

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

CABINET
20th NOVEMBER 2008

Revised Partnerships Framework

OPEN	
SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY STRATEGY THEME	All Themes
CORPORATE PLAN AIM	All Aims
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APPENDICES	Appendix A – Strategic and Operational Partnerships Framework. This document has 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.

2. RECOMMENDATION

The Cabinet is asked to RECOMMEND to Council that:

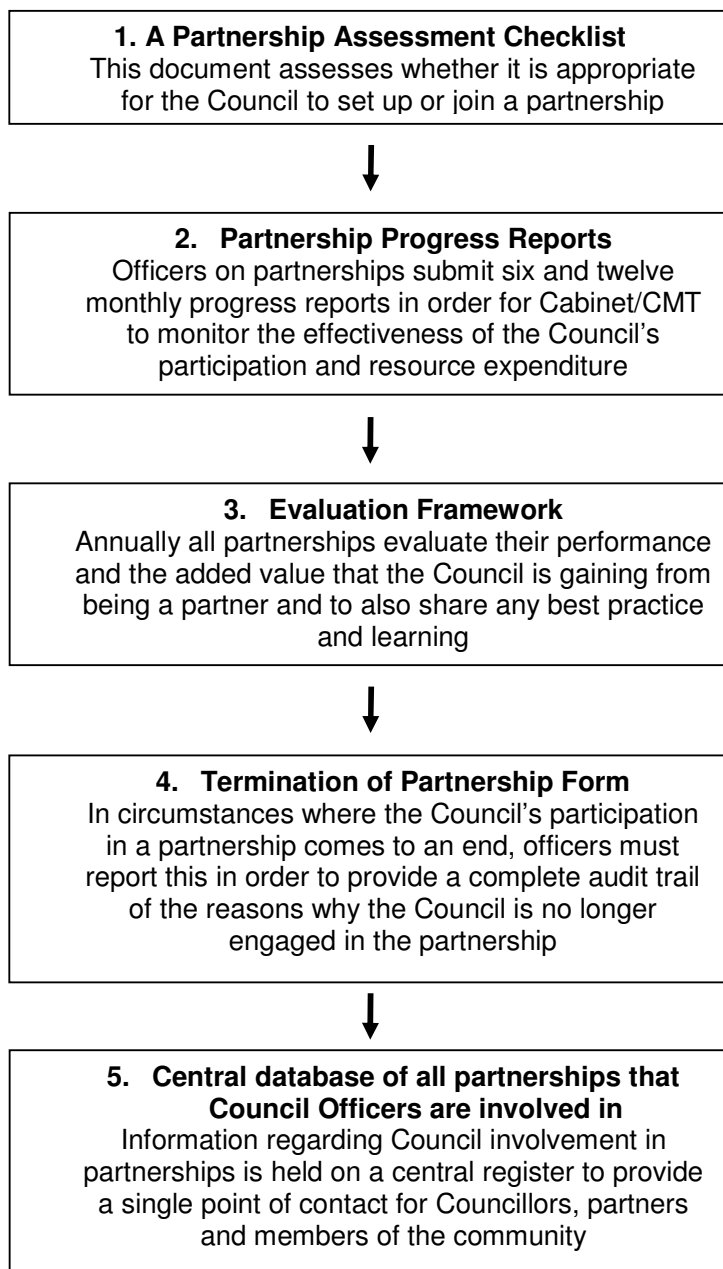
- 2.1 **The revised Strategic and Operational Level Partnerships Framework as set out in Appendix A be adopted.**

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 to grow, with impetus coming from the Comprehensive Area Assessment and the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007. Both focus on Local Strategic Partnerships, Local Area Agreements, Shared Services, community engagement, efficiencies and value for money, of which partnerships have a key role.
- 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 was updated in April 2007 and set out its five main elements as follows:



- 3.6 Those lead Council Officers on partnerships received training on the revised Framework in May 2007.
- 3.7 To further support the implementation of the Framework it has recently been revised to capture how partnership activity is delivering the:
- a) targets of the Worcestershire Local Area Agreement 2008

- b) targets of the refreshed Community Strategy ‘Making a real difference’ 2008; and
- c) Wyre Forest District Council Corporate Plan Aims and Priorities

- 3.8 In addition, the six monthly progress update now requires officers to identify public participation and engagement in their partnership’s activities.
- 3.9 All of the above information will be required for the Council’s forthcoming Comprehensive Area Assessment so it is critical that it is effectively captured and used to support effective involvement in partnerships.
- 3.10 A copy of the revised Strategic and Operational Level Partnerships Framework is set out in **Appendix A**.

4. IMPLEMENTATION OF FRAMEWORK

- 4.1 A progress report on the Council’s participation in partnerships, which will analyse information captured by the Partnerships Framework for the period April to October 2008, will be reported to Cabinet in February 2009.
- 4.2 In the meantime, it should be noted that since the introduction of the Partnerships Framework in 2006, the number of partnerships the Council is involved in has been rationalised and streamlined which is one of the key focuses of the Framework. This information is set out in **Table 1**.

Table 1

WFDC involvement in partnerships	2001	2004	2005	2007	2008
Sub District / District	19	36	36	33	25
North Worcestershire			3	3	1
Worcestershire	20	27	26	24	22
Regional	5	4	2	3	2
Total number of Partnerships	44	67	67	63	50

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 Local Government White Paper ‘Strong and Prosperous Communities’ and Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 further emphasise the role of local partnerships in the delivery of better high quality public services for citizens.

7. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 7.1 Through the Council’s Risk Management processes, ‘Partnerships’ has been identified as a corporate risk. This Framework, therefore actively mitigates that risk by implementing a measured, appropriate and comprehensive control.
- 7.2 Application of the revised Partnerships Framework will help to continue 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.
- 7.3 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

- Leader of the Council
- Corporate Management Team

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- Comprehensive Performance Assessment Inspection Report – December 2004
- Developing a Partnerships Framework – Report to Cabinet on 22nd December 2005
- Governing Partnerships – Bridging the Accountability Gap – Audit Commission – October 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 Act 2007
- Revised Partnerships Framework – Report to Cabinet on 26th April 2007