

# Compliments, concerns and complaints policy for Boston Big Local, December 2015

As we develop our Partnership to guide us through the coming ten years, it is timely to agree and publicise how we respond to compliments, concerns and complaints.

## Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to guide the Partnership and to be open with the public about how Boston Big Local looks to respond to compliments, concerns and complaints.

The policy first covers the values that guide us and expectations of members' conduct. The second part covers how we look to respond to the public.

## Partnership members' conduct

**Our values** are set out in our Agreement and are written into our Plan.

- We will work in a fair, inclusive, honest and transparent way.
- We will foster a friendly and welcoming atmosphere in all that we do.
- We will support anyone fitting the membership criteria to become actively involved.
- We will review how we are working so that barriers are reduced.
- We accept there will be different views within the steering group. When differences or conflict arise these will be dealt with fairly and openly, focusing on the issues or opinions, not on the individual.
- We will communicate in an accessible way with our community, through a range of approaches, including events, newspapers, radio and social media.
- We will support, engage and work with other groups in the area that have similar or overlapping objectives.
- We uphold the idea of 'sticky money' as we want the Boston Big Local investment to have the greatest impact locally. Therefore we will aim to source providers, services and goods from within the Boston Big Local area. Where this is not possible we will extend our search outwards. The principal of 'sticky money' will be balanced against obtaining value for money and the desire to engage with businesses and organisations that have similar values to the group.

**Our Guiding Principles** are to be:

- Open, honest, even handed, inclusive and fair.
- Active in the community, sharing our vision, listening to and hearing what the Community wants and needs.
- Enabling sustainable environmentally sound projects that are locally run and that benefit as large a section of the community as possible.
- The best we can, self-challenging, adaptable, impartial, transparent and accountable in all our dealings with the community.

## Conduct

- All meetings shall be conducted with regard to accepted good practice and particularly the principles of openness, fairness and parity of esteem. Members will be expected to sign their Partnership Agreement as in the Appendix.
- The ruling of the Chair will be final.
- A Partnership member who does not comply with this Agreement or who does not attend three consecutive Partnership meetings without notice may have their membership reviewed by the Partnership and terminated if decided upon by a two thirds majority of resident voting members.

- Concerns and complaints raised by those outside the Partnership will be responded to quickly as described below and in a manner seeking to reduce tension and conflict and achieve speedy resolution.

### **Declarations of Interest**

- A member must declare an interest if he or she has a direct or indirect personal or financial interest in the matter under discussion.
- An interest must be declared at the beginning of the relevant meeting or as soon as the member is aware they have an interest. Interest must be declared clearly so that all members are aware of the interest and how it arises.
- Members should take no part in an item where they or any close associate might otherwise gain an unfair advantage. In such cases it will be for the member to withdraw from the room.

### **Partnership response to the public**

The two main points of contact are the Plan Coordinator and the Chair. Their details are on the website, Partnership correspondence and newsletters.

Partnership members receiving information from the public, especially where this is in the nature of a concern or a complaint, will encourage the person concerned to make their views known in writing to the Plan Coordinator. This is to ensure the matter is picked up and that the individual Partnership member is not left acting as a go-between.

The Partnership looks to make an initial response to a written compliment, concern or complaint within 48 hours of it being received by the Plan Coordinator. This will usually be by email. In all cases the Chair and Local Trusted Organisation will be advised immediately.

Depending on the nature of the issue, the Plan Coordinator will seek information from those best placed to respond. The Partnership seeks to make a fuller and more detailed reply where needed within a month of the issue first being raised.

If the issue raised is about the Plan Coordinator, Local Trusted Organisation or Big Local Rep, then the concern will be passed to the Chair.

All written compliments, concerns and complaints will be raised at the next Partnership meeting which are usually on the second Thursday of each month. Correspondence will be kept on file. Where a point of general interest is at stake, a summary or clarification will be posted on the website.

Where the person raising a concern or complaint is not content with the fuller reply from the Plan Coordinator, Age UK Boston & South Holland, as the Local Trusted Organisation, will discuss and agree next steps with the Chair.

- This may include a face to face meeting at which the complainant may come with a chosen friend or advocate.
- It may include agreement to no further action.
- Where the concern relates to the Big Local Rep, this will include informing and being advised by Local Trust or Renaisi as the management organisation for Big Local.

If a face to face meeting does not secure a resolution, next steps may include requesting intervention by Local Trust and or Renaisi.

## **Boston Big Local contact card**

Please get in touch with us to let us know your thoughts, things you think are going well or any concerns you have. On receipt of a contact card we will aim to reply initially within 48 hours. Where further enquiry is needed we will aim to have a fuller response to you within 28 days. You can find our full policy called Compliments, Concerns and Complaints on our website at [www.bostonbiglocal.co.uk](http://www.bostonbiglocal.co.uk)

What is the reason for you contacting us? Please tick: compliment, concern, complaint, other

Please give your contact details, ideally with email address and phone number to make it easier to be in touch

Name  
Address  
Phone  
Email

Please summarise briefly what you want to say in the box below.

On behalf of the Boston Big Local Partnership, thank you for getting in touch

**Plan Coordinator:** Rachel Lauberts  
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Procedure to be reviewed April 2016