

Campaigns and Political Activity Policy and Procedures

1. Purpose

Suffolk Artlink will ensure that it has a clear process on political activity and campaigning if/when we want to support, or oppose, a change in government policy or the law.

We will ensure that any staff and volunteers working on campaigns understand the rules for us as a voluntary sector organisation.

The policy sets out that as a charity we can take part in political activity that supports our purpose and is in our best interests. When/if the organisation engages in political, or other campaigning, activity, this must support the delivery of our organisation's purpose.

There may be situations where carrying out political activity is the best way for trustees to support the charity's purpose. However, political activity must not become the reason for the charity's existence.

As a charity we will, and must, remain independent and must not give support to a political party.

Any activity will be in line with the powers set out in our governing document and within the Trustee duties and responsibilities.

This policy does not seek to limit staff, trustees and volunteers actions in their personal capacity, but staff, trustees and volunteers must avoid any association with Suffolk Artlink when engaging in campaigns and political activity unless they have prior Board approval. If a statement is made which inadvertently associates Suffolk Artlink with an individual's campaigning or political activity the individual should report this to the Chair of Trustees and Director (officer) at the earliest opportunity.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all staff and volunteers, including trustees.

3. Definitions

‘Political activity’: The Charity Commission uses the term ‘political activity’ to describe activities or campaigning to change or influence policies or decisions taken by:

- national, devolved, local or overseas government
- public bodies including international organisations such as the UN and World Bank, and national or local organisations such as regulators or NHS Trusts

4. Policy

This policy sets out Suffolk Artlink’s position on involvement in campaigns and political activity within the United Kingdom. It ensures compliance with UK law, regulatory requirements, and our commitment to impartiality, transparency, and integrity.

Suffolk Artlink is politically neutral and does not endorse or support any political party, candidate, or partisan political activity.

We may engage in issue-based campaigns that align with our mission and values, provided these activities comply with relevant legislation, including the Charities Act 2011, Lobbying Act 2014 and guidance from the Charity Commission.

All campaigning must be:

- Lawful: Adhering to UK electoral, lobbying, and charity law.
- Non-partisan: Focused on issues, not political parties or candidates.
- Transparent: Clearly stating our objectives and funding sources.

Staff and representatives must not use Suffolk Artlink’s resources (including time, funds, or assets) for personal political activity.

Personal political views must not be expressed in a way that implies organisational endorsement.

5. Procedures

Any engagement with policymakers or government officials must be recorded and conducted in line with lobbying regulations.

5.1 Decision making

To help us make our decision, we will:

- act within our charity’s governing document
- act honestly and only in our charity’s best interests
- be sufficiently informed, taking any advice, we need
- take account only of the relevant factors
- manage any conflicts of interest
- make a decision that is within a range of decisions that a reasonable body of trustees would make
- consider the impact our political activity on the organisation’s assets including its reputation, especially when it might attract significant public interest or criticism.

- Mitigate the potential for criticism by conducting our activity with respect and tolerance.

5.2 Political activity

For all political activity, but especially high-risk activities, we will make sure we can show that:

- it will further our charity's purpose and will be in its best interests
- the charity will be able to remain independent of party-political bias
- we can justify the resources needed
- the potential benefits outweigh the risks
- we can justify any use of controversial material and we have considered the associated risks and legal requirements
- we can comply with any other laws that apply, for example on advertising, slander and libel
- we will identify and mitigate risks if we are carrying out political activity in the period between an election being announced and held. We will follow Charity Commission guidance about [Charities, Elections and Referendums](#).
- we have written records to show how we reached our decisions

5.3 Working with politicians

We will remain independent by:

- asking political figures we engage with not to promote party political messages at our events or premises
- seeking to engage equally with all major political parties
- being aware of and managing any risk if we always engage with only one party or person as this could call into question whether the organisation is politically neutral.

We will never:

- provide money or other resources to anyone who is standing as a candidate
- promote a particular candidate or political party

5.4 Other campaigning

If we take part in other campaigning that is not political activity, it will only be to further our charity's purpose.

6. Monitoring and review

The Board of Trustees will review this policy every three years.

Date approved or amended	Signed	Role

20/07/2026	Alistair Winch	Company Secretary on behalf of the Board of trustees