

REDCAR & CLEVELAND PARTNERSHIP

Community Infrastructure Support Group

TERMS OF REFERENCE

1. Introduction

- 1.1 A broad range of Government objectives depend on the involvement of citizens and communities. It is therefore important to build people's capacity to be involved as active citizens, enabling them to speak up on behalf of their communities and through community groups with the capability and resources to bring people together to work out shared solutions.
- 1.2 In order to have the greatest possible impact, the Government's view is that community capacity building support needs to be better coordinated and targeted.
- 1.3 Better collaboration in the delivery of community capacity building support across the Borough of Redcar & Cleveland is a key priority within the Borough's Community Engagement Capacity Building Plan, Local Area Agreement, and Sustainable Community Strategy.
- 1.4 The formation of the Community Infrastructure Support Group is the practical expression of local support organisations' commitment to better coordinate their community capacity building activities across the Borough in order to maximise impact.
- 1.5 This document serves as a "Terms of Reference" for the group and sets out the purpose of the group, its membership, roles and responsibilities and governance arrangements.

2. Purpose of the Group

- 2.1 To develop a strategic approach to the planning and provision of community capacity building activities delivered within Redcar & Cleveland by promoting better collaboration and coordination between the various support organisations locally around (but not exclusively restricted to) the following issues: -
 - Pooling information to establish a map of need for community capacity building across the Borough
 - Mapping existing provision by support organisations delivering community capacity building activities within the Borough
 - Providing evidence of the long term value of community capacity building to local funders and agencies and advising them on models for more sustained and consistent funding

- Jointly considering redeployment or rationalisation to fill gaps and seeking additional resources to fill gaps which cannot be met by rationalisation
- Mapping issues covered, including where community capacity building is generic and where it is issue-specific, and seeking ways to fill gaps in issues covered
- Establishing common or reciprocal objectives and organising networking and cross-referral to maximise the impact of community capacity building activities
- Agreeing ways to capture outcomes and linking the indicators in the Local Area Agreement and Sustainable Community Strategy with other community capacity building objectives, processes and measures
- Agreeing steps to bring all community capacity building practice up to an agreed standard.

3. Membership

3.1 Core membership is as follows, but substitutes are permitted if necessary. Other officers can be invited on an ad hoc basis in order to contribute their expertise where relevant to the work of the group. This membership may evolve over time and be subject to change.

Name	Designation	Organisation
Fiona Chesters	Senior Development Officer	Tees Valley Rural Community Council
Mal Fitzgerald	Chief Executive	Redcar & Cleveland Voluntary Development Agency
Julian Feakes	Community Development Coordinator/Lead Council Officer for Stronger Communities	Redcar & Cleveland Borough Council
Val Mitchell	Business Planning & Development Officer/Lead Council Officer for Stronger Communities	Redcar & Cleveland Borough Council
Emma Grimes	Communities Manager	Coast & Country Housing
Susanne Ruffell	Regeneration Funding Manager	Redcar & Cleveland Borough Council
Catherine Sills	Community Skills Organiser	Redcar & Cleveland Borough Council

3.2 The principle underpinning membership is that it should be open to all managers of support organisations delivering community capacity building activities across all or a substantial part of the Borough of Redcar & Cleveland.

3.3 Following *Firm Foundations: the Government's Framework for Community Capacity Building*, community capacity building is defined as follows: -

“Activities, resources and support that strengthen the skills, abilities and confidence of people and community groups to take effective action and leading roles in the development of their communities”

3.4 Community capacity building is therefore generally understood to mean encouragement and particularly practical support to people to act together voluntarily – usually through community-led organisations – to tackle problems, influence public services, meet social needs and improve the quality of life in their communities. Its main focus is all external support provided to assist community-led organisations making up the community sector to be more effective in achieving their aims.

3.5 Member organisations would be expected to have as a substantial part of their core business the provision of practical support to community sector organisations, including at least some of the following: -

- Helping new groups to start up
- Helping communities to identify needs/issues
- Giving general information and advice
- Assisting with fundraising
- Building support networks
- Facilitating consultation
- Facilitating learning and assessing training needs
- Brokering liaison with services
- Providing access to funds
- Providing training
- Advocacy
- Other technical help such as assisting community representatives on partnerships and committees

4. Roles & responsibilities

4.1 Whilst respecting each organisation's independence, members are committed to the principle of cooperation for the benefit of local people, communities, and the voluntary and community sectors within Redcar & Cleveland.

4.2 Members will be expected to act on behalf of their section, team or organisation, and to ensure that the work of the group is fed back to relevant parties, and any agreed pieces of work are progressed.

5. Frequency of meetings

5.1 Meetings will be held at least six times each year, with a view to reviewing this after the first year. Meetings may be held more frequently, as the business of the group dictates.

6. Coordination and administration

6.1 Coast & Country Housing will arrange meetings, including the distribution of meeting papers.

6.2 The Chair will ensure any issues or work emerging from the Group are managed effectively and reported to the Stronger Communities Partnership as and when necessary.

7. Decision-making

7.1 Any decisions will be made by group consensus.

8. Chair

8.1 Fiona Chesters (Senior Development Officer, Tees Valley Rural Community Council) will chair meetings of the group. Catherine Sills (Community Skills Organiser, Redcar & Cleveland Council) will act as vice chair of the group.

9. Specific functions

9.1 To support the further development and implementation of the community capacity building elements of the Borough's community engagement capacity building plan.

9.2 To assist in the reporting of progress against stronger communities priorities and indicators for the Sustainable Communities Strategy and Local Area Agreement.

9.3 To undertake specific stronger communities projects and work streams on behalf of the Redcar & Cleveland Partnership when required.

These terms of reference were adopted on.....26 Feb 08.....

Signed..........

Position.....CHAIR.....