

Empowering Communities Partnership Steering Group

Terms of Reference

Background

The Empowering Communities Partnership (ECP) supports Norfolk's Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) sector to develop and build capacity through networking; training and events; advocacy and strategic voice; and support for volunteering.

ECP brings together the expertise, perspectives and experience of its partners to offer an impactful programme of support, guided by the [NAVCA Four Pillars of Infrastructure](#) and informed by feedback from local VCSEs. More information about ECP can be found here: <https://www.ecnorfolk.org.uk/about-us/>

Role: The role of the Steering Group is to guide the Partnership's strategic direction and inform its priorities and activity. To support this role the Partnership aims to provide:

- A safe and supportive space to encourage openness, respectful challenge and accountability.
- A chance for cross-sector relationship building to enable collaboration.
- An opportunity to ensure the needs of Norfolk's diverse VCSE sector are represented in ECP's sector support offer.
- Accountability to the sector through greater transparency around priorities and funding

Responsibilities:

- To ensure representation of the VCSE sector in decision-making concerning the direction and priorities of ECP.
- To share intelligence and learning from place-based and/or interest-based networks (key updates from each member to be circulated in advance of the meeting).
- To facilitate two-way communication between ECP, the VCSE sector and wider stakeholders.
- To ensure coordination and complementarity with other VCSE workstreams across the system, thus avoiding duplications.
- To act as critical friend and sounding board to encourage and support the delivery of a progressive infrastructure offer.
- To explore and support opportunities to bring in further funding and resources or link with initiatives elsewhere in sector.
- To co-design sector research.
- To feed into and sign-off ECP publications (e.g. State of the Norfolk VCSE Sector reports; Impact Reports).
- To review ECP Quarterly impact data.
- To develop plans for future 3-5 years of ECP.

Membership:

The Steering Group will comprise ECP partner leads, representatives from Norfolk County Council, and 3 – 4 other Norfolk-based VCSE organisations, representing a breadth of size, geography and scale.

Norfolk County Council is the main funder of ECP and their Community team provides strategic insights into the working relationships between VCSEs and statutory bodies, as well as issues affecting communities across the county.

Membership of representatives from other Norfolk VCSEs is by appointment, based on EOIs received in response to open invitation to the sector.

More than one representative from the same organisation may attend meetings, however, each member organisation has one vote, and this is usually given to the most senior representative of the organisation. Steering Group members may send a substitute from their organisation to attend a meeting on their behalf but substitutes must be briefed beforehand.

Conflicts of interest – any potential conflicts of interest with the work of Empowering Communities must be declared upon application to the Steering Group. A register of interest will be held, with declarations reviewed quarterly, at meetings.

Advisory roles:

Representatives from the ICB VCSE Assembly and the Norfolk County Council Norfolk Business Board are invited to hold a seat on the Steering Group, in an advisory capacity. This is to ensure joint working and coordination across work plans and avoid duplication.

The Norfolk & Waveney ICB VCSE Assembly represents the VCSE sector in health and social care; shaping and driving forward strategy and ensuring the views of VCSEs are represented in decision-making. The Norfolk Business Board supports inclusive economic development for the county, with the VCSE lead ensuring that economic growth is equitable and inclusive of diverse communities.

Frequency and duration:

- Meetings to be held Quarterly.
- At least initial 2 meetings to be face to face (following meetings to be hybrid with face-to-face attendance encouraged).
- Meetings to last a maximum of 2 hours.
- External speakers may be invited to join and/or contribute to part of the meeting.

Ways of Working:

Each meeting will involve:

- Discussion of key updates from each member, circulated in advance of the meeting.
- Review of ECP Quarterly impact data and feedback received from sector.
- Discussion and reflection on topics of strategic importance to sector.
- Review of and shaping, where relevant, ECP activity for upcoming Quarter.
- Publishing of Steering Group minutes onto ECP Website after the meeting.