

# Terms of Reference

## Somer Valley Forum

### 1. Name and Area of Benefit

1.1 The name shall be the Somer Valley Forum

1.2 The Somer Valley Forum will cover the two Towns and six Parishes of:-

Farrington Gurney; High Littleton; Midsomer Norton; Paulton; Peasedown St John; Radstock; Timsbury and Westfield.

1.3 Corresponding Members will be:-

Camerton and Shoscombe (B&NES)  
Chilcompton; Coleford; Hemington; Holcombe; Kilmersdon; Stratton-on-the-Fosse (Mendip)

### 2. Background

2.1 The Somer Valley Forum is part of an initiative that aims to improve the external engagement of the Council and its partners by bringing together neighbourhoods, villages and towns to reflect local issues and priorities.

2.2 Whilst creating operational boundaries, it is also important in identifying local priorities and bringing together local communities where there are shared and common issues.

2.3 Each area of the initiative will be supported by a local 'Forum' that will work together to improve local engagement, join up services and foster communication so local people receive better outcomes.

2.4 Each Forum may collaborate with other Forums to share good practice and engage in wider discussions. This collaborative approach is designed to secure involvement of stakeholders and local residents.

### 3. Aims and Objectives

3.1 The overall aim is to provide a mechanism for collaboration between communities and public bodies; including Bath and North East Somerset Council and members of the Public Services Board; in order to improve local engagement, join up services and foster communication so local people receive better outcomes.

3.2 The objectives are to:-

- Involve residents and organisations by seeking their views and encouraging them to participate in improving their quality of life
- Identify common issues across this area and debate local priorities

- Discuss how organisations, including this Forum, will work most effectively together to respond to the local priorities and take action where appropriate
- Influence wider policy developments and encourage meaningful conversation

#### 4. Key principles

4.1 All voting and non-voting members of the Somer Valley Forum agree to follow the five key principles of the Connecting Communities programme which are:-

- To **listen** - always being open to ideas.
- To **prioritise** - making sure local needs come first.
- To **join up** - working in partnership with our local communities.
- To **work collaboratively** - helping communities find the best way to tackle local issues.
- To **share ideas** - building on what works.

#### 5. Membership

5.1 The Core Membership of the Somer Valley Forum will be:-

##### **Non-voting Members**

One officer representative from the following public services:-

- Avon and Somerset Constabulary
- Avon Fire and Rescue Service
- Curo
- NHS Bath and North East Somerset
- Bath & North East Somerset Council

##### **Voting Members**

- All B&NES elected ward members in the Somer Valley Forum area
- Up to 2 representatives from all of the Parish Councils in the Somer Valley Forum area
- Up to 2 representatives from the Town Councils in the Somer Valley Forum area

5.2 Further voting members may be drawn from voluntary, community and social enterprise organisations and local business, within the area of benefit as defined in 1.2

5.3 Meetings of the Somer Valley Forum shall be open to the public. A notice of every meeting will be placed on Bath and North East Somerset Council's web meeting diary. All members of the Somer Valley Forum will be requested to promote all meetings to encourage wider engagement. Members of the public may speak/participate at the Chair's discretion.

- 5.4 An organisation may apply to become a member of the Somer Valley Forum and this shall be considered at the Forum AGM, subject to a maximum number of 50 members. Applicants will be associate members until this time, subject to 5.6 below.
- 5.5 Members that do not attend, or give apology for, three consecutive meetings of the Somer Valley Forum will be deemed to have allowed their membership to lapse but will be welcome to re-apply.
- 5.6 The Secretarial support role will be carried out by Bath & North East Somerset Council, Strategy and Performance Service.

## **6. Role of the Chair and Vice Chair**

- 6.1 The Chair and Vice Chair will be elected from the voting membership set out above. They shall act independently and work on behalf of the Forum for the wider benefit.
- 6.2 The Chair and Vice Chair will meet with the relevant officers of Bath and North East Somerset Council to propose agendas, discuss how issues might be resolved and report to the Forum as appropriate.

## **7. Working Methods**

- 7.1 The Somer Valley Forum will meet at least 4 times a year, one of which meetings shall be an Annual General Meeting.
- 7.2 A third of voting members should be in attendance at each Somer Valley Forum meeting, for the meeting to be quorate.
- 7.3 Agendas and papers for meetings will be circulated a minimum of seven calendar days before a meeting. A record of each meeting will be taken.
- 7.4 Every member of the Somer Valley Forum shall be accorded the same degree of respect, dignity and consideration by all other members, irrespective of people's protected characteristics: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation and with regard to equalities legislation.

## **8. Agenda Planning**

- 8.1. The Somer Valley Forum will adopt a core agenda for ordinary meetings as follows:-
- Welcome, Introductions and Apologies
  - Declarations of Interest
  - Minutes of the Last Meeting
  - Matters Arising
  - Standing Items (eg Community Safety, Transportation)
  - Parish and Town Council Items
  - Community Items
  - Consultation Items (eg Council, Police, CCG etc)

## **9. Area profile**

- 9.1 The Somer Valley Forum will establish and keep updated an Area Profile that aims to inform the priorities for the Forum.

## **10. Annual General Meetings**

- 10.1 The Somer Valley Forum will hold an Annual General Meeting each year or within fourteen months of the anniversary of the inaugural meeting.
- 10.2 The Somer Valley Forum will elect a Chair and Vice-Chair at its first inaugural meeting. These positions will be held for one year and thereafter elections will take place at the Annual General Meeting.
- 10.3 At the first inaugural meeting and subsequent AGM meetings, the Somer Valley Forum shall:-
- i. Elect the Chair and Vice Chair
  - ii. Review the Terms of Reference
  - iii. Agree how organisations, including this Forum, will work together to respond to the local priorities and take action where appropriate
  - iv. Influence wider policy developments
  - v. Review its progress annually and consider how to engage more widely, showcase initiatives and share good practice
- 10.4 Any voting member may stand to be elected as Chair or Vice Chair. The existing Chair and Vice Chair may seek re-election.
- 10.5 Nominations for Chair and Vice Chair may be received prior to and at the AGM. This includes self-nominations for both positions.

## **11. Voting**

- 11.1 The Somer Valley Forum will seek to work through the development of consensus.
- 11.2 Decisions, including alterations to the Terms of Reference, will be made by a simple majority vote, subject to the quorum of the meeting (see 7.2 above).

## **12. Working Parties**

- 12.1 The Somer Valley Forum may establish from time to time working parties that will be responsible for undertaking specific topics as necessary.
- 12.2 Members of the working parties may co-opt individuals or organisations to join, in an advisory capacity, to support their objectives.
- 12.3 A record of working party meetings will be taken and reported back at the Somer Valley Forum meetings.

### **13. Dissolution**

- 13.1 A proposal for dissolution of the Somer Valley Forum will require the approval of the majority of voting members.
- 13.2 All funds, documents and possessions shall be disposed of in accordance with the wishes of the majority of voting members.