

JOINT FORUM OF COMMUNITY COUNCILS IN WEST LoTHIAN

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Name:

The name of the group shall be the Joint Forum of Community Councils in West Lothian.

Governance:

The Forum will be operated by community councils with support from West Lothian Council.

Aims of the Forum:

- To share knowledge and experience on subjects of common interest.
- To formulate questions for the council's Policy, Development and Scrutiny Panels (PDSPs) and to influence community planning decisions.

Membership of Forum:

- Membership of the Forum shall be open to every community council across West Lothian.
- Each community council will only have one vote at meetings of the Forum, regardless of the number of members per community council in attendance.

Meetings of the Forum:

- The Forum shall hold one Annual General Meeting before one of its two ordinary meetings/events per year. Ordinary meetings/events will take place on dates set by the Forum.
- Special meetings/events can be called at any time on the instruction of the Chair or at the request of at least 5 operational community councils in West Lothian. The local authority's liaison officer for community councils will also have discretion to call a special meeting of the Forum.
- Special meetings will be held within 14 days of receipt of the request by the Forum.
- Meetings will be quorate when at least 5 community councils are represented. Multiple members from one community council will not count towards the quorum.

Office Bearers:

At every AGM, the Forum shall elect a Chair, Vice Chair, Treasurer and Secretary. The Forum can co-opt representatives to fill any vacancies which arise between the AGM. Wherever possible, the office bearers should be made up of different community councils.

Sub-Group:

The Forum will appoint a sub-group comprising the 4 office bearers and up to seven additional members. The sub-group should comprise members from different community councils.

Sub-group members may be invited to represent the views of community councils on council and partner agencies committees/panels.

Comments from community councils will be sought through the Joint Forum page on the Knowledge Hub given the tight timescales between agenda papers being available and meetings taking place.

The sub-group will provide regular feedback on business arising from these meetings which is of interest to community councils.

Records of Meetings:

Notes of meetings of the Forum will be produced and circulated to all community councils in West Lothian by the council's liaison officer for community councils.

Control of Finance:

- An annual grant set by West Lothian Council will be used to fund and advance the work of the Forum to support community councils across West Lothian.
- There shall be three signatories appointed from the office bearers of the Forum. Every cheque will require to be authorised by two of the three signatories. Authorised signatories must not be co-habitees.
- The Treasurer shall keep proper records of the finances and prepare a statement of accounts for the previous financial year that shall be independently examined by a qualified accountant or two examiners appointed by the Forum. Auditors cannot be a member of a West Lothian community council nor have any connection to any member of a West Lothian community council.
- The financial year of the Forum will operate from 1st April to 31st March the succeeding year.
- Examined accounts will be approved at the AGM and submitted to the local authority in claim of an annual grant.

Changing the Terms of Reference:

- Any proposal by a community council member to change the Terms of Reference must be considered at a quorate meeting of the Forum.
- If the proposal is supported by the majority of community councils in attendance at the meeting, the amendment shall become effective with immediate effect.

Dissolution:

- Dissolution may occur on a voluntary basis and by resolution of the majority of members in attendance that are entitled to vote at the meeting where the proposal is considered.
- Funds and property of the Forum will be held in trust by West Lothian Council.

Approved at the second meeting of the Joint Forum of West Lothian Community Councils held in West Lothian Civic Centre, Livingston on 7th December 2018.

Chair

Secretary