

Essex Association of Councils for Voluntary Service (EACVS) Terms of Reference

Introduction

EACVS is an Association of the district based support and development agencies (sometimes called local infrastructure organisations or LIOs) working to provide help and services to front line voluntary and community organisations across Essex, Southend and Thurrock. **Each works behind the scenes in their locality to ensure that local third sector groups and organisations get the support they need.** They provide their members, and the local voluntary and community sector (VCS), with a range of services and development support, and are the voice of the local VCS.

Local support and development organisations, often known as CVSs, help the local third sector in a variety of ways by:

- Identifying and filling the gaps
- Raising standards
- Enabling communication and collaboration
- Providing a voice
- Promoting strategic involvement

Each member of EACVS is part of a network that is in touch with over 164,000 local third sector groups and organisations across the country. For more information about LIOs visit: <http://www.navca.org.uk/about/whatisanlio.htm>

Aims

The aims of EACVS are:

- To agree upon and present a collective county-wide CVS voice to relevant stakeholders
- To co-operate in strengthening the voluntary sector of Essex as a whole
- To promote the value of the work of CVS in the county of Essex
- To explore and progress opportunities where CVS can work collaboratively
- To communicate ideas and information amongst each other
- To share values, information and best practice with each other
- To provide peer-support to each other.

Guiding principles

EACVS is committed to **equality of opportunity, participation, co-operation and involvement** and seeks to:

- Encourage its members to collaborate with each other where possible, rather than compete, and to explore areas and ways of working where duplication can be minimised/avoided
- Apply the principle of subsidiarity where possible; EACVS role is to enable infrastructure service provision through its members or other stakeholders, rather than EACVS being the direct service provider
- When necessary, and with the agreement of EACVS members, individual CVSs may host projects for the benefit of EACVS members or the wider VCS in Essex
- Share responsibility across its membership for EACVS activities
- Promote, implement, and uphold the principles of the local and Essex Compact and supporting Codes.

Membership and fees

Membership of EACVS is open to the 14 CVS or equivalent LIOs delivering generalist infrastructure support and services in Essex, Southend & Thurrock; a membership list is maintained and attached.

Membership is by annual subscription, currently £30 per annum, rising to £50 from April 2011. Fees will be reviewed and agreed annually. EAVCS funds are held and managed by the Treasurer, at no cost to EACVS. Generally decisions on expenditure are agreed at EACVS meetings. At least three members of EACVS must act as signatories on the account.

Meetings of EAVCS are open to the senior officer of each member organisation. Senior officers unable to attend a meeting may send a substitute and undertakes to ensure that they are fully briefed

Meetings and Communications

Responsibility for calling an EACVS meeting, setting the Agenda, and finalising minutes rests with EACVS Chair. Communications between the Chair and members will, in general, be carried out by email.

- EACVS meets every two months, usually on the 2nd Monday at a central venue (where possible, member meeting rooms will be used at no, or minimal, cost to EACVS).
- The Chair will call for Agenda items two weeks before each meeting and all members are encouraged to input into the Agenda.
- Members attending external meetings, or taking a portfolio lead, on behalf of EACVS will return a written report (using the standard template) to be circulated with the Agenda.
- The Agenda and supporting papers will then be issued one week before each meeting.
- Minutes of each meeting will be available a month before the next meeting.
- Quorum will be achieved when five members are present.

Urgent matters: where direction or decision is required before the next meeting, details will be circulated via the Chair and an email consensus reached.

Confidentiality and Conflicts of Interest

EACVS members should:

- Feel able to discuss or share any matter without risk that the discussion, by email or in meetings, will be generally shared or circulated outside of EACVS in any way other than in the formal minutes.
- Adhere to the principle that all information created by, or on behalf of, EACVS shall not be transferred or utilised except on behalf of, with agreement from, EACVS members.
- Declare any potential or actual conflicts of interest at the beginning of each meeting or prior to the particular Agenda item.

Honorary Officers

Nominations for EACVS Chair will be invited from the membership and will be elected annually, with the expectation to continue in the role for a maximum of 3 years. The Chair will organise and chair EACVS meetings, attend meetings as EACVS representative as agreed by members of EACVS, co-ordinate and encourage delegation to members to act as lead on areas of Essex-wide work.

Nominations for EACVS Vice-chair will be invited from the membership and will be elected annually.

Periodically, nominations for EACVS Treasurer will be invited from the membership and a decision agreed by consensus. The Treasurer will manage the funds of EACVS, provide regular updates on the financial position of EACVS, and a formal annual report.

A Minutes Secretary shall be nominated, in rotation, at each meeting of EACVS.

Representation of EACVS to other organisations and bodies

All EACVS members share responsibility for maintaining the good reputation of EACVS to other organisations and bodies.

Individual members of EACVS may take on specific delegated responsibility to speak on behalf of EACVS to Essex County Council and other Essex-wide bodies and organisations, or to take the lead on a portfolio of work on an issue. These representatives shall be selected and agreed to at EACVS meetings and reviewed as required.

These representatives are responsible for putting topics on the agenda, written and verbal reporting, collecting views, expressing the single view or the complexity of views from EACVS to other bodies.

Organisations wishing to **contact, make representation to, or invite representation from EACVS** should initially contact the Chair, Sue Sumner on 01371 878454 email suecvs@btconnect.com

Secretarial support to EACVS

Currently there is no paid secretariat for EACVS. This position is under review; to be agreed by 30 September 2010.

Review

These Terms of Reference will be reviewed and agreed annually at the April meeting of EACVS.

Dissolution

If EACVS decide at any time that on the ground of expense, attendance or otherwise it is necessary or advisable to dissolve, a meeting of all members shall be called, at no less than 21 days' notice. If the decision to dissolve is confirmed by those present at the meeting EACVS shall have power to dispose of any assets held by or on behalf of EAVCS and, after settling any liabilities, the remaining assets shall be shared equally amongst the remaining members.

Membership as at 12 April 2010

Organisation	Lead officer
Basildon, Billericay & Wickford CVS	Chris Evans
Braintree District Voluntary Support Agency (EACVS Treasurer)	Judy Cuddeford
Brentwood CVS	John Fry
Castle Point Association of Voluntary Services	Michaela White
Chelmsford CVS	Lorraine Jarvis
CVS Uttlesford (EACVS Chair)	Sue Sumner
Colchester CVS	Tracy Rudling
Maldon & District Community Voluntary Service	Paul Murphy
Rainbow Services Harlow	Jackie Sully
Rayleigh, Rochford & District Association for Voluntary Service	Jackie Brown
Southend Association of Voluntary Services	Allison Semmence
Tendring CVS	Sharon Alexander
Voluntary Action Epping Forest	Jacqui Foile