**Constitution of the Highland Action Partnership**

(effective 1st January 2019)

The following sets out how the Highland Action Partnership will conduct its business effectively. It covers:

* The purpose of the Action Partnership
* The Local Action Plan
* Membership of the Action Partnership
* Roles on the Action Partnership
* Meetings
* Promoting the Action Partnership
* Conduct of Action Partnership Members

**1. Purpose**

1.1 The purpose of the Highland Action Partnership is to bring communities, elected members, and services to work together at a local level, using local insight and professional knowledge, to reduce inequalities and deliver better outcomes for those experiencing challenges in their lives.

1.2 Inequalities exist where some people are experiencing disadvantage compared to others. This could be in relation to such things as access to public services, fuel poverty, transport, or employment opportunities. The Action Partnership aims to develop local actions which help address these inequalities. The best way to do this is to work with communities to gain a real understanding of the issues faced by them, and work together to address these.

1.3 The Action Partnership is not intended to replace or replicate the invaluable work of Community Councils or local community groups, but instead to complement their work, and provide a forum for community members to work with local elected members and public services, to address local inequalities.

**2. Local Action Plan**

2.1 The Action Partnership should produce a local Action Plan which sets out how it will address inequalities in the area, this should be reviewed and updated, if appropriate, on an annual basis.

**3.1 Membership**

3.1 The voting membership is:

3.2 All elected members representing the Highland Ward or it’s successor ward(s) are ex-officio voting members of the Action Partnership for as long as they serve as a councillor.

3.3 Each community council in the Highland Ward shall be entitled to nominate one voting representative and one substitute voting representative to serve on the Action Partnership, to represent their community council area (see section 4). The substitute voting representative shall only have speaking and voting rights in the absence of the main voting member. They are hereafter referred to in this document as “community representatives”.

3.4 The pupil/school council/representative body of each secondary school serving the Highland Ward area shall be entitled to nominate two voting youth representatives and two substitute voting representatives to serve on the Action Partnership. The substitute voting representative shall only have speaking and voting rights in the absence of the main voting member.

3.5 The non-voting membership is:

* The Community Planning Partnership shall be entitled to nominate a “Lead Officer” to support the Action Partnership and act as a link between the Action Partnership and the Community Planning Partnership.
* Support staff – The Council`s Stronger Communities Team assist Action Partnership before, during, and after, the Action Partnership meetings; organise the meetings and help in the delivery of the Local Action Plan.
* Locality Manager(s) (or their representative) from the Health and Social Care Partnership
* Representative(s) of the Third Sector Interface for the local area

3.6 The Action Partnership can invite representatives from local public services (e.g. police, fire, Council, NHS Tayside) to either attend every meeting, or to come along on a `case by case basis`, and provide information about local service provision and the opportunities for joint working. The role of representatives from these services is to provide support, advice and information to the Action Partnership, to shape and deliver the Action Plan, and local actions.

3.7 Action Partnership members can also invite individuals or community groups to meetings - for example, if that individual/group has a particular interest or knowledge in an issue being discussed at the Action Partnership. For venue size purposes, please advise communityplanningpartnership@pkc.gov.uk

of any invited quests before the meeting. The Chairperson and Lead Officer should be notified prior to the meeting, so they are aware who may be attending.

**4. Community Representation Selection**

4.1 Community voting/substitute representatives must live in the community council area they’re being nominated to represent. As the main purpose of the Action Partnership is to address inequalities, community representation should reflect wherever possible, gender balance and represent the ethnicity, demography, and the range of localities in the Highland Ward area

4.2 Community Council Nominations Process:

4.3 The representative nominated by the community council does not need to be a community councillor, but can be.

4.4 Nominations for voting or substitute members must be agreed and formally minuted at a community council meeting. A copy of this minute can be used to inform the Action Partnership of the community council`s nominee;

4.5 Where a Community Council fails to nominate:

4.6 Where a community council is in abeyance, or where a community council has failed to nominate a representative within two months of the start of a new term of office (as defined in section 6.) then the Action Partnership shall advertise the vacancy publicly within four months of the start of the term and a representative shall be elected using the process outlined below.

4.7 Persons living in the geographical boundary of the community council that is in abeyance/failed to nominate may nominate themselves, provided they have the written support of a proposer and seconder who are also resident within the community council area. Where there is more than one nominee for the vacancy an election shall be held by the Action Partnership to elect the representative for that area. All persons over the age of 16 years old living in the community council area, and registered on the electoral register shall be eligible to vote. The Alternative Vote (AV) system shall be used in the election, and it shall be by secret ballot, conducted by the Action Partnership. The Action Partnership shall appoint a Returning Officer and Deputy(s) Returning Officer(s) from within its membership, at the start of the call for nomination/election process;

4.8 Where a community council area representative is elected using the process outlined in 4.3.2. there shall be no substitute voting member for that community council area;

4.9 A community council area representative elected using the process outlined in 4.3.2. shall cease to be a member at the same time as other community council area representatives, as outlined in section 6.

**5. Exclusion from membership**

5.1 Any person may be temporarily suspended, or excluded from the Action Partnership by majority vote at an Action Partnership meeting, providing the following procedures have been observed.

5.2 At least 21 days’ notice must be given of the intention to propose a resolution to suspend / exclude a member, to the member concerned, specifying the grounds for the proposed suspension / exclusion.

5.3 The member concerned shall be entitled to be heard on the resolution at the Action Partnership meeting at which the resolution is proposed.

5.4 The member concerned can appeal against the decision, and another Action Partnership would be requested to hear that appeal, and make a decision.

**6. Period of Tenure**

6.1 Elected members shall be members of Action Partnership for as long as they serve as a councillor

6.2 Community representatives and substitute representatives shall serve two year terms (renewable), expiring on 31st December every two years, with the first term ending in December 2019. Community councils may change their nominated representative or nominated substitute representative during a term of office, but any new nominees term of office shall still cease at the same time as all other community representatives.

6.3 The youth representatives shall serve for one year terms (renewable), expiring on 30th June each year

6.4 Non-voting members shall serve for as long as their organisation or body nominates them to serve.

**7. Election of Chairperson & Vice-Chairperson**

7.1 The voting members of the Action Partnership shall elect a Chairperson and a Vice-Chairperson from among their number.

7.2 The Chairperson and Vice Chairperson shall be elected at the first meeting of the new year after a new term of office has started, or at the first scheduled meeting following their resignation as an office bearer.

7.3 The Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson shall serve for a two year term starting from 2020, but their term of office shall cease at the same time as the Community Representatives term of office comes to an end.

7.4 A nomination for Chairperson or Vice-Chairperson must be proposed by one other voting members of the Action Partnership.

7.5 Where a position is contested then an election shall take place, amongst the Action Partnership membership. Candidates shall be allowed to make a brief statement prior to voting taking place. The election shall be by secret ballot and conducted using the Alternative Vote system. The Lead Officer or their nominated representative shall act as Returning Officer.

7.6 The Lead Officer or their nominated representative shall chair the meeting where a vacancy of Chairperson is to be elected until such time as a Chairperson has been elected. This shall apply in all instances including where a vacancy is being filled due to resignation and there is a Vice-Chairperson still in post.

7.7 The election of Chairperson/Vice-Chairperson shall be the first substantive item of business at any meeting where it is to be discussed after items such as Welcome/Apologies, Minutes of Previous Meeting and Declarations of Interest.

**8. Roles of Members**

8.1 Role of Chairperson – to facilitate the effective agenda management and running of the Action Partnership meetings, and ensure that all parties have an opportunity to express their views.

8.2 Role of the Vice-Chairperson – to undertake the functions of the Chairperson in their absence, and assume the role on an acting basis following the resignation of the Chairperson until the next scheduled meeting.

8.3 Role of Lead Officer – to represent the Community Planning partners’ organisations, and provide a link between the Action Partnership and Community Planning organisations (such as Police, fire, NHS Tayside, Council).

8.4 Role of Youth Representatives – to represent the views of young people in the Highland Ward area.

8.5 Role of Community Representatives – to represent the communities, and contribute to the activities of the Action Partnership.

8.6 Role of Elected Members – to represent the communities which have elected them as local elected representatives.

**9. Meetings**

9.1 The Action Partnership shall agree the frequency, time and location of its meetings.

9.2 A special meeting of the Action Partnership may be called by the Chairperson at the written request of two voting members.

9.3 Venues should be selected to be accessible for participants with disabilities and should generally be selected with teleconferencing facilities to allow members to be part of the meeting through telephone or skype. Members who contribute via telephone or videoconferencing shall be considered present and shall have voting rights.

9.4 Action Partnership meetings are open to the public to attend as observers. Notices of meetings are made public though local media and the Council website. Notices should include information on how the general public can attend and contribute at the meetings.

9.5 Minutes shall be made of all proceedings at all formal meetings. The minute shall include the names of the voting and non-voting members present, and should be approved either at the following meeting.

9.6 Any voting member of the Action Partnership may request an item be added to the Agenda or raise it under Any Other Business (AOB) which shall be a standing item on all Agendas.

9.7 Agendas for the Action Partnership must include Apologies, Minutes of the Previous Meeting and a Finance Update.

**10. Sub Groups**

10.1 The Action Partnership may agree to set up Sub Groups to look at a specific issue/project or to focus on specified geographical areas.

10.2 The membership of any Sub Groups shall be determined by the Action Partnership

**11. Conduct**

11.1 All members should respect each other views and allow them to speak uninterrupted.

11.2 The Chairperson should ensure that all members are given the opportunity to speak if they wish to do so.

11.3 A member of the Partnership, who has a personal interest in any transaction or other arrangement which the Local Action Partnership is proposing to enter into, must declare that interest; they will be debarred from voting on that issue.

11.4 All Action Partnership members should meet the terms of the Code of Conduct for members (see Appendix 1).

**12. Decision Making**

12.1 The business of the Partnership will generally be conducted by discussion and consensus. Where consensus cannot be reached, a proposed course of action to be undertaken by the Action Partnership must be proposed and seconded by a voting member.

12.2 A simple majority of the votes cast shall be required to approve any course of action.

12.3 Voting members shall have one vote each, which must be given personally at the meeting. Non-voting members and observers at the meeting will not be given a vote.

12.4 If there are an equal number of votes for, and against, any resolution, the Chairperson shall have casting vote.

12.5 If a private ballot is requested by any voting member then one shall be conducted.

**13. Funding Panel**

13.1 The Funding Panel shall determine the policy and procedure on how to disperse money allocated to the Action Partnership, such as the Community Investment Fund or participatory budgeting money. It shall also be the formal body of the Action Partnership that agrees on any funding requests received through the (CIF) or other similar funds.

13.2 The Funding Panel shall consist of all voting members of the Action Partnership, who will each have one vote.

13.3 The Funding Panel shall be chaired by one of the elected members, agreed or elected by the other elected members. The elected members not elected to chair the Funding Panel shall serve as Vice-Chairs of the Funding Panel.

**14. Promoting the Action Partnership**

14.1 Action Partnership members are encouraged to feedback relevant information about the work of the Partnership to the wider community as often as possible using local media, social media, press releases, newsletters etc. The Partnership should agree any content for media releases as a group, unless a member is specifically delegated by the Partnership to carry out a piece of work, on its behalf.

14.2 All members are responsible for promoting the Local Action Partnerships and encouraging community cohesion and involvement.

**15. Changes to this Constitution**

15.1 Any changes to this constitution shall require a two-thirds vote in favour by voting members present at the meeting.

15.2 Any proposed changes must be lodged by a voting member with the support staff for the Action Partnership at least seven days in advance of the scheduled meeting where the changes are to be discussed.

15.3 The Chairperson may call a special meeting of the Action Partnership to discuss proposed changes to this document at the written request of at least two voting members of the Action Partnership.

Agreed by the Highland Action Partnership members on:

(Date: to be inserted)

**Appendix 1**

**Code of Conduct for Action Partnership Members**

Members of the Action Partnership should meet the following principles of proper conduct:

* Service to the Community
* Selflessness
* Integrity
* Objectivity
* Accountability and Stewardship
* Openness
* Honesty
* Leadership
* Respect

**Service to the Community**

You should act in the interests of the local community, which you have been elected or nominated to represent.

You have a duty to establish and reflect, through the Action Partnership, the views of the community as a whole, on any issue, irrespective of personal opinion.

You should ensure that you are, within reason, accessible to your local community and local residents. Various mechanisms to allow the general community to express their views, i.e. suggestion boxes, community surveys, opinion polls should, where possible, be made available.

**Selflessness**

You should take decisions solely in terms of the interest of the community that you represent. You must not use your position as a Action Partnership member to gain financial, material, political or other personal benefit for yourself, family or friends.

**Integrity**

You must not place yourself under any financial or other obligation to any individual or organisation that might reasonably be thought to influence you in your representation of your community. If you have any private and/or personal interest in a matter to be considered by the Action Partnership, you should declare this and if deemed necessary by other members, of the Partnership, withdraw from discussions and the decision making process with regard to that matter.

You should not accept gifts or hospitality that may be seen to influence or be intended to influence your opinion or judgement.

**Objectivity**

In all your decisions and opinions as an Action Partnership member you should endeavour to represent the overall views of your community, taking account of information which is provided to you or is publicly available, assessing its merit and gathering information as appropriate, whilst laying aside personal opinions or preferences.

You should ensure that you represent the interests of your community and community council and not the interests of a particular political party or other specific group.

**Accountability and Stewardship**

You should ensure that the Acton Partnership uses its resources prudently, in accordance with the law, and for the purposes of Action Partnership business and for no other purpose.

**Openness**

You should be open about your decisions, actions and representations, giving reasons for these where appropriate. You should be able to justify your decisions and be confident that you have not been unduly influenced by the views and/or opinions of others.

If you have dealings with the media, members of the public, or others not directly involved in your Action Partnership, you should ensure that an explicit distinction is made between the expression of your personal views and opinions from any views or statement made about or on behalf of the Action Partnership.

**Honesty**

You should act honestly and work within the law at all times. You must declare any private interest relating to your Action Partnership and take steps to resolve any conflicts arising in a way that protects the interest of the community and the Action Partnership.

**Leadership**

You should promote and support the principles of the Action Partnership by leadership and example, to maintain and strengthen the community’s trust and confidence in the integrity of the Action Partnership and its members in representing the views and needs of the local area. You should also promote equality and social inclusion, and challenge discrimination in any form.

You should act to assist the Action Partnership, as far as possible, in the interest of the whole community that it serves. Where particular interest groups’ concerns are in conflict with those of other groups or other areas you should help to ensure that the Action Partnership is aware of them.

**Respect**

You should respect fellow members of your Action Partnership and those that you represent, treating them with courtesy, respect and in a non- discriminatory manner at all times. This should extend to any person, regardless of their position, you have dealings with in your capacity as a member of the Action Partnership.

Recognition should be given to the contribution of everyone participating in the work of the Action Partnership. You should ensure opportunity be given to every participant to have their knowledge, opinion, skill and experience taken into account.

You should ensure that confidential material, including details about individuals, is treated as such and that it is handled with dignity and discretion and is not used for personal, malicious or corrupt purposes.