

Governance Options for Regional Community Water Quality Panel Committees

Each committee responsible for managing a CWQP, Water Quality Summits and other local events, will include 3 to 9 elected members. To ensure effective, inclusive, and sustainable leadership, Waterwatch UK proposes the following governance options for structuring leadership within each committee.

Option A: Rotating Chairperson Model

Structure:

- The Chairperson role rotates every six months among the Community Committee
- A Vice Chair may be appointed to provide support and ensure continuity during handovers

Pros:

- Distributes leadership responsibility
- Fosters a sense of shared ownership and engagement
- Encourages leadership skill development
- Brings diverse styles and perspectives to panel leadership

Cons:

- Risk of reduced continuity in leadership
- Requires a clear handover and orientation process

Option B: Co-Chair Model

Structure:

- Two Co-Chairs serve concurrently, elected by the panel
- They share facilitation and representation duties

Pros:

- Shared workload
- Allows flexibility if one Chair is unavailable
- Encourages collaborative leadership

Cons:

- Requires consistent communication between Co-Chairs
- May lead to ambiguity without clear role delineation

Option C: Single Chairperson with Vice Chair

Structure:

- One Chairperson serves a two-year term (still required to be elected after 1st year)
- A Vice Chair is elected to support and serve as a designated successor

Pros:

- Clear and consistent leadership
- Built-in succession planning
- Easier to maintain long-term direction and accountability

Cons:

- Greater responsibility on one individual
- May limit shared leadership opportunities

Recommended Option: Rotating Chairperson Model (Option A)

Given the panel size (3–9 members) and the community-led ethos of Waterwatch UK, the Rotating Chairperson Model offers the best balance of inclusivity, leadership development, and shared responsibility.

Why this model works:

- **Promotes Shared Leadership:** Encourages equal involvement and avoids over-reliance on a single leader
- **Encourages Diverse Perspectives:** Different leadership styles contribute to more dynamic and responsive decision-making
- **Builds Capacity:** Members gain experience and confidence through leadership rotation
- **Reflects Waterwatch Values:** Embodies transparency, empowerment, and collaboration

Addressing Continuity Challenges:

- Implement a structured handover process between outgoing and incoming Chairpersons
- Assign a standing Vice Chair or governance support liaison to ensure smooth transitions and maintain operational knowledge
- Maintain basic leadership continuity tools (e.g. shared action logs, planning calendar, and induction checklist)

Implementation Suggestions:

- Develop an annual rotation schedule agreed upon by panel members
- Define induction guidance for incoming Chairpersons
- Clearly outline expectations and responsibilities in the Governance Handbook

This model is well-suited to Waterwatch UK's values and the practical realities of small, volunteer-led panels. It ensures leadership is accessible, distributed, and effective.