

Neighbourhood networks – Frequently Asked Questions

This is a list of the questions that have been raised at the initial sessions of the neighbourhood networks.

Neighbourhood networks

How will the neighbourhood networks build on the work of the Neighbourhood Partnerships?

The neighbourhood networks will continue to have a key role in community planning processes, and through their new remit and membership, provide a way of increasing community influence and involvement across the city.

The remit of the neighbourhood networks includes having a role in deciding on the allocation of budgets devolved by public bodies. The Council has agreed to continue the previous arrangement under the neighbourhood partnerships for the neighbourhood networks to be involved in the allocation of the Community Grants Fund. It will be for the neighbourhood networks to determine how they do this. Any process needs to be open, transparent and properly managed so the neighbourhood networks might decide to establish a sub group, funding panel or participatory budgeting steering group. It will be for them to decide locally.

The neighbourhood partnerships previously had a role in the allocation of the neighbourhood environment programme funds. With the introduction of the neighbourhood networks, the Council will be looking to review these funds to consider where influence could be strengthened and capital investment prioritised.

How can members of the public and businesses get involved in neighbourhood network meetings/gatherings?

Members of the public and businesses can be involved in neighbourhood networks by:

- coming along to community sessions arranged by the network
- raising their issues with any of the groups who are members of the network.

Community bodies, elected members for the relevant wards and third sector organisations working in the local area make up the membership.

Can you come along to the neighbourhood network if you are a member of the voluntary sector forum?

Yes third sector organisations are members of the neighbourhood networks and can come along.

Can we rename the neighbourhood network to better reflect the local communities?

Yes, the name of the neighbourhood networks can be changed. Any proposed change must be approved by the Edinburgh Partnership Board.

How often will the neighbourhood network meet?

The neighbourhood networks will decide how often to meet. They must, however, meet at least once a year.

What will the process be for reviewing the locality improvement plan?

The locality community planning partnerships are responsible for reviewing the locality improvement plans and will decide how they want to do this.

What's the Chair's role?

The Chair of the neighbourhood network will be a champion for the network.

Initial tasks they may undertake are:

- opening and closing network gatherings
- being a first point of contact for officers supporting the network
- being a link for other neighbourhood network chairs and working with them to provide a citywide perspective.

Does the neighbourhood network need to appoint a chair?

Yes, each network must appoint a Chair and Vice Chair every year as stated in the governance framework.

As the neighbourhood networks are just starting to develop, each network can put in place interim arrangements initially. As part of their development, they will be expected to decide how they will appoint a Chair and Vice Chair going forward.

How will the neighbourhood network involve the wider community?

Each neighbourhood network will decide what approach to take. This allows them to build on what's already working in their area and develop new ways of engaging with the wider community to make sure that all voices are heard.

How do schools/parent councils, including private schools, fit into this?

Parent councils and schools, including private schools, will be involved in the neighbourhood networks. One way in which they will be able to do this is through

participating in engagement activity. Parent councils, as community groups, are members of the neighbourhood network.

How will cross boundary issues be managed e.g. one neighbourhood network issue going across another?

Where there are cross boundary issues, neighbourhood networks will be encouraged to work together to agree what action needs to be taken. When an issue involves several public bodies, it should be raised with the locality community planning partnership. When an issue relates to a single service, it should be taken up with the service provider.

Community councils

What is the role of community councils if community bodies can raise issues directly at neighbourhood networks?

Community councils act as a key voice for individuals and groups in their local area as well as having a statutory role within the planning and licensing systems. This remains unchanged by the new arrangements.

The neighbourhood networks are the way in which the whole community will influence the priorities and outcomes for community planning. They are designed to encourage wide participation from across the whole neighbourhood.

What's the role of community councils in the locality community planning partnership?

The membership of the locality community planning partnerships is made up of public sector bodies (such as the Council, Police Scotland, NHS Lothian and the Fire and Rescue Service), third sector organisations, one elected member for each of the wards within the locality and a community representative nominated by each neighbourhood network.

Community bodies on the neighbourhood networks, should include community councils, tenants' organisations, Friends of the Parks groups, parent councils and community trusts. The community bodies will nominate their representative on the locality community planning partnership. This can include community councils.

Locality community planning partnerships

How many times will the locality community planning partnership meet?

The frequency of the locality community planning partnership meetings will be agreed by its members.

Will there be a commitment to publicise meetings and agendas in advance, so people can be prepared and informed?

Yes, meeting dates and agendas will be made publicly available in advance.

What kind of decisions will the locality community planning partnership be taking?

The locality community planning partnership is responsible for developing and delivering the locality improvement plans. These are the local plans that aim to improve the area through joint working between public, voluntary and community bodies.

What's the role of the neighbourhood network members of the locality community planning partnership?

All neighbourhood network members will be expected to:

- act as a voice for the neighbourhood network during locality community planning partnership meetings and discussions
- take decisions at locality community planning partnership meetings based on the interest of the whole community, recognising the view and priorities identified by the network
- share information about locality community planning partnership business with neighbourhood network members.

How was the nomination process for neighbourhood network community representative for the locality community planning partnership developed?

Given the neighbourhood networks will take time to establish and determine how they will work, a process to secure the community representation was needed so that the locality community planning partnerships could be established with the involvement of all members. Officers created a nomination process, based on existing practice including the community council nominated member process. This provided an immediate solution, whilst recognising that in future the nomination process will be determined by the neighbourhood networks as part of their annual meeting.

Can there be several people representing the network at the locality community planning partnership, so the best skilled person can be there? This could reflect the knowledge or the individual's expertise.

The governance framework states that there will be one community representative per neighbourhood network on the locality community planning partnership.

However, each neighbourhood network will be represented on the locality community planning partnership by elected members, voluntary sector forum representation and the community representative.

How many voluntary sector representatives will there be on the locality community planning partnership?

An interim arrangement has been put in place. This makes the voluntary sector representatives on the former locality leadership teams become the locality community planning partnership members. The number of representatives will therefore vary in the short-term.

A planned review of third sector support and participation will consider the representation of the third sector within the new arrangements, and specifically on the locality community planning partnerships.