

Regional Council: Terms of Reference

The Regional Councils are a key part of the structure of athletics in England. Elected by the member clubs / associations within each of the nine England Regions, they form a link between the grass roots of club athletics and the England Athletics' (EA) Board and Staff: the Chair of each Regional Council is a member of the National Council which in turn influences the Board of England Athletics, through those of its members who are Board members and by communication to England Athletics senior executives.

This document is intended to provide an overview of the Terms of Reference of Regional Councils, primarily for use by existing or prospective Regional Councillors, and in addition - through publication on the England Athletics website - by affiliates and members of England Athletics and other key stakeholders within the sport of Athletics in England. It supplements those sections of the England Athletics Limited Articles of Association that deal with Regional Councils (currently Articles 62-97 within the Articles).

Key functions and underlying principles

Regional Councils should operate in line with the England Athletics Purpose:

- “To inspire more athletes and runners of all abilities and backgrounds to fulfil their potential and to have a lifelong love for the sport”

Regional Councils should operate in line with the England Athletics Vision Statement:

- “An inclusive sport where everyone belongs and can flourish”

They should also embrace the England Athletics Values of:

- Fun
- Inspiration
- Inclusivity
- Integrity

In working to support the strategic priorities, Regional Councils via the National Council act principally in an advisory capacity, representing EA member clubs and bodies but in being a two-way positive conduit for communication and information.

Primary responsibility for the development of EA strategy resides with the EA Board but Regional Councils will be actively involved in the consultation and strategy formation process and will work closely with the England Athletics Club Support and Participation team and other staff in carrying out their regional duties.

The EA Board may delegate matters to Regional Councils. A key element of Regional Councillors' responsibilities is to support the duty of the England Athletics Board – enshrined in the Articles of Association - to consult at appropriate levels prior to making certain key decisions i.e. club affiliation and athlete registration fees.

EA Regional Councils represent a broad range of interests within the sport within their respective regions. Given that each Regional Councillor will have been nominated / elected by member clubs / associations within their Region, they will need to achieve a careful balance between representing and lobbying for the interests of those clubs / associations and communicating and supporting the national strategies of England Athletics. Thus, each Regional Councillor should apply:

- Appropriate levels of independence and judgement in their dealings with partners, members, and England Athletics. The guiding principle should always be what is judged to be in the best long-term interest of the sport.
- Care when making public statements in their capacity as members of a Regional Council, exercising an appropriate level of professionalism and discretion and when necessary respecting the confidentiality of information which from time to time may be shared with them.

Specific responsibilities and activities

The key responsibilities of the Regional Councils are summarised in the Articles of Association, and include:

- Improving the delivery of athletics for the benefit of their member bodies in conjunction with the staff and executive officers of England Athletics.
- Representing their region's interests within the overall national strategy framework and providing input based upon their expertise and the views of their constituents.
- Representing the interests of the club and volunteer sector of the sport through their Regional Council, and therefore through the Regional Chair via the National Council.
- Contributing to the formulation of national strategy by identifying regional priorities and bringing them to the attention of England Athletics (principally but not exclusively) via the National Council and through participating in a functional portfolio structure where required.
- Where appropriate, produce a Regional Action Plan, aligned to the England Athletics operational plan, to ensure focus and join up between the work of the Council and that of the staff.
- Assisting in the delivery, and monitoring of the implementation of, the Regional Action Plan against key actions agreed between the Council and Club Support Manager.
- Assisting in the dissemination of information on England Athletics national policy to stakeholders in the region through face to face and digital communication platforms.
- Assisting and working in partnership with England Athletics staff in identifying and engaging with key stakeholders in their region i.e. by roadshows, webinars, and other forms of engagement.
- Engaging with and supporting the role of County Athletics Associations and other competition providers.
- Lead the annual EA volunteer awards programme for the region, including the selection process, planning and delivery of the events. Input into the overall planning and delivery of the programme will also be vital to ensure continual improvement.
- Monitoring the effectiveness of national policy and its execution within the region and providing feedback to England Athletics through the National Council.
- Assisting England Athletics' staff in service delivery where appropriate e.g. competition licensing.
- Engaging positively and constructively in national working groups as required. Providing local knowledge and communication for the benefit of the sport.

- Governance – including, as appropriate, involvement in matters such as disciplinary, grievance and welfare matters, and consideration of new club affiliations, and first claim decisions.

Regional Councillors may claim out of pocket expenses, incurred wholly and necessarily in connection with the performance of the above activities, in accordance with the policy set out by England Athletics.

Membership and meetings

The key regulations governing the processes for membership are set out in the above-mentioned Articles of Association. In summary those comprise:

- Each Regional Council shall consist of a Chair, Elected members and Co-opted members.
- Elected members are elected, for an initial period of four years, by member clubs / associations within the Region (the detailed processes for that are contained within the Articles of Association, amplified as necessary in the separate Election Regulations, which are approved by the Board and shall be published on the England Athletics website).
- The Chair shall be elected by the Elected members, for an initial term of two years.
- Each member of the Regional Council (as above) shall, in the absence of conflicts of interest, have one vote at meetings.
- The Elected members may also, at the discretion of the Chair, co-opt additional members (who must in total not exceed the number of Elected members) with appropriate skills and who reflect the diversity of athletics within the relevant region.

Regional Councils may also invite other key stakeholders to attend meetings (but not to vote) from time to time, for example Chairs of County Associations within the Region (if they are not already Elected or Co-opted members).

There are no maximum or minimum numbers of meetings specified within the Articles of Association, but Regional Councils are expected to hold meetings with sufficient frequency to fulfil the above key Functions and Responsibilities. This will typically mean that each Regional Council will meet at least three times a year. It may be efficient for Regional Council meetings to be scheduled so that they take place shortly prior to meetings of the National Council, so that Regional Chairs will be well positioned to represent local views.

The quorum for meetings of each Regional Council shall be three and shall include at least two elected members of the Regional Council. All reasonable efforts shall be made to give notice of meetings of Regional Councils to all its members, the Club Support Manager, and other invited parties, and to arrange such meetings so that all members are able to attend. Meetings may, if necessary, be held by means of conference telephone call or other similar communications equipment.

Minutes of each Regional Council Meeting shall be provided on a timely basis to the Chair of the National Council and to the relevant Club Support Manager, once approved. Every effort shall also be made to communicate the key decisions made and matters discussed (while respecting confidentiality of the discussions themselves) to member clubs / associations within the Region on a timely basis, either by posting on the Region's website hosted by England Athletics or by circulation including via email.

An annual "open meeting" of each Regional Council may, on the request of the National Council, also be held to ensure a wider voice can be heard by the Clubs and other members: see also above the key function of facilitating consultation.

Roles and responsibilities of Regional Chairs, including Representation on National Council

The Regional Chairs will sit alongside their peers to form the National Council. Details of the operation of the National Council are set out in the Articles of Association.

Each Regional Chair shall perform the following functions to the extent that they judge them necessary to deliver the overall strategy in their region:

- Work in close co-operation with their Club Support Manager.
- Chair Regional Council meetings: convene, conduct, ensure outputs and follow up.
- Provide leadership for volunteers on their Regional Council and in the wider athletics community in their region.
- Participate in portfolio forum meetings as required.
- Represent their region at County (or equivalent) Championship meetings to the extent practicable. The Regional Chair will also make best endeavours to attend a County Committee meeting for each county in their region at least once a year.
- Contribute to and take part in the effective implementation of England Athletics' Grievance and Disciplinary procedures (principally in relation to volunteer matters and Appeals Panels) as required.
- Maintain a high profile at the various competition events throughout the region.
- Foster relationships with partner organisations across the region.
- Represent the views of their Regional Council on the National Council.
- Take responsibility for a national portfolio as required and where appropriate.
- Take part in national project groups which recommend policies and plans to the National Council and to the England Athletics Board as appropriate.
- Contribute to the effectiveness of the National Council in an advisory capacity to the England Athletics Board.
- Prepare advisory papers for the National Council and the England Athletics Board where appropriate.
- Share best practice and request guidance on specific areas of development where required.

Each Regional Chair may, in consideration of discharging the above responsibilities, be awarded a fee at an appropriate amount (currently £3,000 per annum) to be determined from time to time by the England Athletics Board. This fee will fall within the scope of Income Tax and will be paid monthly on the company's payroll.