

Defra's Civil Society Partnership Network (CSPN)

Terms of reference

Status and lifespan

Defra's Civil Society Partnership Network is an Ad Hoc Advisory Body established for three years from **1 August 2014 to 30 July 2017**.

Mission

The mission of the Civil Society Partnership Network is to:

- foster the highest standard of partnership working between Defra and civil society;
- maximise the benefits of civil society input to Defra's policy-making;
- promote the adoption of new, co-designed policy delivery models; and
- establish Defra as an exemplar for how central government should work with civil society.

Functions

The functions of the Civil Society Partnership Network (hereafter "CSPN") are to:

- guide Defra's strategic approach to working with the full range of civil society;
- ensure the availability of rapid, authoritative advice and support to Defra Ministers and officials on issues of relevance to civil society – both at the strategic level and on specific policy questions;
- provide independent horizon-scanning capacity in relation to Defra's areas of responsibility.

Structure

The CSPN comprises:

- the "core group", which provides leadership and coordination for the Network as a whole; and
- the "wider network" of civil society contacts, which is established and managed by the core group.

Membership of the core group

The core group consists of up to 10 civil society members appointed by Defra following an open competition. Members of the core group are appointed in their own right and *not* as

representatives of the organisations for which they work, or other organisations to which they may belong.

Role of the core group

The role of the core group is to:

- ensure that the CSPN fulfils its functions effectively;
- establish the wider network and manage it so as to provide a readily accessible resource of expertise on civil society issues, including civil society perspectives at the regional and local levels;
- work with Defra Directors and Defra's Social Research Group to develop a Programme of Work for the CSPN and ensure that this Programme of Work is delivered by the Network.

Role of the wider network

The role of the wider network is to:

- provide a resource of expertise and capacity which the core group can consult and draw on, as appropriate, in relation to delivery of the Programme of Work.

Governance

The CSPN is ultimately accountable to Defra Ministers. Ministers will approve the CSPN's Programme of Work.

The line of accountability at official level is through Directors to the Director General for the Policy Delivery Group.

The CSPN is chaired by a member of the core group, as selected by its members.

Meetings

The core group meets three times a year, normally with the attendance of the Defra Minister responsible for civil society issues.

The core group meets once a year with the Secretary of State, if possible as part of one of its regular meetings.

The wider network meets once a year with Defra's civil society Minister.

Meetings with Defra's Supervisory Board are arranged on an exceptional basis, if an issue arises which is sufficiently strategic to require the attention of the Board.

Terms of appointment

CSPN members are expected not to occupy a paid role or hold a particularly sensitive or high profile unpaid role in a political party, and not to engage in specific party-political activities on matters directly affecting the work of the Network. When engaging in other lower level political activities, they should be conscious of their public role and exercise proper discretion. Members must act according to the Seven Principles of Public Life (the Nolan Principles).

CSPN members should not misuse information gained in the course of their public service for personal gain or for political purpose, nor seek to use the opportunity of public service to promote their private interests or those of connected persons, firms, business or other organisations.

CSPN members may claim eligible travel and subsistence expenses for attending Network meetings and other Network activities.

Where CSPN members are not paid to perform strategic influencing or liaison roles as part of their salaried employment, they may claim reimbursement for time spent on CSPN business. The Department will advise CSPN members of the rates and arrangements for reimbursement.

22 September 2014