

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

CABINET
26th APRIL 2007

Revised Partnerships Framework

OPEN	
COMMUNITY STRATEGY THEME	
CORPORATE PLAN THEME:	Providing Community Leadership
KEY PRIORITY:	Effective Partnerships
CABINET MEMBER:	Councillor Stephen Clee
RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:	Chief Executive
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APPENDICES	The appendices to this report have been circulated electronically and a public inspection copy is available on request (See front cover for details).

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To report on the revised Strategic and Operational Level Partnerships Framework for the Council and the development of Guidance for Managing Risks and Opportunities in Partnerships.

2. RECOMMENDATION

The Cabinet is asked to RECOMMEND to Council:

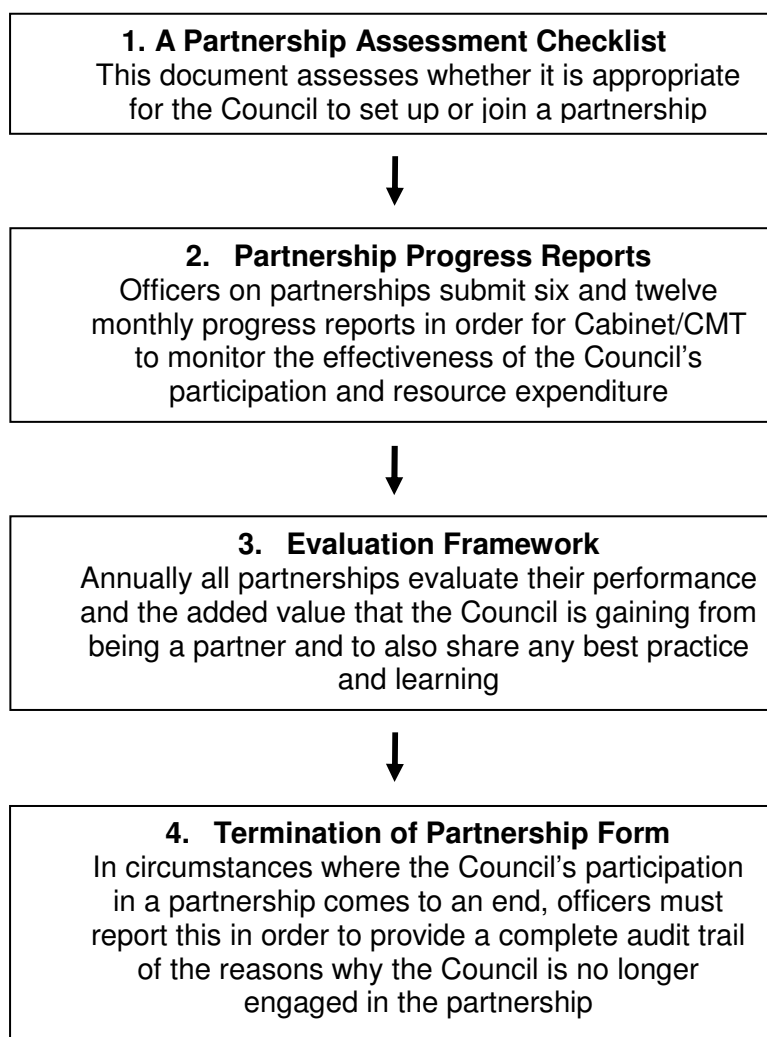
- 2.1 **The revised Strategic and Operational Level Partnerships Framework and the Guidance for Managing Risks and Opportunities in Partnerships, as set out in Appendix A and Appendix B respectively, of the report be adopted.**

3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The Council is committed to working with partners and recognises the value of effective partnerships in the delivery of its strategic priorities and contributing to the well-being of our local communities.
- 3.2 The trend for partnerships is set to continue and grow with impetus coming from the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Bill 2007, which covers Local Strategic Partnerships, Local Area Agreements, Shared Services, efficiencies and value for money.
- 3.3 Flexibility, innovation and many other benefits allow partnerships to address

issues that individual organisations could not tackle alone. However, partnerships also bring the potential for increased risks. The additional complexity of working in partnership means that ambiguity and confusion can arise. This can lead to weakened accountability and reduced clarity over expected outcomes.

- 3.4 Entering and continuing to participate in partnerships must be based on a sound understanding of the risks, challenges and anticipated benefits involved.
- 3.5 In February 2006, the Council adopted a Strategic and Operational Level Partnerships Framework to guide its approach to, involvement in and evaluation of partnerships. The Framework started to be rolled out across Divisions in April 2006.
- 3.6 In June 2006, a review of the Partnerships Framework was undertaken by Internal Audit. Understandably, due to its infancy in terms of implementation, there was some limited awareness of the Framework and how it should be applied.
- 3.7 The review identified a few procedural weaknesses in the Framework, none of which were classified as 'Significant', however, very slight amendments have now been made to the Framework to address these.
- 3.8 There are five main elements to the revised Partnerships Framework:





5. Central database of all partnerships that Council Officers are involved in

Information regarding Council involvement in partnerships is held on a central register to provide a single point of contact for Councillors, partners and members of the community

- 3.9 Therefore the purpose of the Framework is to bring clarity. It should be used sensibly to ensure that the soft attributes of successful partnership working are not lost. The Framework is a strategy to guide work, not a barrier to prevent effective working.
- 3.10 A copy of the revised Partnerships Framework is set out in **Appendix A**.
- 3.11 To further support the implementation of the Framework, separate guidance has been developed for 'Managing Risk and Opportunities in Partnerships' as set out in **Appendix B**.

4. IMPLEMENTATION OF FRAMEWORK

- 4.1 The number of partnerships the Council is currently involved in is set out in **Table 1**. It should be noted that over the last 12 months there has been some rationalisation and streamlining of officer representation on both district and countywide partnerships.

Table 1

WFDC involvement in partnerships	2001	2004	2005	2007
Sub District / District	19	36	36	28
North Worcestershire			3	3
Worcestershire	20	27	26	18
Regional	5	4	2	3
Total number of Partnerships	44	67	67	52

- 4.2 The six monthly progress reports will be collated and placed on the Council's Intranet. Only those partnerships which appear not to be making sufficient progress will be reported to Cabinet.
- 4.3 Over the next couple of months, Officers involved in partnership working will be invited to participate in awareness training on the revised Partnerships Framework to ensure they are clear of the requirements it places upon them.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report. The Partnerships Framework does enable information on financial investment in partnerships to be captured. This will allow the Council to monitor our financial contribution to partnerships much more effectively than was previously possible.
- 5.2 It is envisaged that the implementation of this revised Framework will enable

some efficiencies to be gained through the rationalisation of the Council's involvement in those partnerships which are not supporting the Council's strategic priorities.

6. LEGAL AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The Council has a duty to work in partnership with others in the public, private and voluntary sectors to promote social, economic and environmental well-being (Local Government Act 2000).
- 6.2 Both the recently published Local Government White Paper 'Strong and Prosperous Communities' and Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Bill further emphasise the role of local partnerships in the delivery of better high quality public services for citizens.

7. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 7.1 Application of the revised Partnerships Framework will help to reduce the risk of being involved in partnerships, which contribute insufficiently towards the Council's priorities or fail to add value commensurate with the resources invested.
- 7.2 Whilst failure to become involved in appropriate partnerships can result in loss of external funding potential, specialist knowledge or skills, or opportunities to learn from others.

8. CONCLUSION

- 8.1 The benefits of partnership working in assisting the Council to achieve its strategic priorities are recognised, and by applying the revised Partnerships Framework should help to provide a more effective and consistent approach to the Council's involvement in partnerships.

9. CONSULTEES

- 9.1
- Leader of the Council
 - Corporate Management Team
 - Head of Legal and Democratic Services
 - Head of Financial Services
 - Financial Services Manager

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 10.1
- Comprehensive Performance Assessment Inspection Report – December 2004
 - Developing a Partnerships Framework – Report to Cabinet on 22nd December 2005
 - Internal Audit Review Report Recommendations – August 2006
 - Local Government White Paper – Strong and Prosperous Communities – October 2006
 - Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Bill 2007