

**WELLAND INTERNAL AUDIT CONSORTIUM
Harborough District Council**



CONFIDENTIAL

INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT



CORPORATE WIDE

Managing Partnerships

Issue Date:	14 th May 2010	Issued to:	Matthew Bradford	Head of Community Services
			Tom Day	Partnerships Manager
Author:	Richard Gaughran		Kamal Mehta	Deputy Chief Executive

Date: 14th May 2010

MANAGING PARTNERSHIPS

REF: H/MPAR/2010.bf

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Context

The term "partnership" is used to describe a variety of relationships between the Council and other parties from the public, private or "third" sectors which are characterised by expectations about co-operative working to maximise the benefits accruing to all parties. Effective management of partnerships involves: providing assurance that the basic objectives of each partnership are achieved; protecting the Council's financial and other interests in partnerships; and, identification and maximisation of the potential for added value to be achieved through partnership working.

Overview

The Council has identified the Local Strategic Partnership as the "partnership of partnerships" and the LSP provides a framework within which thematic and area-based partnerships can be co-ordinated. The Acting Partnerships Manager has demonstrated that there is work in progress to enhance arrangements for co-ordination and performance management. The Council's service planning arrangements provide clear linkages between the outcomes sought by Teams, Portfolio Holders and specific partnerships and makes clear the accountability of specific managers for the delivery of those outcomes: for the significant partnerships reviewed planned outcomes are underpinned by targets capable of objective evaluation. The Council has assessed, formally, its corporate exposure to the risks of partnership working: within Team Plans specific risks are identified and, where practical, mitigated.

However, a number of areas for improvement have been identified.

- The Council has yet to develop a formal strategic approach to the use of partnerships in delivering its corporate priorities, although the Business Plan sets out the basis upon which it will work with partners.
- The templates for Team Plans do not specifically prompt consideration of partnership issues.
- It was confirmed that the constitution underpinning the Broughton Astley Improvement Team has yet to be adopted formally and there are indications that other agreements may not have been formalised.
- The Council has yet to respond to the recommendation in the Audit Commission's Governance Report about the development of a Partnership Risk Register to support the formal assessment of the risks of significant partnerships.

These issues are addressed through the recommendations in the report. As a result of these findings, the overall assurance rating is given below.

As only minor risks have been identified and minor recommendations made, the assurance rating following this audit is

Sound

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Scope

The audit examined the key controls established to ensure:

- proper governance of partnerships;
- delivery of agreed partnership outcomes;
- the Council's interests are not compromised; and
- partnership working delivers added value.

The recommendations are listed on the action plan, followed by the detailed report.

Acknowledgements

The help and co-operation of the Acting Partnerships Manager was much appreciated by the Auditor.

Richard Gaughran
Head of Consortium

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ACTION PLAN

RECOMMENDATION	Section number	Priority	Officer Responsible	Agreed Action and completion date
The Partnership Manager draft, for consideration by Strategic Management Team, a Partnership Strategy, defining the conditions under which partnership working would be considered and key stages in the approval of a new partnership.	01.01.01	3 - Low	H of Community Services	Agreed to develop as Partnership Framework document 1/10/2010
The Partnership Manager determine which partnership constitutions or agreements have yet to be formalised and set out a programme for the formalisation of all outstanding draft documents.	01.02.01	2 - Medium	H of Community Services	Agreed to formalise documentation for key partnerships 1/10/2010
The Partnership Manager consult with relevant Heads of Service to produce a schedule of the Council's key partnerships and an assessment of the risk associated with each. The resultant Register should be subject to review by Strategic Management Team.	01.06.01	2 - Medium	H of Community Services	Agreed 1/10/2010
Head of Change consider whether there would be value in amending the Team Plan Template to prompt consideration of partnership working and any associated risks.	03.02.01	3 - Low	H of Change	This will be picked up as part of the Business Planning Strategy Group. 1/10/2010

NOTES:

Action Plan Grade Classification:	H-High, M-Medium, L-Low	Order of Priority of Implementation. Please note that it will normally be expected that all recommendations will be implemented within 6 months.
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The range of Assurance ratings is as follows:

Audit Opinion:	Explanation:
GOOD	Minor risks have been identified.
SOUND	Some risks have been identified and some recommendations made.
MARGINAL	A number of risks have been identified and changes should be made.
UNSATISFACTORY*	Unacceptable risks have been identified and changes must be made.
UNSOUND*	Major risks exist and fundamental improvements are required.

A rating of "Unsatisfactory" or "Unsound" requires immediate management attention and arrangements will be made for a further review to be carried out at a later (agreed) date.

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