5 <sup>th</sup> September
The Framework Drop-In – Review and Comment	8 <sup>th</sup> September
Working group meeting	9 <sup>th</sup> September

**WHAT HAPPENS NEXT.....**

<b>NEXT STEPS</b>	<b>WHEN</b>
Copy of the draft Community Engagement Framework and the consultation report sent to all stakeholders that have been involved	End of September
Statutory Partners i.e. Police, Health, Fire Service – sign off	October/ November
LSP Partnerships i.e. Healthy City, Learning Partnership – sign off	October/ November
Public Service Board – final comments	14 <sup>th</sup> October
BHCC Overview & Scrutiny Commission – final comments	21 <sup>st</sup> October

2020 Community Partnership development session on community engagement	22 <sup>nd</sup> October
Working group – close down meeting	6 <sup>th</sup> November
BHCC Cabinet – sign off	20 <sup>th</sup> November
Stronger Communities Partnership meeting – sign off	20 <sup>th</sup> November
2020 Community Partnership board – sign off	2 <sup>nd</sup> December

## Appendix 2

### Draft Aims of the Framework

People have sent some clear messages about what they think about community engagement and what the Framework should achieve. The following key themes have emerged -

- Investment in the development of people in both communities and organisations
- Improvements in information and communication particularly providing feedback
- Better co-ordination and use of resources
- Long-term, resourced, commitment to improving community engagement
- Creation of real opportunities to influence the outcome of decisions and tackle issues in communities
- Developing more creative ways to engage with people and communities that ensure everyone has a voice not just those that 'know how'

In response to these themes we have developed three over-arching aims. Under each of the aims we have identified specific outcomes we want to achieve.

**All three aims are of equal importance and achievement of each aim will impact on the achievement of the others.**

#### 1. Improve engagement activity that enhances the lives of people and their communities

*We will do this by -*

- Providing **individuals** and communities with the information, advice and **support** they need to develop their confidence, skills, knowledge and ability to:

**Individuals** –  
children,  
young people  
and adults

- i) participate in community life
- ii) engage with services
- iii) engage in local decision-making
- iv) understand and engage with democratic processes

**Support** – for example, informal and formal training, transport to meeting venues, funding for a development worker, reimbursement for child care,

- Maximising opportunities for individuals and communities to take control over the issues that effect their lives in order to:
  - meet their needs
  - contribute to their economic and social progression
  - build active and inclusive communities

## 2. Improve engagement activity that ensures opportunity for all

*We will do this by -*

- Promoting and supporting processes for effective representation of communities in local and citywide strategic planning and decision-making
- Developing more creative, tailored approaches that support engagement opportunities for all sections of the community

<p><b>Creative approaches</b> – for example, informal events that support different communities and public services interacting</p>
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## 3. Improve engagement activity that drives up the quality of services and makes better use of resources

*We will do this by -*

- Improving collaboration between communities and services to ensure that issues and priorities are identified and action taken
- Improving co-ordination between all partners to ensure more effective planning and implementation of engagement initiatives which take into account existing knowledge, structures and groups
- Developing the capacity of members of the 2020 Community Partnership to carry out high quality community engagement that meets the standards of the Framework
- Ensuring that learning from engagement activity is captured and used to support continual improvement of community engagement in the city

## **Appendix 3**

### **Draft Community Engagement Standards**

To support our commitment the 2020 Community Partnership and its constituent parts will work to the following more detailed standards:

#### **1. Planning and Resources**

##### **Clarity of Purpose**

Before beginning any engagement activity, we will be clear about why it is happening, what we want to achieve, which engagement activity we will use, who we are seeking to engage, what can and cannot be influenced, how we will use the information gathered through the engagement activity and what the benefit of being involved will be.

##### **Evidence Base**

We will use all available research, knowledge and community intelligence to help us plan engagement activities. We will not carry out engagement activities if the information we need is already available.

##### **Timing**

We will allow sufficient time to design and carry out engagement activities that are inclusive and encourage participation from all affected communities. We will also allow sufficient time to ensure that the results of engagement activities can shape our policies, plans and services and that we can 'test back' with communities what they have told us. When timing for activity is set for us by another, for example, national government, we will clearly communicate this to participants.

##### **Resources**

We will plan engagement activity carefully in the light of what that activity seeks to achieve and in the context of available resources and will communicate any constraints clearly. We will recognise the need to resource practical support that helps people to be involved.

#### **2. Communication and Partnership Working**

##### **Communication**

We will always be open, honest, and accountable when sharing information and responding to contributions from all participants. All communication will be jargon free and relevant to the intended audience. We will seek to use a wide range of methods to maximise the dialogue between communities and partners. We will clearly communicate how participants can seek redress if they are unsatisfied with the process. We will also communicate between partners to create joined-up engagement activities and avoid duplication of effort.

##### **Partnership**

We will work in partnership with other organisations when and where they have greater expertise, knowledge or experience about engaging with specific communities, with particular recognition of the knowledge and expertise of the voluntary and community sector. The independence of the voluntary and community sector will be respected and recognised in all partnership working.

### **Quality**

We will work to ensure that staff responsible for engagement have the skills and capacity to achieve high quality engagement. Equally, we will work to ensure that communities have the opportunity to develop their skills and capacity to engage if they wish.

### **Accessibility**

We will support a variety of engagement activities to reflect the diversity of our communities. We will be flexible and responsive to the ways that the community wants to engage with us. We will recognise the need to make engagement both formal and informal at different times and for different people and purposes. We will provide practical support to help overcome barriers that some individuals and communities may face to engagement, particularly vulnerable and seldom heard groups.

## **3. Feedback and Learning**

### **Feedback**

We will provide feedback to the community about the engagement activities we carry out and will explain how the community's input contributed to the decision-making process. We will explain how and when we will provide feedback to the community at the same time as we carry out the community engagement exercise. We will also make the feedback as widely available as possible.

### **Monitoring & Review**

In partnership with stakeholders, we will monitor and review the engagement activities we carry out to ensure that all sections of the community have the opportunity to engage should they choose to, particularly those whose voices are often not heard, and change our practices accordingly. We will learn from our own practice.

## Appendix 4

### **Stronger Communities Partnership Terms of Reference**

#### **Purpose**

The Stronger Communities Partnership exists to lead, develop and support active community engagement in strategic planning and decision-making processes, in order to improve local service delivery, partnership working and reduce inequalities in Brighton and Hove.

With a strategic remit, the Partnership will link with others in the wider family of partnerships on community engagement issues. The Partnership is not responsible for overseeing Stronger Communities programme delivery.

#### **Aims**

The Stronger Communities Partnership aims to:

1. Bring together and support communities to have a meaningful voice, in local groups and on the 2020 Community Partnership (and its wider family of partnerships)
2. Champion, support and build capacity around community engagement in decision-making in both the third and public sectors
3. To oversee delivery of the strengthening and involving communities targets in the Local Area Agreement
4. Develop successful partnership across sectors and organisations to achieve its purpose

#### **Objectives**

- 1.1 To facilitate active participation and engagement between the community and voluntary sector and statutory providers, bringing together organisations and communities
- 1.2 To improve representative structures and processes in the city, in order to strengthen involvement of the community and voluntary sector in strategic planning and decision-making
- 1.3 To review the impact of the area based grant funded community engagement activity
- 2.1 To host the Community Engagement Framework, including monitoring implementation, partners compliance and develop ongoing actions to achieve its objectives
- 2.2 To promote good practice around engagement, showcasing Brighton and Hove's achievements as a Community Empowerment Champion
- 3.1 To build relationships with partners to improve engagement opportunities for citizens and communities to influence and shape service design, planning, commissioning, delivery and monitoring/evaluation focusing on neighbourhoods and inequalities
- 3.2 To ensure the needs of the different groups and communities are reflected in the City's partnerships and service provision
- 3.3 To champion the Compact and other tools which enable good practice in partnership working, especially on community engagement and representation
- 3.4 To receive recommendations and performance reports from its sub-group the Stronger Neighbourhoods Group for action, comment and/or decision



## **Membership of the Stronger Communities Partnership**

### **CVSF representatives**

#### *Elected representatives*

- Four elected representatives from neighbourhoods, to represent all neighbourhoods in B&H
- Four elected community based communities of interest groups from the following equality strands: Age, Faith, BME, LGBT, Disability and Gender, to represent equalities in general (to include one representative from the emerging Equalities Coalition).

#### Support officers

- Two area based community development representatives
- CVSF / SCP support officers

### **Statutory agency representatives**

#### Strategic Officers

- LSP Co-ordinator
- Chief Exec's Policy Unit Officer
- Voluntary Sector Unit Officer
- Equalities and Inclusion Team Officer
- Neighbourhood Management Team Officer

Officers with a strategic remit for community engagement from statutory agencies/council departments (those involved in the Community Engagement Framework working group)

- Police
- PCT
- Housing; BHCC and RSLs (Social Landlords Forum)
- Adult Social Care
- Customer Services
- CYPT
- Environment
- Adult learning
- Employment and skills (economic development)

#### Others

- Local Authority Councillor (who is also represented on the Stronger Neighbourhoods Group)

The membership may grow and develop to reflect new activities and emerging issues. Each statutory organisation or department is responsible for electing/nominating their representatives. This process must be transparent and allow for change every two years.

## **Expectation of members**

- Members should participate in Partnership meetings, email discussions, and any structures such as working groups
- Members should represent the Partnership externally as agreed, in which case they should represent the views of the Partnership
- The Partnership can agree specific roles for members and delegate responsibilities to these roles
- Working or sub-groups should report back to the Partnership, and may also include organisations who are not Partnership members
- Each organisation will have a named individual as the Partnership member, however other members of the organisation are welcome, provided they have been briefed. They cannot vote
- Members of the Partnership may nominate a deputy to attend in their absence who should be fully briefed. The deputy is entitled to vote
- All members of the Partnership are expected to liaise with colleagues in their department, organisation or sector
- Members should adhere to the Nolan Principles of Public Life.

## **Decision-Making**

- Decisions may only be taken when the meeting is quorate (quoracy shall be 4 voting members)
- Decisions will be made by consensus where possible. If this proves impossible, a vote will be taken and a simple majority required. Each member of the Partnership has one vote, except CVSF/SCP staff
- The Chair's vote carries when a vote is split
- In exceptional circumstances (e.g. a decision is required before the next meeting) decisions may be made by email and the Chair will co-ordinate this process. Any decisions should be confirmed at the next meeting.

## **Values**

- **Equality:** The Partnership will ensure that it promotes equality in all its work and will be active in ensuring its work is meeting the needs of the full diversity of its communities
- **Accountability:** The Partnership will support the interests of all its members and work in an open and transparent way, with good communication between partnership members and their membership organisations/sectors
- **Respect/Co-operation:** The Partnership will aim to achieve its aims through co-operation and collaboration whilst recognising, respecting and reflecting difference
- **Partnership:** The Partnership will affect its work through the development and maintenance of strong and effective partnership working
- **Communication:** The Partnership will communicate regularly with stakeholders at appropriate key times. Information on the Partnership / minutes of meetings and other associated work carried out by the Partnership will be made available to members of

the CVSF as well as to staff within statutory agencies. This will be the responsibility of the relevant partnership member.

### **Chair and Vice-Chair**

- The Chair shall always be a full member of the Community and Voluntary Sector Forum
- The Partnership will elect its Chair and Vice Chair at its first meeting following the CVSF biennial elections. These two representatives will then go to be LSP representatives.
- The Chair will agree the agenda for meetings with the SCP Officer and will chair, or make arrangements for chairing of meetings.

### **Servicing and Support**

- Using SCP resources, the SCP Officer will arrange for meetings to be serviced and will provide support to the Chair and Partnership members
- The SCP Officer and other supporting officers will provide reports and other information needed for the Partnership to make effective decisions
- A clear brief outlining roles and responsibilities and a Stronger Communities Induction Pack will be provided for all members of the Partnership.

### *Meetings*

- The Partnership will ordinarily meet quarterly, with the facility to call additional meetings if necessary
- Under normal circumstances members will be expected to attend all four meetings a year and to give prior notice of any non-attendance
- Notes of meetings will be taken and circulated in an accessible format to members of Partnership for onward distribution
- The agenda and any relevant papers will be circulated at least 7 days before the date of the meeting
- All papers will be drafted in clear and simple language and in an accessible format and hard copies of any documents sent by e-mail will be made available to all members
- Meetings will take place in an environment that encourages and supports active participation by all members of the Partnership and special needs provision will be available at all times
- CVSF representatives are eligible to claim for their time spent in Partnership meetings, including preparation and follow-up, in line with CVSF's reps' expenses policy.

### **Conflicts of interest**

- Members must declare any actual or potential personal interests they have in any item on the agenda or as they arise during a meeting
- If they have a personal interest members must also consider whether or not that interest is a *prejudicial personal interest* and take the necessary action
- For the purposes of this Partnership, a personal interest is, generally, one that affects a member (individually, or a person/ body/organisation a member has a close connection with) more than other people in Brighton and Hove. If a member of the public, knowing all the relevant facts, would view a member's personal interest in the item being considered as so great that it is likely to prejudice the member's judgement of the public interest, then the member has a *prejudicial personal interest*.

- If a member has a personal interest: they must declare the interest but can stay, speak and vote.
- If a member has a *prejudicial personal interest*: they must declare the interest, cannot speak or vote on the item and must leave the room

### **Confidentiality and data protection**

- The Partnership will respect confidentiality, and operate within the requirements of the data protection act
- Business will normally be carried out openly and transparently. In exceptional circumstances, and with agreement of the meeting, members can request an issue is discussed confidentially, and the discussion will not be minuted.

### **Powers**

- The Partnership may establish sub-groups or commission pieces of work or activity, which help to deliver its aims and objectives.

### **Reports and Review**

The Partnership will review its Terms of Reference in April and October of each year.