

**REPORT TO THE SCRUTINY PANEL for PEOPLE  
MEETING OF 24<sup>th</sup> NOVEMBER 2011**

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**Status:** Recommendation  
**Title:** Partnership Working (Part Two)  
**Originator:** Tom Day (Community Partnership Manager)  
and Edward O'Neill (Democratic Officer)  
**Where from:** Scrutiny Commission, 17<sup>th</sup> June 2010  
Scrutiny Places Panel, 7<sup>th</sup> October 2010  
**Where to next:** Executive (Subject to the recommendation(s) of this Panel)

Objective: To set out a policy outlining this Council's approach to Partnership working.

1. Outcomes sought from Panel

- 1.1 A recommendation that the Council adopts a working protocol for Partnerships.
- 1.2 A recommendation that the Council adopt a log/register, to include all of the Council's existing Partnership arrangements.

2 Background

- 2.1 The Scrutiny Commission resolved on the 17<sup>th</sup> June 2010 to examine, comment and make recommendations on existing and future partnership working arrangements. It was agreed that this report be brought in two parts, and that Part One be concerned with existing arrangements and Part Two with developing a more consistent approach to partnerships.
- 2.2 The Welland Internal Audit Consortium conducted an Audit titled 'Managing Partnerships' in April 2010. The opinion of the Auditor was that partnership management by Harborough District Council is "Sound" as only minor risks have been identified and minor recommendations made (see Appendix A for full audit document).
- 2.3 On 7<sup>th</sup> October 2010 the Scrutiny Places Panel recommended that:
  - i) "A Harborough District Council Partnership Working Protocol be devised for implementation to enable a consistent approach to future Partnership arrangements.

- ii) A log/register be created to include all of the Council's existing Partnership arrangements. This should be updated and maintained as new partnerships are established. The notes of Partnership Meetings should be included in this register. The register should include an annual activity summary.
- iii) An analysis of specific Partnerships' performance be undertaken on an individual basis as required, by the appropriate Scrutiny Panel, subject to the agreement of the Scrutiny Commission."

### 3 What is a Partnership?

3.1 A partnership is a group of stakeholders brought together from a range of organisations, to be responsible for tackling challenges and opportunities in which they have a shared interest. A partnership can be described as a joint working arrangement where the partners:

- are otherwise independent bodies.
- agree to co-operate to achieve common goals or outcomes.
- plan and implement a jointly-agreed programme, often with joint staff or resources.
- share relevant information.
- pool risks and share rewards.

### 3.2 Partnerships are not the same as:

3.2.1 'External bodies', which may be defined as those bodies that are single organisations, but in which councils may be invited to take part (e.g. nominations to governing bodies).

3.2.2 Networks that consist of personal or professional relationships, which need not involve organisational commitment or support to shared outcomes. These will usually be more fluid and smaller in scale than partnerships.

3.2.3 Strategic Partnering, whereby councils enter into long-term contracts with private companies to provide a broad range of their services.

### 4 Features of Partnerships

4.1 Although partnerships vary widely in the exact form they take, they usually share a number of basic features:

4.1.2 Common purpose of the member organisations. The partners will be aiming to achieve shared outcomes.

4.1.3 Defined roles and relationships of those involved. These roles and relationships may vary significantly. While some partnerships will involve partners taking decisions and acting on them, in others partners will simply exchange information and develop new thinking for the individual organisations to take action.

- 4.1.4 A range of organisations working together. Representation on the partnership can vary significantly, both in terms of the seniority of those involved and also whether officers or Council Members participate.
- 4.1.5 A lead agency. Some will be established by a council, some by other organisations, some will be statutory and others will be locally generated.
- 4.1.6 A good understanding of the work of the other bodies in the partnership and other partnerships.
- 4.1.7 A constitution. Partnerships will vary in the way that they are constituted. Some will have very detailed constitutions, which will clarify the legal status of the Partnership, others much less formal expressions of the rules governing their operation (e.g. terms of reference). They may vary in the way that they work. Some will have regular formal meetings, while others may involve less formal relationships.
- 4.1.8 Be resourced in some way. Some will have their own staff and budgets, while others will operate with minimal resources (e.g. providing meeting space).
- 4.1.9 A commitment to share the information needed to review value for money and performance.
- 4.1.10 A protocol for dispute resolution

## 5 Why does the Council enter into Partnerships?

- 5.1 The partnership working approach can be used for a number of reasons:
- To respond to a strategic or operational issue which might be too big, complicated or unaffordable to resolve alone;
  - To fulfil an obligation e.g. to access funding;
  - As part of a statutory requirement.
  - Meeting a community need for which no one agency is responsible or able to address;
  - To be more effective and efficient by building capacity collectively.
- 5.2 The proposed Policy for Partnerships is shown at Appendix B.

## 6 Equality Impact Assessment Implications/Outcomes (attach completed EIA)

- 6.1 This is shown at Appendix C.

## 7 Impact on Communities

- 7.1 Effective partnerships contribute to the well being of the communities and often bringing efficiency, cost effectiveness and improvement to services.

## 8 Legal Issues

8.1 It should be noted that some partnerships are operated on a statutory basis – for example the Community Safety Partnership.

## 9 Resource Issues

9.1 This Policy and its checklist will ensure that Partnerships are adequately resourced and that efficiencies will be delivered. For example, the pooling of resources.

## 10 Community Safety Implications

10.1 The Harborough Community Safety Partnerships is an example of an effective Partnership. This multi agency partnership involves sharing information, risks, joint planning and decision making and pooling of resources.

## 11 Carbon Management Implications

11.1 Not applicable.

## 12 Risk Management Implications

12.1 The partnership checklist is accompanied by a risk assessment template to ensure that actions are in place to mitigate the risk.

## 13 Consultation

13.1 Each Head of Service at Harborough District Council was asked to complete one questionnaire for each partnership that the Council influences.

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**Previous report(s): *Scrutiny Places Panel, 7<sup>th</sup> October 2010***

**Information Issued Under Sensitive Issue Procedure: Y/N**

### **Appendices:**

- A Partnership Audit Recommendations**
- B Partnership Strategy**
- C Equality Impact Assessment**