

**Harborough District Council
Partnership Policy
2013-16**



Release Draft
Date: 19th December 2013

Author:	Tom Day
Document Version Number:	V5.0

Document History

Document Location The source of the document will be found in
W:\PUBLIC\COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS\Managing Partnerships

Date of next revision: February 2015

Revision History

Version Number	Revision date	Previous revision date	Summary of Changes	Changes marked
V5.0	19.12.13	03.12.13	Amendments from V 4.0	
V4.0	03.12.13	12.11.13	Amendments from V 3.0	
V3.0	12.11.13	15.09.13	Amendments from V2.0	
V2.0	15.09.13	NA	Updated document following agreement in 2011	New document

Approvals

Name	Signature	Title	Date of Issue	Version
------	-----------	-------	---------------	---------

CMT		CMT		
CMT				
Executive			Jan 13	



Harbrough District Council Partnership Policy

Introduction

Partnership working plays a crucial role in the delivery of public services, as local authorities are increasingly working with other organisations, businesses, third sector and community groups to share knowledge and deliver joint working and/or services to achieve a common goal.

The purpose of this policy is to set out Harborough District Council's (HDC) approach to partnership working, and to set out arrangements for entering, managing, reviewing and exiting partnerships, to ensure that our resources remain focused on delivering our priorities and expected outcomes to our residents.

Defining a partnership

A partnership is defined as an arrangement between two or more independent organisations to work together in order to achieve a common goal. This usually involves sharing risk and reward, joint decision making and pooling and/or alignment of resources.

Within this policy, partnerships are not the same as:

- Officer networks, forums or consultation groups (eg. Leicestershire Land Charges Group) which meet to support best practice.
- Contractual arrangements where HDC has delegated / outsourced a function¹.
- An External Body which Councils may be invited to take part in.

Benefits of partnership working

Partnership working can have many benefits including, but not restricted to:

- Increased service resilience.
- Reduction in duplication.

¹ To ensure effective opportunity and risk management, high value contractual arrangements and external bodies that require significant resources, in terms of officer time and finance, will be included in the Partnership Register. These will usually have their own governance, management and monitoring arrangements.

- Economies of scale.
- Access to additional resources.
- Delivery of shared services, joint commissioning and procurement.
- Opening new markets and business opportunities.
- Sharing of data, skills and knowledge.
- Transparent and collective decision making

It is important that the benefits of partnership working are identified for each individual partnership.

These may be hard benefits, i.e. those that can be measured (for example, cashable benefits) and/or softer benefits (e.g. early intervention – investing now to save later). Partnerships should deliver one or more of the benefits listed below:

- Cashable Savings - this could be either additional income or reduced expenditure.
- Service Quality - this could be increased customer satisfaction or providing a more joined up or integrated service.
- Improved Speed or Throughput – this could be sharing work.
- Risk Mitigation – this could be through increasing resilience, avoiding future costs, service degradation or reputational risk.

Context of partnership working at HDC

The Council will commit itself to effective partnership working with other organisations where this is the best way of achieving its aims and objectives. This does not mean that it will engage in all potential partnerships: in some cases, the Council will decide that its resources are better employed elsewhere or that others should take a lead role. However, the Council will always make such decisions openly and consciously. It will communicate honestly with external organisations; and where it commits to partnership working it will strive to be a dedicated and reliable partner.

The importance of partnership working is set out in the Council's Operating Model and Medium Term Financial Strategy.

This approach is supported by national and local policy, including the Localism Act, which encourage collaboration and partnership working of the public sector, third sector organisations, businesses and communities in order to access and make best use of resources, incentives and opportunities.

Partnership Register

All partnerships that HDC are involved with are captured in the Partnership Register. This is a working document that outlines key information about each partnership, including the Council's direct and indirect contributions, benefits and risks. This document will be refreshed on an annual basis, in line with the Business Planning process to ensure that the Council continues to align its involvement in partnerships with changing priorities and outcomes, and where appropriate allocate budgets or provide "in principle" budget allocations

Appendix A to this policy sets out the information that is captured relating to each partnership in the Partnership Register. Appendix B sets out the criteria used to determine value and risk assessments.

Entering into a Partnership

If the Council wishes to enter into a partnership, it should be assessed against the headings set out in the Partnership Register in order to provide adequate information for the Corporate Management Team (CMT) to make a decision on involvement, in consultation with the relevant Portfolio Holder.

This includes an assessment of the potential value of the partnership, usually referencing benefits such as cashable savings, service quality, improved speed / throughput or risk mitigation. It also includes an assessment of risk, which should take into account the risk of not being involved with the partnership.

If the partnership requires direct financial contribution which has not been outlined in existing budgets, a proposal should be submitted to Executive for approval.

DRAFT

Partnership Governance

There should always be clear partnership governance in place. This should be discussed and agreed by the relevant CMT member, the Portfolio Holder, CMT or the Executive as appropriate in relation to the value and/or risk of the Partnership. This could include:

- A formal legal relationship with clearly defined roles, responsibilities and obligations imposed on each of the partners.
- A statutory requirement.
- A non-legal relationship where the partners have agreed to work together for the common good of a narrow or wide section of the community.
- An informal joint working arrangement, based on an agreed commitment of resources to a particular project or programme.

Any issues of concern regarding the Council's involvement in a partnership should be reported by the lead officer to the relevant member of Corporate Management Team as they arise, for advice on appropriate course of action and escalation if required.

Partnership governance arrangements must comply with audit requirements.

Managing Performance, Data Quality & Risk

The Council will undertake regular performance monitoring to ensure that partnership working is effective and that outcomes are delivered.

Due to the diverse nature of partnership working, performance and risk management and monitoring may be undertaken in a variety of ways. These may include:

- Capturing partnership work through the Business Planning process within the Key Activities, performance indicators and key risks in the Corporate Delivery Plan. These are reported on through the TEN Performance Management System and Quarterly Performance Reports.
- A regular item for partnership progress and issues at Corporate Management Team meetings and the Executive Strategy Board.
- Partnership performance monitoring reports to Scrutiny / Executive.

The annual review of the Partnership Register will ensure that partnerships remain relevant to delivering the Council's priorities.

Where partnership or third party data is reported through the Council's Corporate Delivery Plan and Quarterly Performance Reports, assurance that this information is accurate is required from the partnership or providing organisation. If this information has not been verified or is an estimate, a caveat should be included in the report.

The Council's key partners and partnerships have mechanisms in place to ensure data quality, including regular scrutiny of their own performance.

To inform the decision making process to enter a partnership, an assessment of risk should be undertaken as part of the information required in the Partnership Register. This is reviewed every year in line with the annual refresh of the Partnership Register.

Risks of exiting a partnership are held in the Partnership Register. If the Council wishes to exit a partnership, the risks should be explained in detail as part of the exit strategy and controls put in place to minimise the impact of exit as appropriate.

Council Representation

Council representation on a partnership will vary, depending on the nature, significance and status of the partnership.

In cases where Member representation on partnerships is required, a list of outside bodies will be provided to Group Whips who are required to supply nominations. The list of annual appointments is then agreed at Annual Council. In some cases appointments are for four years, in which case they will be agreed at the first Council meeting after an election and continue for the life of that Council.

Annual Council also agrees that any places on outside bodies that remain unfilled, or any changes during the course of the year/four year period, may be filled later by the Chief Executive in discussion with the Group Whip.

Officer representation on partnerships will be reviewed as part of the annual refresh of the Partnership Register and during the year as required.

Roles and Responsibilities

Officers / Members involved with partnerships	Act in the interests of HDC at all times. Identify and develop partnership opportunities / horizon scan. Report any issues of concern to the relevant member of CMT who will action or escalate as appropriate. Communicate information effectively and efficiently within the Council to ensure that information arising from partnership meetings is shared effectively with other Members and Officers. Maintenance of the Partnerships Register.
Policy, Performance and Partnerships Team	Accountability for Partnership Register and Policy, and co-ordination of the annual review of the Partnership Register Provide critical challenge on partnership involvement.
Corporate Management Team	Receive annual review of Partnership Register. Receive any escalated issues from officers / Members involved with partnerships as and when they arise and advise on appropriate action. Determine involvement with new partnerships and exit from existing partnerships. Make recommendations to Executive where appropriate on involvement with or exit from partnerships, and budget allocation Ensure active engagement where a decision to participate in a partnership has been taken. Ensure the council has the resources to fulfil its commitments to the partnership.
Scrutiny	Receive performance reports where appropriate.
Executive	Decisions on resourcing not included in annual budget. Receive performance reports where appropriate.
Partnerships that the Council is involved	Deliver the benefits that they have agreed to deliver, work in an efficient, effective and economical way, providing good value for

with	money, develop a sense of shared purpose & build relationships between members of the partnership, have representation from partners at the appropriate level.
------	----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Leaving a partnership

There are a number of reasons why the Council may decide to end its involvement in a partnership. These could be:

- The partnership has achieved the outcomes is set out to, or concern that the partnership is not delivering the agreed outcomes.
- The partnership is no longer relevant to delivering the Council's priorities.
- The partnership is time limited, or is succeeded by another set of arrangements.
- External funding ceases.
- Changes to legal basis on which the partnership was originally established.

In any case where the Council wishes to cease involvement with a partnership, an exit strategy must be completed. This should include risks of no longer being involved with the partnership and appropriate control measures to mitigate any impact.

The exit strategy should be submitted to CMT for consideration and approval in consultation with the relevant Portfolio Holder, or for onward consideration and approval by the Executive if it is a significant partnership.

Related Frameworks, Strategies & Policies

The Partnership Policy is intrinsically linked to a number of other frameworks, strategies and policies that apply across Harborough District Council, including:

- HDC Operating Model
- Data Quality Strategy
- Medium Term Financial Strategy
- Procurement Strategy



Appendix A - Partnerships Register - Guidance Notes

Partnership Name	What is the name of the partnership?
Lead Partner	Within the partnership, who is the lead partner?
Function of Partnership	What is the purpose of the partnership and what are the key partnership objectives?
Is the Partnership Strategic or Operational? Is this a statutory partnership we are obliged to attend? (Y/N)	Think about whether the partnership has a strategic / steering / oversight function, does it carry out an operational / delivery function? This should determine the level of representation. Is the partnership a statutory partnership? Does the Council have a statutory obligation to attend?
Frequency of Meetings	How often do meetings take place – monthly / quarterly etc?
HDC Representative(s) (Officer and/or Members)	Who attends the partnership to represent HDC? Is there just one person or do several people attend? Think in terms of both Officers and Members
CMT / SMT / Officer / Member	What level is the person / people who are attending the meeting?
Which Priority / Critical Outcomes does the Partnership help to deliver?	List the priority and numbers of the Critical Outcomes that the partnership contributes towards.
Estimation of staff time (inc preparation, meeting & follow up) (hrs per month)	How many hours are spent on the partnership – think in terms of meeting time but also any administration for the partnership, preparation time including time taken to brief Members if necessary, and resulting work from the partnership.
Estimation of the Council's contribution (£) of the budget	How much does the Council put into partnership in terms of financial contribution? Remember to take into account partnership projects.
Impact / risk of exit from Partnership	What will be the impact if the Council leaves the partnership? Think about implications on service delivery – inconvenience / short term / long term repercussions, lack of service delivery, extent of impact on reputation, financial penalties and risks.
Overall Risk Assessment	Use the Partnership Risk Assessment criteria to determine whether the risk assessment is High, Medium or Low.
What is our role in the partnership? (control, influence, information)	What role do HDC take in the partnership? Do we lead, are we there to influence decisions and policy, are we contributing advice and information etc
Value: Access to additional resources, Ability to influence key policy & key decisions Enhancing reputation	Think about what benefits the partnership brings about for the Council; does it provide access to funding pots, grants, pooled resources etc? Does it produce lots of positive press stories and PR?
Overall Value Assessment of the partnership	Use the Partnership Value Assessment criteria to determine whether the partnership is of High, Medium or Low value to the organisation
How is information from the partnership currently	How is information disseminated to the officers who need it; is there a mechanism for communicating / reporting to



shared?	individuals or internal groups? How does information flow between partnerships? What are the communication channels to other councils in cases where we are the district representative – and how are we briefed when other districts take the lead?
----------------	------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Appendix B – Partnership Risk and Value Assessment Criteria

Note that these criteria should be used for guidance only. This is not a prescriptive list to assess risk and value.

Partnership Risk Assessment

HIGH	MEDIUM	LOW
Council resource contribution greater than £100k	Council resource contribution between £50k and £100k	Council resource contribution less than £50k
Considerable time resource commitment from Council	Moderate time resource commitment	Minimal time resource commitment
Medium to long term problems/fallout if partnership fails	Short term problems/fallout if partnership fails	Inconvenience if partnership fails
Partnership has a critical impact on the achievement of Council priorities	Partnership has a moderate impact on the achievement of Council priorities	Partnership does not impact in a material way on the achievement of Council priorities
Serious reputation impact (sub-regional / national)	Moderate reputation impact (local impact)	Minimal reputation impact
Significant importance for the administration	Moderate importance for the administration	Little or no importance to the administration

Partnership Value Assessment

HIGH	MEDIUM	LOW
Significant contribution to delivering the Corporate Plan and the Corporate Delivery Plan	Moderate contribution to delivering the Corporate Plan and the Corporate Delivery Plan	Little contribution to delivering the Corporate Plan and the Corporate Delivery Plan
Significantly reduces cost of service delivery	Some reduction in the cost of service delivery	Does not reduce cost of service delivery

Provides significant opportunity to access external funding	Provides some opportunity to access external funding	Provides little or no opportunity to access external funding
Significantly enhances Councils reputation	Moderately enhances Councils reputation	Little enhancement to Councils reputation
Significantly improves service delivery	Moderately improves service delivery	Minimal improvement to service delivery
Significantly improves service resilience	Moderately improves service resilience	Minimal improvement to service resilience
Key to influencing sub-regional and local decision-making and policy development	Key to influencing local decision-making and policy development	Minimal influence on decision-making and policy development
Significantly supports the delivery of a statutory function	Moderately supports the delivery of a statutory function	Does not support the delivery of a statutory function
Benefit to the Council exceeds investment of resources (time / money)	Investment of resources (time / money) commensurate with benefit to the Council	Investment of resources (time / money) exceeds benefit to the Council

DRAFT