



## **How the North Meets South Big Local steering group works**

### **1. Background**

This document describes the North Meets South Big Local Steering Group and how it works.

### **2. The steering group**

The North Meets South Big Local steering group is a group of people that provide overall direction of Big Local in the area. They sign a memorandum of understanding with Local Trust on behalf of the area. While Local Trust refers to this group as the Big Local Partnership, we are known as the North meets South Big Local Steering Group.

### **3. Area of benefit**

The area of benefit is the North Meets South Big Local area (Marks Gate Big Local area).

### **4. Aim and purpose**

The aim of the Steering Group is to develop North Meets South Big Local area as a thriving community, taking full advantage of the support and opportunities offered through Big Local.

- A. Promoting Big Local and an understanding of the programme throughout the North Meets South area
- B. Working and engaging with a range of people in the community as appropriate and where possible
- D. Agreeing a shared vision for the area
- E. Creating a Big Local plan that reflects the vision and priorities
- H. Working with an appropriate nominated support body (locally trusted organisation) to administer the distribution of funds
- I. Reviewing the Big Local plan



## 5. The guiding principles

At all times the Steering Group will be mindful of the following principles:

- A. Building the Steering Group into an effective working team that makes use of the mix of skills, experiences and interests
- B. Adhering to the meeting ground rules
- C. Give opportunities for the community to be involved
- D. Applying principles of equal opportunity and integrity
- E. Accepting there will be conflict and disagreements and commit to address these in a constructive way
- F. Listening to all points of view and respecting them
- G. Reflecting on achievements and sharing lessons for the future
- H. Developing good relationships within the team
- I. Supporting and respecting each other

## 6. The North Meets South Steering Group

The Steering Group is the decision making body for Big Local in the area. It is a core group of members who make key decisions within the wider Partnership.

### Purpose

The Steering Group ensures the activities and operations, set out in section 4 and 5, are carried out effectively and efficiently. The Steering Group will make decisions relating to Big Local in the North Meets South areas, including the use of funding.

### Funding

Finances will be administered differently, depending on the source of funding:

- A. Local Trust Grants will be held by a locally trusted organisation (LTO). The steering group can have more than one LTO to manage expenditure for different Big Local Plan proposals. The LTOs will ensure that funding decisions and procedures meet the requirements of Local Trust to ensure transparency, accountability and best



practices. This means that no individual (as part of the Steering Group decision-making body) will be legally liable in any way for expenditure relating to a Big Local Plan. Finance reports will be prepared by the LTO and presented at Steering Group meetings.

B. Money that is raised, donated or generated by the activities of NMS itself will be held in a separate bank account opened by the Steering Group. Two out of three signatories will be required to authorise payments on this account. Deposits can be made by steering group members or staff members. This bank account can also be used to hold ring-fenced money on behalf of other voluntary organisations, which will be authorised by a signed agreement between the two organisations. The funds and transactions on this bank account are the responsibility of the members of the Steering Group. A quarterly record of income and expenditure will be prepared and presented at Steering Group meetings.

## **7. Engaging with the community**

We are committed to engaging meaningfully with members of the North meets South area, and offering a range of opportunities for other people to get involved with Big Local. To this aim we will hold or be part of a minimum of three events a year in the area.

## **8. Membership of the Steering Group**

The aim is to achieve a membership of the Steering Group that reflects the area. Voting membership of the Steering Group is open to anyone who lives or works in the North Meets South area and shares the aims of the Partnership and is at least 16 years of age. There will be between 8 and 15 members of the Steering Group at any one time, of which at least 55% will be residents of the North Meets South Big Local Area.

While members may be from different neighbourhoods of the Big Local area, they will be making decisions for the benefit of the whole area and not just representing the part of the area they live in or group/organisation that they might be a member of.

There will be no payment as a Steering Group member, however necessary expenses will be considered subject to circumstances.

### Terminating membership of the Steering Group

Individual membership of the Steering Group may be terminated by the Steering Group in line with our normal decision-making processes. Reasons for this might be



on the grounds of a member acting against the aims of the Partnership, breaching the code of conduct, bringing the Partnership into disrepute, or missing two consecutive meetings without a reasonable excuse.

### Training and team building

All members will be expected to undertake training and team building as part of the role. Once formed the Steering Group will identify ongoing support and training needs.

### Officers

In the first instance when the new Steering Group is established a Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary and Treasurer shall be elected by the Steering Group. It is also possible that we might review this during the annual review.

## **9. In-year recruitment of Steering Group members**

If there are vacancies in the voting membership of the Steering Group during the year, the existing voting members of the Steering Group can vote to appoint people to fill those vacancies.

All people wishing to be on the Steering Group must demonstrate they will keep to the guiding principles within this document, sign a code of conduct, will fairly represent all sections of the community, act in the best interests of Big Local and want to serve the community and not use their personal agenda to make decisions.

## **10. Decision-making and voting**

All members of the Steering Group have one vote. All Steering Group decisions shall be taken on the basis of a consensus of all those present. In the event that a consensus is not possible in a reasonable time, the voting members shall be required to take a vote on the matter involved. In the event that a vote is tied, the Chair (or Vice Chair when Chair not present) shall have the casting vote. The Chair and Vice Chair will be resident members.

## **11. Meetings and attendance**

- A. The Steering Group will try to support anyone with any particular needs to ensure their full participation in all meetings
- B. There will be a Steering Group meeting at least once every two months approximately



- C. Any member of the Steering Group with 2/3rds of the Steering Group's agreement can call an extraordinary meeting
- D. The meetings will enforce the ground rules agreed by the steering group
- E. If necessary, the Steering Group can hold occasional meetings and make decisions via email and telephone conference call and the procedures as outlined in this document apply
- F. If there is urgent business, the Chair might call an additional meeting

There shall be a quorum when at least half of the voting members are present at a meeting and 55% are residents.

The Agenda will be determined by the Chair (with input from other Steering Group members) and distributed prior to each meeting, with relevant papers attached.

## **12. Declarations of interest and loyalty**

At the beginning of every meeting of the Steering Group, Community Forum, AGM or task-groups, members will be required to declare any direct or indirect financial and other interest they have in any agenda item being discussed at that meeting and may be asked to leave the meeting during a vote.

### Declaration of interest and loyalty

*In line with the code of conduct, members of the partnership will need to declare any conflicts of interest and loyalty.*

Where a member has a clear private or personal interest in a matter under consideration, they must both declare that interest and, if necessary, withdraw from the meeting. The interest need not be of a purely financial nature but could include membership of a club or organisation connected with the matter under discussion. Interests can be positive or negative especially where a competitive element is introduced. For example, a member may wish to support a particular course of action because it impacts more favourably on an organisation they are a member of, or impacts favourably on their friends/relatives.

Big Local partnerships need to work out when a member has to withdraw from the meeting because we recognise that most people in the partnership will know the people and organisations under discussion.

If in doubt, an individual should avoid being in any position where suspicion could



be raised for any appearance of improper conduct - if in doubt, the individual should declare the interest and seek guidance from the Big Local Rep for future meetings.

Where an individual has declared an interest a statement should appear in the notes of the meeting. For example:

XXX declared a financial/non-financial interest in the above item and withdrew from the meeting, taking no part in the discussion or decision.

or

XXX declared non-financial interest in the above item and remained in the room during its consideration, but took no part in the discussion or decision.

This includes rare instances when a member may have an interest in delivering a project to progress a core North Meets South priority. In such cases, there also needs to be a clear match between the member's professional experience/skills and the required task.

### **13. Concerns or disputes**

Wherever possible, any issues or concerns that members have between meetings should be raised first through the Chair.

Any member who feels they have not been treated fairly or has a complaint about proceedings should raise the matter at a Steering Group meeting, or separately with the Chair informally, or if the issue is related to the Chair then separately with the Vice Chair. Additionally the Big Local rep can hear disputes in the first instance.

Complaints passed the point of informal discussion should be put in writing to the Steering Group via the LTO ([northmeetssouth@londoncf.org.uk](mailto:northmeetssouth@londoncf.org.uk)).

If the dispute is unable to be resolved at the Steering Group meeting then it needs to be escalated and mediation with an independent person or organisation shall be used as a dispute resolution technique.

### **14. Alterations to these Terms of Reference**

These Terms of Reference may be altered by the Steering Group in line with our normal decision making processes.