

This handbook contains information to assist you as a member of the GSP. It will be updated from time to time, as the need arises. Information about the GSP, minutes, newsletters, as well as the handbook can be accessed via Gateshead Council's website:

www.gateshead.gov.uk/gsp

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Gateshead Strategic Partnership Members' Handbook



Introduction

The aim of an LSP – a Local Strategic Partnership – is to encourage different parts of the public sector, as well as the business community, voluntary and community sectors and government agencies to take a strategic overview and coordinate their activities to improve outcomes in important areas such as health, education, crime, employment and the environment.

Gateshead Strategic Partnership was launched in 1999. The Partnership is made up of a 'family of partnerships' that work to deliver the priorities local people have identified as important to them as set out in the Sustainable Community Strategy – Vision 2030.

The key aims of the Gateshead Strategic Partnership are to:

- Coordinate partnership working in Gateshead with particular reference to regeneration, neighbourhood renewal and community planning
- Involve the community, voluntary and business sectors in strategic decision making

The membership of the Partnership is wide and open to any agencies and organisations across the public, business, voluntary and community sectors. The Partnership is made up of the Steering Group and the following 'themed' partnerships:

- Economy, Skills, Housing and Transport
- Safer, Stronger Communities and Culture
- Children and Young People
- Health and Social Care

General Membership

Membership of Gateshead Strategic Partnership is open to any organisation working to make Gateshead a better place.

Members will be asked to sign up to working to help deliver Vision 2030 and Gateshead Local Area Agreement (LAA) in whatever way they can. Statutory partners highlighted through the Local Government and Involvement in Public Health Bill will be asked to formally agree their contribution.

Members will receive:

- Newsletters
- Publications
- Invitations to Annual Meetings and other partnership wide consultation events

Members will be invited to contribute to groups within the GSP as and when appropriate.

GSP Structure – Roles and responsibilities

The **GSP Steering Group** is responsible for:

- Providing strategic direction for the work of the GSP
- Place-shaping – making Gateshead a better place to live, work and visit
- Developing the Sustainable Community Strategy for the borough, Vision 2030
- Steering the implementation of Vision 2030 and the Local Area Agreement (LAA)

- Ensuring that Vision 2030 and Gateshead's LAA are delivered and updated as necessary
- Agreeing resources and pooling of funding to deliver Vision 2030 and the LAA
- Monitoring the performance of the GSP and require improvement plans where necessary
- Leading on cross cutting projects as necessary

Some members may be asked to take on a dual role to provide a link to either a Theme Partnership or Area Forum.

The **Theme Partnerships** are responsible for:

- Setting the direction for policy in Gateshead for their theme and agreeing priorities for improvement
- Delivery of the appropriate Improvement Targets and actions in Vision 2030 relevant to the theme and within the LAA
- Co-ordinating resources and pooling of funding to deliver Vision 2030 and the LAA as relevant to the theme
- Quarterly reporting to GSP Steering Group on Improvement Targets in Vision 2030 and Gateshead's LAA
- Responsible for ensuring excellent services are delivered across Gateshead, monitored through the Comprehensive Area Assessment
- Promoting awareness and understanding of issues relating to their theme across the GSP and seek out opportunities for cross cutting work
- Ensuring that effective sub-group arrangements are in place and reviewed regularly

Working Groups and Task and Finish Groups

The GSP is supported by a large number of sub-groups that carry out essential work to contribute to policy development and ensure Vision 2030 is delivered at an operational level.

Such groups may take a variety of forms including groups that meet regularly and Task and Finish Groups that will exist for a time limited period.

All the acts of any such groups will be fully and promptly reported back to the Partnership and the GSP Steering Group when appropriate. The composition, remit, powers and authority of any groups will be determined by the Partnership at the meeting approving its establishment.

Operational Arrangements for all groups within Gateshead Strategic Partnership

All groups within Gateshead Strategic Partnership will be expected to work in line with the operation arrangements below. Normally, decisions are reached by everyone coming to an agreement. All partner organisations should ensure that appropriate representatives attend meetings, with substitute representatives allowed.

- The Chair and Vice-Chair will be agreed yearly in April
- Terms of Reference will be reviewed yearly in April
- Membership will be reviewed yearly in April including consideration of new members
- Any partner organisation may resign by giving not less than one month's notice in writing to the Chair

- The partnerships will meet at least six times a year
- All members of the Partnership can ask for an item to go on the agenda. This can be done via the partnership coordinator at least two weeks before the meeting. The Chair will make the final decision about whether it is included on the agenda
- The agenda and supporting reports will be circulated at least one week in advance. Partnership coordinators can give briefings on the agenda on request
- Where a decision is needed urgently, the Chair and Vice-Chair have the authority to make the decision. This must then be reported to the next meeting for retrospective agreement
- Past agenda, minutes and reports will be available on the Council's website at www.gateshead.gov.uk/gsp
- All meetings will be open to the public

Decision making and resolution of disputes

Decision making will be clear, open and transparent. Meetings will be focused and build consensus towards decisions.

Decisions taken by the Gateshead Strategic Partnership must be:

- Consistent with the visions, outcomes and targets in the Sustainable Community Strategy and relevant delivery plans
- Supported by relevant partners and by relevant service providers, especially those represented on the Gateshead Strategic Partnership

Where decisions can't be reached through consensus, issues should be resolved by a vote using the following rules:

- There is one vote per member and decisions will be by majority
- The Chair will have a second casting vote
- The quorum is half the members of the group

Given the diversity of organisations and people involved in the Partnership, differences in opinion are inevitable in this process of decision making. This diversity is welcomed and encouraged as only through reasoned and challenging debate will the partnership succeed in achieving its goals. The aim, however, is for differences of opinion to be dealt with in a positive and constructive manner.

In situations where differences of opinion are seriously escalating and jeopardising its work, the members concerned could consider to enter into mediation with the assistance of an impartial third party.

Mediation should ideally be jointly called by both parties concerned, but it could be requested by other members of the Partnership where conflict arose.

The role of the Chair is to:

- Ensure that all partners from whatever background have an equal opportunity to participate in discussions, debates and decisions
- Ensure decisions are within the spirit of the Community Strategy
- Try to achieve decisions by consensus

The role of the Vice-Chair is to:

- Substitute for the Chair in accordance with the above role

Partnership members

- Contribute to identifying local needs and set targets to improve services
- Contribute to the development and implementation, monitoring and evaluation of partnership policies, strategies and action plans in particular Gateshead's Sustainable Community Strategy and Local Area Agreement
- Work to influence the corporate strategies and plans of organisations and groups in order to complement the aims and purpose of the Partnership
- Represent the Partnership and its objectives at public meetings, events, workshops and conferences as and when necessary and, promote and champion the work of the Partnership
- Operate in an open, accessible, responsive and accountable manner and represent the interests of their sector at meetings of their Partnership
- Report back to their organisation or partners on the outcome of Partnership meetings
- Ensure they conduct themselves in a way that promotes a culture of mutual respect
- Promote equality of opportunity for all sections of society in the work of the Partnership

Representation on GSP Steering Group

Each of the Theme Partnerships, Area Forums and other sectors (Diversity Forum, Disabilities etc) should identify a member to act as a representative on the Steering Group. The remit is an overarching one taking a wider view of the work and the strategic direction of their theme, area or sector and ensuring this is taken into account in the work of Gateshead Strategic Partnership as a whole. They will:

- build and maintain a comprehensive understanding of the issues, priorities and challenges of their theme area
- be a champion for their policy theme at the GSP Steering Group meetings to ensure relevant issues are contributed
- bring the views of the theme partnership to the GSP Steering
- ensure the work programme of the Theme Partnership, Area Forum or sector is aligned and communicated to the GSP Steering Group
- to encourage the widest engagement and representation on the GSP Steering Group we would seek to ensure that;
 - i. at any one time there are no more than three representatives from the same organisation on the Steering Group
 - ii. there is an effective and appropriate balance across all sectors, statutory, business, community and voluntary
- give group not personal views
- present items at the GSP Steering Group from group or sector they are representing
- be available for briefings on the GSP Steering Group agendas and papers
- give feedback on the discussions and decisions taken at GSP Steering Group, or ensure this takes place in order to drive the work across their Partnership
- seek agreement from organisations and partnerships to actions agreed by the GSP Steering Group
- regularly attends both the GSP Steering Group and the group they are representing.
- ensure that a nominated representative from their Theme Partnership, Area Forum or Sector attends the GSP Steering Group if they are not able to do so.

Resource allocation

From time to time the Gateshead Strategic Partnership will be involved in allocating resource within the borough. At such times the Partnership will agree the:

- accountable body
- process of application
- process of decision making
- monitoring arrangements

Accountability

Gateshead Strategic Partnership is not a legal body. Members of the Partnership are accountable to their own organisations. These terms of reference do not replace the statutory duties or other responsibilities of partners or their own internal accountability arrangements.

All members of the Gateshead Strategic Partnership will report back to their own organisations about the work of the Partnership.

Equalities and diversity

The Gateshead Strategic Partnership is committed to best practice in equalities and diversity, as well as to ensuring that all residents have equal access to the opportunities the borough provides regardless of faith, race, disability, gender, sexual orientation or age.

The Partnership recognises and embraces its role in tackling inequality and promoting equality across Gateshead. This role is embedded in Vision 2030. All members of the Partnership and Theme Partnerships are expected to adopt an inclusive approach to their work.

Conflicts of interest

Members of the Partnership must notify the Chair if they have a personal, financial or other interest in items being considered at a meeting. A member with a prejudicial interest in any matter must:

- withdraw from the room where a meeting is being held whenever it becomes apparent that the matter is being considered, or from the particular discussion and decision taking on matters relating to the issue being considered
- not seek to improperly influence a decision about that matter

This will not apply if that member attends that meeting for the purpose of answering questions or otherwise giving evidence relating to that decision or action.

Local authority Councillors will remain subject to legislative requirements in relation to declarations of interest as well as Gateshead Council's Constitution and the Councillor's Code of Conduct.

For guidance on conflicts of interest please contact the Senior Partnership Officer.