

Chief Officers' Group and EPOA Partnership - Terms of Reference

1. Purpose	
Status of the Group and Partnership:	The Chief Officers' Group (CO) is the main decision-making body of the Essex Planning Officers' Association (EPOA) which is a partnership that represents Greater Essex local planning authority officers.
Objectives and Roles of the Group:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) To co-ordinate and make decisions on the activities of the EPOA and delegate workstreams to Forums and sub/working groups, commissioning of specific work, coordinate appropriate training and to represent and lobby on planning-related matters on behalf of the partner local planning authority officers; 2) Provide a general forum for open discussion of all planning related matters affecting Greater Essex and in doing so enable the sharing of good practice and facilitation of cooperation and joint working on issues of a strategic nature and common interest. 3) To perform the role of Project Board for the Essex Coast Recreation Avoidance and Mitigation Strategy (RAMs)
2. Membership and Administration	
Greater Essex Partner Local Authorities:	<p>Basildon Borough Council Braintree District Council Brentwood Borough Council Castle Point Borough Council Chelmsford City Council Colchester Borough Council Epping Forest District Council Essex County Council Harlow Council Maldon District Council Rochford District Council Southend-on-Sea Borough Council Tendring District Council Thurrock Council Uttlesford District Council</p>
Membership	Chief Planning Officer or equivalent (or nominated by) of each Partner Local Authority

Role of Membership:	To elect a new Chair and Vice Chair every two years. To represent the interests of the EPOA and any other EPOA Forum sub/working group. To support the Chair in ensuring that the objectives of the Group and the EPOA are upheld. To attend CO Group meetings and to ensure a substitute if unable to attend. To participate in sub/working groups where relevant.
Role of Chair:	To lead and facilitate meetings and to ensure the EPOA partnership and the CO Group adheres to its objectives. To prepare agendas for meetings in consultation with the Group and to make arrangements for the production of meeting action notes. Seek volunteers from the Group Membership to participate in relevant Forums and sub-groups if required.
Role of Vice-Chair:	To support the Chair and assume the role of Chair if the Chair is unable to attend meetings or represent the EPOA for any reason.
Frequency of Meetings:	Five meetings a year to meet approximately every two to three months. Additional meetings to be called by the Chair if required.
Rules on decision making:	Any decision or recommendation should be made by consensus. In the unlikely event that consensus cannot be achieved then a vote (1 vote per partner authority) would be required to decide matters on a majority decision. In the event of a tie, the Chair would have the casting vote.
Sub-Forums	<p>The following EPOA Sub-Forums report to the CO Group:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design Forum • Development Management Forum • Planning Policy Forum • Planning Support/Admin Forum <p>Other Forums or project Working Groups will be formed where necessary with the agreement of the CO Group.</p>
Finances	
Funding arrangements of the partnership	The partnership is funded by contributions from member Local Authorities. Annual financial reports to be considered at the end of each financial year.
Responsible financial and legal local authority for partnership	Essex County Council

Partnership Revision

Procedure for individual members to leave the partnership	Members can indicate their intention to leave the EPOA to the Chair in advance of their final meeting.
Revising the Partnership	This Terms of Reference will be reviewed on an annual basis at the end of the financial year.

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