

## Efford Building Communities Initiative Masterplan

**Heart of Efford Community Partnership Handbook**  
prepared by  
**CSC Regeneration & Research Consultants**

March 2007 updated

Please note:  
This document is printed on both sides in line with CSC's environmental policy



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## 1. INTRODUCTION

This handbook has been developed by CSC Regeneration & Research Consultants for members of the Heart of Efford Community Partnership (HECP).

The HECP has been established as a vehicle, which enables local people to influence the key decisions, made about the development and progression of the Efford estate in a structured and coordinated way. This approach makes it vitally important to the success of the Building Communities Initiative master plan for Efford that local people develop the skills and knowledge to play their role effectively. This handbook is designed to build the necessary skills required by members of the HECP.

### 1.1 HOW TO USE THE HANDBOOK

The HECP Handbook has been specifically designed to match the needs of those partnership members involved with the Building Communities Initiative master planning process. The handbook provides a reference guide to different elements of the operations of the partnership committee, and will also be a useful guide to future members if and when the partnership evolves in the future.

The handbook is written in plain English and is presented in a user friendly fashion. For best effect the handbook should be read and used as a whole document, but each section can also be referenced as a stand alone guide.

The handbook contains the following sections:

1. Introduction
2. Aim and Objectives
3. Roles and Responsibilities
4. Ground Rules
5. Effective meetings
6. Team Work
7. Using Structures
8. Equal Opportunities Commitment

Some of these sections are presented here for further consideration and up-dating by members of the partnership committee. For example, the section on Ground Rules contains some suggestions but Full Partnership members should agree the ground rules eventually adopted. The handbook can then be updated as appropriate to remain a current working document of use to the HECP.

## 2. HECP AIM AND OBJECTIVES

The HECP Constitution identifies the aim and objectives of the HECP as follows:

**Aim:** To further the interests and improve the quality of life of all who live or work in the Efford Neighbourhood.

**Objectives:**

- a. To listen to, consult and share information with the people of the Efford Neighbourhood
- b. To promote and implement initiatives to further the Aim, of the Partnership
- c. To be the lead body for all consultations relating to the Efford Building Communities Initiative and other local regeneration issues
- d. To become a focus for community life

Effective partnerships ensure that the essential purpose of the partnership and what it is trying to achieve are understood by all and remain integral to the work undertaken. This is particularly important at the birth of a new partnership and during periods of change and development. The aims and objectives together provide a touchstone and driving force behind the partnership.

### 3. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The HECP Constitution describes the role of the partnership committee in overseeing the successful appointment of key officers including:

- Chair
- Vice Chair
- Treasurer
- Secretary

It is vital to the smooth running of the partnership as a whole that each officer understands their role, how to carry it out and the responsibilities they hold. This is also the case for members of the committee who are not officers as they still have a variety of important roles to play. Clear definition of each role, and who is responsible for undertaking it is the best way of ensuring that things actually get done.

This section provides a brief outline of the roles and responsibilities of the officers and other members of the partnership committee.

#### 3.1 ALL MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE

All members of the committee take on certain responsibilities through their membership. First and foremost amongst these responsibilities is to promote the work of the HECP to the people of Efford. This will entail working with the other members of the partnership to make a positive contribution to the delivery of the BCI Master Plan. The whole of the committee will be responsible for monitoring the work of the master plan to ensure that what is delivered is to the benefit of the local community.

Acting as a coherent and complete unit the committee must decide from an early stage whether local level representation is facilitated through the entire committee, or, whether small groups of committee members will be formed to represent specific areas in Efford or sections of the local community or other interests about which the HECP has a concern.

The committee must actively represent all sections of the local community fully and fairly and not allow decisions or outcomes to be influenced by prejudice of any kind. Each member of the committee acknowledges their role and responsibility to act with impunity from any individual agenda for personal gain or desire for change which will not bring justifiable shared benefits for the community.

All members of the committee share the same right to engage with committee business and each representative must respect the decisions and contributions of their fellow members and not entertain any personal grievances that may be held against certain individuals.

Members of the committee also have a responsibility to agree and monitor any subsequent funding budgets secured through HECP, ensure that the financial position of the partnership remains healthy and that any assets are only used for the promotion of the work of HECP and its beneficiaries.

#### 3.2 THE CHAIR

The role of the Chair is critical to the operations of the committee, particularly in terms of ensuring that partnership meetings are effective and drive the progress of HECP forward. The Chair is expected to provide leadership but should not dominate meetings or block or inhibit the contributions of others.

The Chair of the HECP will lead on brokering links between the HECP and other local partnerships including DELL and Plymouth City Council, to ensure lasting working relationships are effectively developed and joined up working is championed as a shared overarching objective.

The role and responsibilities of the Chair are therefore dealt with at some length here.

The Chair of a partnership has four main sets of duties:

- A representative role as the figurehead of the partnership
- Ensuring the effective operation of the committee
- Ensuring appropriate supervision of any staff employed by the partnership
- Assisting with the management of the partnership

The second of these roles is probably the most important in terms of the work of the HECP at this stage. Outlined below are some guidelines on chairing meetings.

### 3.2.1 BEFORE THE MEETING

- i. Plan the agenda with other committee members. Make sure the purpose of the meeting is clear. Decide which items will be included, roughly how long each one should take, in which order they should come and who will introduce each one.
- ii. Be well briefed about each item
- iii. Ensure all necessary background papers are sent out with the agenda beforehand
- iv. Check that relevant arrangements have been made re: room bookings, layout, visual aids, catering etc.

### 3.2.2 DURING THE MEETING

#### Communicate

- Start the meeting, welcome new members, make necessary introductions
- Set the scene by stating the purpose of the meeting, its content and structure
- Give an indication of how the meeting should take
- Tell people about anything which may affect the meeting
- Briefly recall on previous meeting if appropriate.

#### Control

- Maintain control. Set out any time limits
- Facilitate discussion allow flexibility and freedom of expression
- Ensure full participation. Draw out quiet members
- Keep to the agenda, deal with each item in turn. Ensure time is used effectively
- Ensure that proper minutes are being taken

#### Coordinate

- Recap On discussions if necessary
- Highlight areas of common agreement
- Weigh up contributions impartially
- Clarify decisions and actions
- Check commitment
- Provide material for the minutes

#### Clarify

- Ensure everyone understands what is being discussed

- Ensure all jargon or abbreviations used in the discussion are understood
- Summarise
- Ensure that when decisions are made they are recorded
- Record who is going to implement them and when

### 3.2.3 AT THE END OF THE MEETING

- Check the date of the next meeting - set them well in advance
- Agree what special items will be put on the agenda of the next meeting and what work needs to be done, by whom
- Ensure that the minutes will be written up, and checked by the Chair before being sent out. Agree by when they will be available.

The Chair may also assume responsibility for the following:

- Make sure that meetings are conducted in accordance with applicable rules of the HECP
- See that the committee is up to strength
- Chairing disciplinary or grievance meetings
- Formally welcoming new member
- Resolving conflict at meetings
- Keeping the meeting to time
- Rule on disputes
- Have a second or casting vote in the event of a "tied" vote at a meeting

## 3.3 THE VICE CHAIR

The role of the Vice Chair is essentially to support the work of the Chair and to deputise for the Chair whenever necessary. As such, the roles and responsibilities of the Vice Chair are the same as for the Chair (see above) as and when the Chair is absent or as and when the Chair delegates responsibility.

At committee meetings where both the Vice Chair and the Chair are present, the Vice Chair may play a supporting role, by assisting the Chair in noting who wishes to speak, for example. This is particularly useful in a large meeting, where the Chair may have difficulty in keeping the whole room in view.

## 3.4 THE SECRETARY

The role of the Secretary to the committee, though largely administrative is nonetheless extremely important. The responsibilities of the Secretary are as follows:

### 3.4.1 BEFORE THE MEETING

- Preparing the agenda with the Chair
- Receiving agenda items from other members
- Circulating the agenda, papers and minutes in good time
- Booking the meeting rooms
- Check that members have taken agreed action following last meeting

### 3.4.2 DURING AND AFTER THE MEETING

- Check that a quorum is present
- Make sure that minutes are taken
- Record decisions and policy and circulate them with the minutes
- Make sure that meetings are conducted in accordance to guidelines of HECP

- Make sure that any members who have been given tasks know what to do

### 3.4.3 OTHER RESPONSIBILITIES

- Oversee that the committee meets legal obligations on reporting charity law requirements etc,
- Keep a check on the progress of work agreed by the committee
- Send out notification of the annual general meeting and any extraordinary general meeting
- Have responsibility for the recruitment process
- Deal with official correspondence, press and publicity

## 3.5 THE TREASURER

The Treasurer of the committee is responsible for ensuring that the money and assets of the partnership is properly managed. This does not mean that the Treasurer actually keeps the accounts etc. but rather oversees the financial management undertaken by appropriate staff or committee members (if this is the case). The main tasks of the Treasurer can be summarised as:

- Ensuring that there are systems in place for budgeting, financial control and monitoring
- Keeping the committee informed of the HECP's financial situation
- Ensuring the budget and management accounts are properly discussed and understood
- Ensuring the accounts are compiled and reported as necessary by professional staff
- Ensuring auditors are appointed and any problems followed up
- Overseeing payments of tax, national insurance, VAT etc,

The Treasurer will normally work in close collaboration with the auditors and the members of the project team responsible for the day to day management of the committee's finances.

## 3.6 WARD COUNCILLORS

Ward Councillors can offer important political perspective on proposals, area strategies and development ideas and their commitment to the HECP should be encouraged and supported by all committee members.

Each Ward Councillor should strive to ensure regular attendance at committee meetings where possible, or seek secondary representation to cover absence. Councillors should inform the Chair of any potential conflict arising between their political responsibilities and activity of the HECP, an appropriate way forward should be developed and agreed by both parties.

## 3.7 NON VOTING CO-OPTEE MEMBERS

Non voting co-optee members agree to adopt the same roles and responsibilities as full committee members described in section 3.1 above with the necessary exception of forfeiting voting rights over decision.

All committee members agree to acknowledge the roles and responsibilities of non voting co-optee members equal and without exception to those of full committee members.

## 4. GROUND RULES

Agreeing a set of ground rules is a way of establishing a set of rules of behaviour which will govern committee meetings. They can also be adapted for use both during partnership meetings, sub group meetings and other public meetings involving HECP. Ground rules are an extremely useful tool for any group of people coming together to work towards a shared goal.

Ground rules should not be confused with the technical procedures of the committee which are covered in detail in the partnership Constitution. Ground rules are about behaviour rather than tasks or procedures.

### 4.1 SUGGESTED GROUND RULES

Agreeing norms of acceptable behaviour is particularly important in the context of HECP. The partnership is an important and recognized community led initiative involving the people who will be directly affected by the developments of the BCI master plan for Efford. This direct involvement can make the decision making process more difficult and more emotional. A set of ground rules may assist the committee to steer a course through potentially divisive discussions. Agreeing ground rules can also be a useful way to understand and overcome differences between different groups such as young people. Ground rules are founded in the understanding that:

- i. Any committee is made up of a diverse set of individuals with varying and sometimes *conflicting* interests, motivations, expectations and character traits
- ii. Any committee is made up of a diverse set of individuals with varying but potentially *similar* interests, motivations, expectations and character traits

Outlined below is a set of suggested ground rules developed by the HECP committee. They can be used as a basis to stimulate discussion and lead to a final set of ground rules to be adopted by the partnership. Ground rules are best achieved through an open discussion process resulting in a consensus agreement, they should also remain open to amendment over time as the membership and the responsibilities of the committee develop.

#### THE HECP SUGGESTED GROUND RULES

1. 1 meeting per month, to last no longer than an hour and a half
2. Set agenda for next meeting at end of meetings
3. Highfield Community School venue is most suitable
4. Agenda and Last Meeting Minutes to be circulated at least one week before meetings
5. Must be co-operative by nature, no shouting, no personal attacks
6. Must stick to agenda
7. Must keep other personal issues at the door
8. Be mindful of those not used to meetings
9. Must involve everyone
10. Look at how meetings are run/chaired – everyone must be encouraged to get involved and look at how

we handle hearing everyone's views/discussion/decisions

11. Look at how to involve young people

New rules can be added to or changed as the committee sees appropriate.

## 4.2 PRINCIPLES OF CONDUCT IN PUBLIC LIFE

The HECF committee may also consider adopting some basic principles established by the Committee on Standards in Public Life as shown below.

### SEVEN PRINCIPLES OF CONDUCT IN PUBLIC LIFE

#### 1. SELFLESSNESS

Holders of public office should take decisions solely in terms of the public interest. They should not do so in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends.

#### 2. INTEGRITY

Holders of public office should not place themselves under any financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organisations that might influence them in their performance of their official duties.

#### 3. OBJECTIVITY

In carrying out public business, including making public appointments, awarding contracts, or recommending individuals for rewards and benefits, holders of public office should make choices on merit.

#### 4. ACCOUNTABILITY

Holders of public office are accountable for their decisions and actions to the public and must submit themselves to whatever scrutiny is appropriate to their office.

#### 5. OPENNESS

Holders of public office should be as open as possible about all the decisions and actions that they take. They should give reasons for their decisions and restrict information only when the wider public interest clearly demands.

#### 6. HONESTY

Holders of public office have a duty to declare any private interests relating to their public duties and to take steps to resolve any conflicts arising in a way that protects the public interest.

#### 7. LEADERSHIP

Holders of public office should promote and support these principles by leadership and example.

## 5. EFFECTIVE MEETINGS

The vast majority of the work of the HECP will be facilitated and decided through meetings including meetings of the full committee and also various sub groups. The effectiveness of these meetings is critical because they will be:

- The principal decision making tool of HECP
- The principal method of community control

This section looks at how to make meetings useful and productive,

The goal of the HECP should be to ensure that meetings are effective, inclusive and enjoyable and that they achieve results. The box below outlines some of the key features of an effective meeting:

**FEATURES OF AN EFFECTIVE MEETING**

1. DESIGN

- Participants know what the meeting is for
- The meeting is planned
- The meeting is managed (by the Chair)
- All items on the agenda are covered
- The meeting starts and finishes on time

2. DISCUSSION

- Everyone is able to contribute
- Contributions are concise and to the point
- Different opinions are aired
- Disputes do not continue after the meeting

3. DECISION MAKING

- The necessary decisions are made
- Decisions are made by consensus
- Everyone is clear what decision has been made

The rest of this section considers what good practices can be put in place to ensure that HECP meetings are both useful and assist the implementation of wider partnership agenda to help improve Efford.

A number of elements contribute to the development of effective meetings:

- Planning
- Chairing
- Behaviour

Each of these is discussed in more detail below.

### 5.1 PLANNING

The planning of a meeting includes a number of areas, not merely planning the agenda. The different

elements to be planned include the following:

- i. Purpose of the meeting
- ii. The agenda
- iii. Communication
- iv. Practical arrangements

Each is discussed in more detail below.

### 5.1.1 PURPOSE OF THE MEETING

The first element of meeting planning is to clarify the purpose of the meeting. If there is no clear purpose to the meeting, there is little point in holding it. There are four general reasons for calling a meeting, they are:

- To give and receive information
- To generate ideas or brainstorm
- To explore and solve problems
- To make decisions

Whilst a meeting may well include all four activities, plan to address them one at a time to avoid confusion. This type of approach will assist participants to remain focused on the task in hand without too much digression.

Planning for a meeting is not just the responsibility of those organising the meeting. Other participants in the meeting must take responsibility for reading any papers prior to the meeting and preparing their own thoughts and opinions on the issues to be discussed. Proper preparation on the part of everyone involved will improve the focus and relevance of the discussion as well as the quality of decision making.

### 5.1.2 THE AGENDA

As a matter of good practice, every formal meeting should have an agenda. The agenda is there to provide structure to the meeting. Each item on the agenda should:

- Be related to the overall purpose of the meeting
- Have an reasonable amount of time allotted to it for discussion
- Be presented in a logical order
- Give some detail as to what is to be discussed and whether a decision is required

It is the role of the Chair to ensure that the timings on the agenda are followed and that each item is considered in order.

Beware of attempting to pack too much into a single meeting. The larger and less experienced the group, the more time will be required for any single agenda item. In addition, the HECP will over time be discussing and deciding upon emotive and complex issues. Such issues need to be accorded enough time in a meeting for full discussion.

### 5.1.3 COMMUNICATION

It is of course essential that all those who should be attending the meeting be informed in good time of the time, venue and purpose of the meeting. This should include all participants and anyone who is being asked to make a presentation to the meeting or contribute in any other way. At least one week's notice should be given as a matter of course.

All participants should receive an agenda and any relevant papers in good time, (ideally at least one week in advance of the meeting). The provision of excessive and lengthy papers relating to the business of the meeting should be avoided. However, participants do have a responsibility to read and digest information provided prior to the meeting. The purpose of providing papers is to enable member to think about their own views and any questions on the issue prior to the meeting. This will result in a more focused and informed discussion at the meeting.

After the meeting all those participating must be sent the minutes including action points and record of the decisions made at the meeting for reference. Good minutes are accurate, clear, unambiguous, consistent and brief. Minutes are not intended to be a verbatim report of what took place, but a summary of discussions and decisions.

#### 5.1.4 PRACTICAL ARRANGEMENTS

The chosen venue and other practical arrangements can have a big impact on the success of the meeting. In making the practical arrangements for a meeting a number of elements need to be considered:

- Accessibility of the venue (public transport, parking, wheelchair accessibility)
- Time and day of the meeting set to maximise attendance
- Acoustics - will everyone be able to hear properly?
- Layout of the room - what kind of atmosphere do you want to establish?
- Catering - including at least tea, coffee and water, but also food for a longer meeting
- Equipment - including overhead projectors, flip charts, etc, as appropriate

Getting these arrangements right will allow participants in the meeting to concentrate on the business of the meeting rather than their own discomfort.

## 5.2 CHAIRING

The role and responsibilities of the Chair are discussed in more detail in a separate chapter of this handbook, and will only be touched upon briefly in this section. However, the role of the Chair is vital to the smooth functioning of a meeting, particularly where the group is large and/or inexperienced.

The responsibilities of the Chair of a meeting include:

- Keeping track of time
- Ensuring the agenda is covered properly
- Making sure everyone knows what is going on and what the task in hand is
- Keeping order and make sure rules and procedures are followed
- Checking on what participants mean
- Making sure everyone who wants to has contributed
- Summarising what has happened to clarify where the meeting is up to
- Summing up choices, decision process, decisions taken and action points

Just as a strong and effective Chair can contribute enormously to the success of a meeting, so an inexperienced or ineffective Chair can have a negative impact. Problems arise if a Chair is dictatorial, indecisive confused or allows others to dominate, for example. This can be addressed by changing the Chair or by offering training. Where neither of these options is possible, participants can make an effort to support the Chair through their own contribution. Some examples of useful contributions in this context are contained in the box below.

### HELPFUL COMMITTEE CONTRIBUTIONS IN MEETINGS

*"I think we're straying from the point. Can we go back to the issue of..."*

*"I'm worried we are running out of time to discuss item 10 Can we move on?"*

*"Chair, can I just clarify what that decision was before we move on?"*

*"I would find it helpful if we could summarise all the options before we start to vote on them."*

*"Are we deciding anything today, or are we just discussing?"*

## 5.3 BEHAVIOUR

The behaviour of participants at a meeting is critical to the success of the meeting. Many people lack the confidence to express themselves fully in a meeting with other people, whereas others find it all too easy to dominate.

A meeting is a social interaction between people who may come from different backgrounds and have different interests. These factors can cause misunderstanding and conflict. It is vital for the success of HCEP that all committee members are committed to making a positive contribution to the success and effectiveness of the partnership meetings and have the skills to do so.

Outlined below are some types of behaviour which will assist committee members to make effective contributions to meetings, as well as some types of behaviour to avoid.

### USEFUL TYPES OF BEHAVIOUR IN HCEP MEETINGS

#### 1. SIGNAL YOUR INTENTIONS

Give the meeting a warning about what you want to do. For example you could say: "I'd like to ask a question." This will get you the attention of the meeting and ensure that everyone hears the whole of what you have to say.

#### 2. ASK QUESTIONS

Asking questions can be a very useful way of contributing to a meeting. Questions serve to clarify what is going on or to force someone to explain a technical issue in layman's terms. Don't be afraid to ask a question – you may not be the only one who needs an answer.

#### 3. TEST UNDERSTANDING

For example: "So what you're saying is that if we adopt course A, then outcome B will be the result?". Questions such as this not only clarify your understanding but also encourage further explanation.

#### 4. SUMMARISING

This is normally the role of the Chair, but others can also contribute in this way.

#### 5. SAY HOW YOU FEEL

If you are finding a meeting confusing, or losing track of the argument then say so – but without causing others to get defensive. For example, instead of saying "This is a very confusing meeting", which might be interpreted as a criticism, you could say "I feel a bit confused", which is much less threatening and impossible to argue with.

## TYPES OF BEHAVIOUR TO AVOID IN HECP MEETINGS

### 1. AVOID IRRITATORS

Avoid using words, phrases and types of body language which can be used, deliberately or accidentally, to irritate people. Examples include heavy sighing, idling your eyes or phrases such as "with the greatest respect" which can imply the exact opposite.

### 2. DON'T DILUTE YOUR ARGUMENT

Make sure that your interjections are concise and to the point, without giving too much supplementary information which can distract from the main point. Use examples to back up your point.

### 3. AVOID ATTACK AND DEFENCE

Try to avoid using heated, emotional and value-loaded language and behaviour. This can provoke an overly aggressive or defensive reaction from others which will make reasonable discussion of the options very difficult.

### 4. AVOID CONDUCTING MEETINGS WITHIN MEETINGS

Holding sub-group meetings within meetings can detract from the main agenda and result in ineffective decision making. Progress made by sub-groups should be presented to the main committee as an agreed agenda item so everyone is informed of the relevant progress and next steps of each sub-group.

Having agreed ground rules for behaviour can also be a useful tool to ensure the smooth running of meetings. Some suggested ground rules are included in another section of this handbook.

## 6. TEAMWORK

A previous section of this handbook deals with effective meetings. This section takes that ethos one step further. The HECP aims to achieve a great deal over the coming months and years for Efford. The most effective way of achieving its goals will be to work together as a team.

This section is presented under the following headings:

- i. What is a team?
- ii. Why work as a team?
- iii. Team development
- iv. Behaving like a team
- v. Dealing with conflict
- vi. Avoiding the pitfalls.

Each is discussed in more detail below.

### 6.1 WHAT IS A TEAM?

Teamwork is where a task or a goal is shared by a group of people working together, rather than different individuals working on separate tasks. Being part of a team is therefore more than just being one of a number of individuals who happen to attend the same meetings. Being part of a team involves sharing a vision, and working together in a coordinated way to achieve that vision. The HECP partnership will benefit from members of the partnership working as an effective, high performance, focused team.

### 6.2 WHY WORK AS A TEAM?

Many organisations have now adopted team working as the way to achieve their goals. Team structures are commonly used in business, sport, and war where achieving set goals is critical. A number of reasons for the widespread adoption of teamwork are outlined below.

#### TEAM WORK WORKS!

- Decisions made as a team are better quality than decisions made individually
- Teams can bring different skills to bear on a problem
- Teams can cover more ground
- The sum of team member is greater than their individual parts
- TEAM WORK IMPROVES PERFORMANCE

### 6.3 TEAM DEVELOPMENT

Good teams are not born, they are made. Team working is a skill which can be learned and developed over time. Some of the factors which limit affect the ability of a group of people to develop into a cohesive team are outlined below:

## TEAM WORK WORKS!

### 1. MEMBERSHIP OF THE GROUP

- Size
- Compatibility
- Permanence

### 2. WORK ENVIRONMENT

- Nature of task
- Physical setting
- Communications

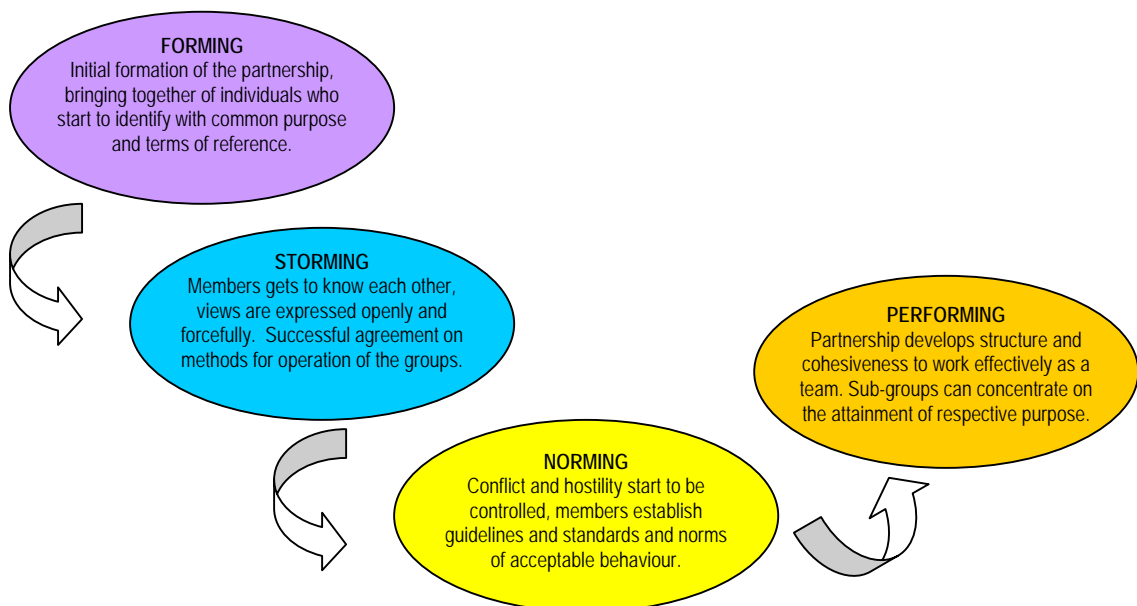
### 3. ORGANISATIONAL FACTORS

- Management and leadership
- Policies and procedures
- Success
- External threats

### 4. STAGES OF TEAM DEVELOPMENT / MATURITY

- Forming
- Storming
- Norming
- Performing

Each of these factors needs to be addressed. The stages of team development are typically the most difficult to address as they concern the social relations of the team members rather than the physical setting or structures they work within. The four stages of team development are illustrated in the diagram below.



If all the factors are addressed and the groups successfully completes each of the four stages of team development illustrated above it will develop into a highly effective team which can concentrate on the task in hand and achieving its goals. The features of a good team are outlined below:

#### FEATURES OF A GOOD TEAM

1. Belief in shared objectives
2. Commitment to the group
3. Acceptance of group values and norms
4. Mutual trust and dependency
5. Full participation by all and consensus decisions
6. Free flow of information
7. Open expression of feelings and disagreements
8. Internal conflict resolution

It is important that the HECP committee commit time and effort to addressing the issue of team development, as the cohesion and effectiveness of the partnership will have an enormous impact on the success of the initiative overall.

Team building can be facilitated through training and skills audits to identify the capacity development needs of individuals and the partnership overall. Adopting regular appraisals of development needs will ensure that the HECP builds a solid foundation of knowledge and expertise to allow it to engage and participate at a number of levels with a broad range of different organisations.

The HECP should also examine how new members can be integrated into the committee over the lifetime of the initiative, perhaps with a tailored induction process.

## 6.4 BEHAVIOUR

Effective teamwork is based on the ability of each member to interact with others in a useful and productive way. This is not always easy due to the different interests and personalities of each team member. A good team is one where members are able to adapt their own behaviour to meet the needs of the team and the task. Some examples of positive and negative team behaviours are given below.

#### POSITIVE TEAM BEHAVIOUR

1. CONTRIBUTING
  - Suggesting new ideas
  - Offering facts and generalizations
  - Initiating information aimed at dealing with the issue
2. CLARIFYING
  - Making ideas and information clear
  - Seeking new ideas and different perspectives
  - Relating one contribution to another
3. SUPPORTING
  - Praising
  - Encouraging others
  - Agreeing with others
  - Keeping communication channels open

#### 4. MEDIATING

- Attempting to reconcile differences of opinion
- Acting as referee in conflict
- Harmonising

### NEGATIVE TEAM BEHAVIOUR

#### 1. DOMINATING

- Attempting to assert authority
- Seeking attention or recognition
- Attempting to control the group by talking loudly
- Being argumentative
- Being stubborn
- Opposing new views
- Attempting to bring up issues already rejected or resolved by the group

#### 2. BLOCKING

- Being stubborn
- Opposing new views
- Attempting to bring up issues already rejected by the group

#### 3. NIT-PICKING

- Tending to magnify or over-emphasise insignificant details
- Holding up group with unnecessary definitions

#### 4. WITHDRAWING

- Failing to contribute to the group
- Day dreaming
- Being very quiet and passive

#### 5. INAPPROPRIATE JOKING

- Failing to take real concerns seriously
- Mocking other's contributions
- Causing the group to deviate from the issue

## 6.5 DEALING WITH CONFLICT

The preceding section considered the ways that good working relations of the committee can be maintained. However, it does need to be recognised that working as part of a team is not easy and it is natural for some conflicts to arise. The nature of the HECP as a community led initiative will inevitably lead to differences of opinion between committee members and the wider partnership. As mentioned in section 6.3, one of the features of good teamwork is that the team is able to resolve conflicts internally and rapidly.

This section looks at how conflict arises and what kind of mechanisms can be used to resolve conflicts.

### 6.5.1 DIFFICULTIES WITH TEAM WORKING

The reason that teamwork can be difficult is that it involves balancing one's own personal needs and feelings with the requirements of the task in hand and the need for team harmony. Many find some of the following aspects of team relations difficult at times:

- Compromise
- Losing an argument
- Swallowing your pride
- Working with people dissimilar to you
- Working with people you do not like
- Speaking out
- Expressing disagreement
- Handling confrontation
- Trusting others

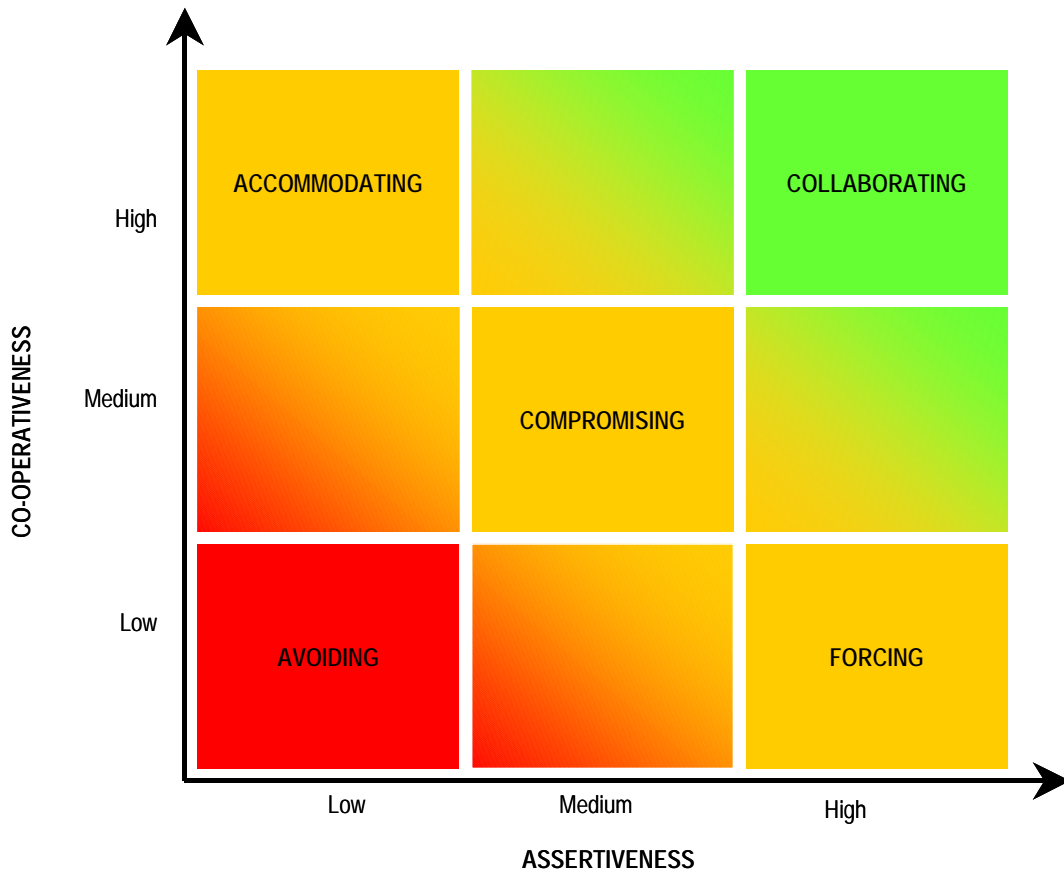
All of these things can cause anxiety and may sometimes lead to conflict and bad feelings.

### **6.5.2 APPROACHING AND HANDLING CONFLICT**

There are five main ways to approach conflict each of which consists of a different balance between assertiveness and cooperativeness. Most people tend to consistently use one of these approaches to handle conflict, according to their personality.

The five approaches to conflict handling are illustrated in the chart below.

## APPROACHES TO CONFLICT



These approaches to handling conflict can be summarised as follows in the box below.

**SUMMARY OF APPROACHES TO HANDLING CONFLICT**

1. **FORCING**  
Assertive & uncooperative. One person pursues his/her own concerns at the other's expense, using whatever power seems appropriate to win their own position.
2. **ACCOMMODATING**  
Unassertive & cooperative. The opposite of forcing, where one person neglects their own concerns to satisfy the concerns of the other.
3. **AVOIDING**  
Unassertive & uncooperative. The person simply does not address the conflict and therefore does not pursue either his own concerns or those of the other person.
4. **COMPROMISING**  
Intermediate in assertiveness and cooperativeness. The objective is to find some expedient, mutually



acceptable solution which partially satisfies both parties.

#### 5. COLLABORATING

Assertive & cooperative. Collaborating involves an attempt to work with the other person to find some solution which fully satiates the concerns of both persons.

Each of the above approaches have their uses under certain circumstances. However, the collaborative approach generally achieves the best results if sufficient time is available and members of the committee should try and work towards adopting this approach as a matter of course.

Outlined below are a number of practical steps to take when conflict arises.

#### HANDLING CONFLICT

1. Confront the conflict not the opponent - to not personalise the dispute.
2. Define the problem in a way both sides can accept.
3. Be clear and open about your position and feelings.
4. Make sure your desire to cooperate is known.
5. Listen and respond, see the other's point of view, persuade them to the same.
6. Do not spent time justifying your past actions or behaviour.
7. Make sure conflict remains costly (in terms of its consequences for the inject).
8. Reach agreement jointly, so that both sides agree and are committed to change.
9. Do not create finned and losers - everyone should win.
10. Do not let disagreement become seconds hostility.

Remember that conflict can also be useful. In every discussion there will be different mints of view. As long as conflict or disagreement is handled positively it can enable a deeper understanding of the issues and stimulate the flow of ideas leading to alternative options.

## 6.6 AVOIDING COMMON PITFALLS

In general terms a cohesive, bonded team is able to generate quality decision making and actions in order to achieve its goals. However there are some common pitfalls to avoid which could prevent a team becoming a really effective working group.

### 6.6.1 GETTING STUCK

Some groups get stuck at one of the stages of team development outlined earlier in this section. In particular, groups often get stuck at the 'storming' stage where there is conflict over the purpose and procedures of the particular group or wider partnership as a whole. These groups can spent a lot of time in conflict over minor issues and never achieve their potential without outside intervention to help them move forward.

### 6.6.2 GROUP-THINK

One of the greatest dangers of team work is 'group-think' where a team does become a bonded and effective group, but gets locked into thought presses which may prevent them from carrying out their task. Some of the symptoms of group-think are outlined below.

#### SYMPTOMS OF GROUP-THINK

- There is the illusion of invulnerability leading to excessive optimism and risk taking
- There are rationalisations by the members of the group to discount warnings
- There is an unquestioned belief in the group's inherent morality and the group ignores questionable ethical or moral issues or stances
- Those who oppose the group are stereotyped as evil, weak, or stupid
- There is direct pressure on any membership questions the stereotypes and loyal members don't question the direction in which the group seems to be heading
- There is self-censorship of any deviation from the apparent group consensus
- There is the illusion of unanimity where silence is interpreted as consent
- There are self-appointed mind-guards who protect the group from adverse information

Teams should remain vigilant against the signs of group-think emerging.

## 7. USING STRUCTURES

The HECP has adopted a number of structures to help forward its aims and objectives, in particular the use of sub-groups to focus on specific issues and agendas. Using a range of different structures can facilitate an organisation in decision making, sharing responsibilities across the committee and considering complex issues in greater details.

This section will examine the types of sub-groups and the ways they can be used to enhance the overall progress and quality of the work achieved by HECP.

### 7.1 SUB-GROUPS

Sub-groups are an extremely useful means of undertaking detailed consideration of complex or lengthy issues more rapidly than would be possible with the full partnership. Sub-groups are also used to give on-going consideration to single issues such as Efford youth engagement, art, funding and quick-wins, enabling members of the committee to develop expertise around particular issues.

Although sub groups vary in size a group of between 4 and 8 is ideal in relation to a committee of around 20 people. Sub-groups are members of the committee who are delegated to undertake a particular task, and are responsible to the full partnership. The extent of their responsibility can vary according to the requirements of the committee. There are three main types of sub-groups:

- Standing sub-groups
- Special sub-groups
- Joint sub-groups

Each of these will be outlined briefly below.

#### 7.1.1 STANDING SUB-GROUPS

A standing sub-group is one which meets on a regular basis, and is likely to carry out detailed administration, research or analysis of specialist issues. For example, in the context of HECP, a standing sub-group on an issue such as youth engagement could consider the following:

- Research factors influencing your engagement in Efford and Plymouth
- Assess levels of youth provision in the area
- Identify gaps in available services
- Consider what interventions are required that could be supported by HECP
- Develop project proposals and/or youth engagement strategy

Such a group would quickly develop a more detailed understanding of all the issues relating to their subject of interest than would be possible for the full committee. This expertise could then be fed back into committee discussions on related issues. The work of the committee would therefore benefit from the developing expertise of its members and the community would in effect maintain a control of the direction of HECP work through members' greater understanding of the issues.

#### 7.1.2 SPECIAL SUB-GROUPS

A special sub-group is one which is established for a limited period of time to examine a particular issue. Normally such a group would be established to deal with a subject which was too complex, difficult or lengthy to be tackled by the whole committee.

The special sub-group is an extremely useful tool for speeding up the decision making process of the

committee by undertaking detailed considerations and making recommendations to the committee on the basis of those considerations. It is important that the remit and responsibilities of a special sub-group are clearly defined at the outset so that members know what is expected of them and what should be achieved.

### 7.1.3 JOINT SUB-GROUPS

A joint sub-group is either a standing or a special sub-group which also contains people from external agencies who are not members of the committee. The aim of a joint sub-group is to foster a co-operative approach to a problem or issue of mutual interest. In the context of HECP, joint sub-groups could be established with members from agencies including:

- Youth Services
- Enterprise Plymouth
- Jobcentre Plus
- Health Authority
- Police
- DELL forum
- PCC (special representative from relevant departments)
- Other local fora and community focussed services

The aim of a joint sub-group is to work in a cooperative fashion to investigate a topic of shared interest and for each party to benefit from the expertise and experience of the other. Such an approach would be very much in line with the ethos of HECP as a local representative body for Efford which attempts to take a 'joined up' approach to regenerating the area. Joint sub-groups in common with other sub-groups would report back to the committee and be accountable to them.

## 8. EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES COMMITMENT

The HECP is committed to equality and accessibility for all people living or working in the Efford area.

The partnership's commitment to the local community is to recognise, utilise and celebrate the contribution to Efford that can be made by all of those who live and work in the area, regardless of race, class, age, disability, religion, gender or sexuality.

### 8.1 SERVICES

The partnership will empower local people and ensure that they are able to fully participate in the development of, and make decisions about, services in their area by:

- Regularly seeking the views of the local community. This will be done through public meetings, Area Forums or Focus Groups. The HECP will ensure that independent advocates are available to assist people who are unable to communicate effectively in this type of setting.
- Producing regular updates on its work and ensure that these are written in plain English.
- Annually reviewing its membership and committee make-up, taking active steps to involve under-represented groups.
- Undertaking an audit of local services and a review of community needs on a regular basis to ensure that services are responsive to the local community

### 8.2 EMPLOYMENT

The HECP committee will advertise all posts locally and positively welcome applications from local residents of the Efford area.

Equal value will be given to skills gained both in paid and unpaid work, where they meet the needs of the post.

All posts will be displayed through an open advertisement process, using published short-listing criteria.

### 8.3 COMPLAINTS

The partnership is committed to dealing with all cases on inequality in relation to its services and has an open and accessible complaints procedure

Independent assistance will be provided to any complainant that has difficulty understanding the process.

All complaints will be monitored and steps taken to re-dress services where inequalities are identified.