

Harborough District Council Partnership Policy 2015 - 2018



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Document History

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Revision History

| Version Number | Revision date | Previous revision date | Summary of Changes | Changes marked |
|----------------|---------------|------------------------|--|----------------|
| V2.0 | 26.02.15 | 02.15 | Small amendments to wording and added link to Risk & Opportunity Framework | |
| V1.0 | 02.15 | NA | New Policy | |

Approvals

| Name | Signature | Title | Date of Issue | Version |
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| Executive | | Executive | 15.03.15 | V2 |
| Executive | | Executive | 10.02.14 | V1 |



Harborough District Council Partnership Policy

1. Introduction

Partnership working plays a crucial role in the delivery of effective and efficient public services. Local Authorities are increasingly working with other organisations, businesses, the third sector and community groups to share knowledge and deliver joint working and/or services.

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.

2. 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.

Partnerships are not the same as:

- Officer networks, forums or consultation groups, which meet to support best practice.
- Contractual arrangements where HDC has delegated / outsourced a function.
- An External Body or Governing Body, which the Council may be invited to take part in.

3. Benefits of partnership working

It is important that the benefits of partnership working are identified for each individual partnership that the council is engaged in. 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). For this reason, Partnerships should deliver one or more of the benefits listed below:

- **External Funding or Investment**- this could be for services or wider district infrastructure
- **Cashable Savings/ income** - this could be new markets or opportunities, efficiencies or reduced expenditure.
- **Increased 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 or new ways of working.
- **Risk Mitigation** – this could be through increasing resilience, avoiding future costs, service degradation or reputational risk.

4. 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 Council aims and objectives. This does not mean that the Council 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.

Engaging in partnerships and joint projects 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.

5. Partnership Register

All partnerships that HDC are involved with are set out in the Partnership Register. This is a working document that outlines key information about each partnership, including the benefit to the Council, the Council's direct and indirect contribution and risks and opportunities.

The register is reviewed annually against the Councils Risk and Opportunity Strategy to ensure it remains an effective tool for CMT and Executive to manage and plan resources to deliver Council aims and objectives.

6. Entering into a Partnership

All partnership opportunities should be assessed using the information requested by the Partnership Register using the Council's Risk and Opportunity Framework. A decision can then be taken as to the Councils involvement having considered the relevant factors and alongside other Council Partnership commitments.

If entering the partnership requires direct financial contribution which has not been outlined in existing budgets, a proposal should be submitted to Executive or the relevant Portfolio Holder for approval depending on the size of the contribution.

7. Partnership Governance

The Council must ensure that its business is conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards, and that public money is safeguarded, accounted for and spent economically, efficiently and effectively.

This applies equally to its partnerships, which have become an increasingly important way of delivering strategic objectives and services but which can produce particular risk and governance issues. For example, partners from different organisations with different priorities and cultures may not have the same opinion about partnership objectives, outcomes and activity. The Council must ensure that partnerships are linked to the democratic processes to give assurance that we are not exposed to unacceptable or unknown risks.

The Partnership Policy and Register should support the Council to identify the significant partnerships, understand their purpose, how they are operated and governed, and to ensure appropriate representation and influence arrangements where necessary.

8. Management of Partnerships

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| Officers / Members representing the Council on partnerships | Should act in the interests of Harborough District Council at all times. Identify and develop partnership opportunities and ensure they are scored against the Partnership Policy and Register. Report/ escalate any issues of concern as appropriate. Communicate information within the Council on the work of the partnership where necessary. Ensure the Partnership Register is updated regularly to take account of changes e.g. in risk. |
| Community Partnerships Service Manager | Accountability for the Partnership Register and Policy including its regular review. |
| Corporate Management Team | Consider issues of concern, liaising with Executive as necessary. Determine/ recommend to Executive involvement with new partnerships, shifting resources and exit from existing partnerships. Ensure the Council has the resources to fulfil its commitments. |
| Scrutiny | To receive an annual report on the Partnership Register. To contribute to effective partnership governance as necessary. |
| Executive | To agree involvement with new partnerships as necessary. To review existing partnership arrangements as necessary. To receive updates on partnership risks and opportunities as part of the quarterly corporate risk register as necessary. |

9. Exiting 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 the legal basis on which the partnership was originally established.

In any case where the Council wishes to cease involvement with a partnership, a proportionate exit strategy should normally be completed. This should include any risks and control measures to mitigate any impact.

The decision to withdraw from a partnership and agreement of an exit strategy should be made by Corporate Management Team and or Executive/ Council as necessary.