

Terms of reference for general working groups



If your steering committee for any sort of project or plan decides to divide the work among smaller working groups, it is useful to agree 'terms of reference' for those groups. This will ensure participants understand what they are being asked to do and the limits to their powers. This is the sort of format you might use:

Name of your Steering Committee:

Terms of reference for working groups

What is the purpose for any working group e.g. this might look like this for a community garden:

The purpose of each working group is to assist the (name of parent committee) to prepare an action plan to build the community garden. Each working group will tackle a specific issue, or set of issues, or the needs and opportunities facing a specific group of people within the community.

Then it's advisable for each working group:

1. Set out its purpose e.g. "to help young people (under 18 years) in the community identify their needs, ideas and concerns and to develop an action plan to meet these needs."
2. Outline how it will gather information and carry out consultations.
3. Set out the timescale and estimated costs of gathering information and carrying out consultations.
4. Produce a short action plan setting out:
 - What** is proposed?
 - Why** the action is needed
 - Who** will be responsible for taking the action?
 - When** will the action be taken forward?
 - How** the action will be implemented and how much it will cost?
5. The working group must be able to demonstrate that projects it has identified have the support of the local community (so the group needs to collect data) and show that they have, where relevant, discussed projects with other organisations that will be able to assist in carrying out the action.

6. Each working group will appoint at least one, but preferably two members, to attend the regular (name of parent committee) meetings (those persons may already be members of the parent committee).
7. Each working group will be responsible for organising its own meetings and must provide a summary progress report to the (name of parent committee) meetings.
8. Financial expenditure in excess of (amount) must be approved by the (name of the parent committee). Receipted expenses for reimbursement should be passed to the steering group treasurer on a monthly basis with reasons for the expenditure clearly given.

For more information contact:

Communities Team: Communities@eastsoffolk.gov.uk