



REPORT TO: OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

DATE: 6 AUGUST 2009

**REPORTING OFFICER: HEAD OF TRANSFORMATION
CLARE SLATER**

SUBJECT: PARTNERSHIP GOVERNANCE TOOLKIT

WARDS AFFECTED: ALL

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 To present members with the draft partnership governance toolkit for the Council

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 It is recommended that Members:

- (i) adopt the Toolkit as the basis for reviewing all existing partnerships in which the Council is engaged;
- (ii) adopt the Toolkit as the protocol to be followed when considering entering into any new partnership arrangements.

3.0 BACKGROUND

3.1 Annual Governance Statement Action Plan – An internal audit undertaken into partnership working identified that the Council needed to establish sound governance arrangements for its significant partnerships. The action proposed in the AGS action plan is to identify significant partnerships and establish appropriate governance arrangements relevant to each.

3.2 Use of Resources – The use of resources assessment, which forms part of the CAA framework requires that the Council demonstrates the principles of good governance in relation to partnerships. Partnership governance has been identified as an area for improvement.

3.4 Partnership Improvement Programme – The Council has recently participated in the IdEA Partnership Improvement Programme, working with partners from the voluntary and community sectors, North Yorkshire County Council, Police and the Ryedale Strategic Partnership.

4.0 INTRODUCTION

4.1 The governance arrangements in place for any partnership working undertaken by the Council are vital to the effective corporate governance and internal control framework of the Council.

- 4.2 The Council needs to have a process through which to identify the significance of a particular partnership and the level of management required to maintain the effective governance of those partnerships judged to be significant.
- 4.3 An audit of all of the Councils involvement in partnerships is currently being undertaken.

5.0 POLICY CONTEXT

- 5.1 The Partnership Governance Toolkit is required to deliver the Annual Governance Action Plan and to evidence a systematic approach to the development and review of partnerships in which the Council is engaged.
- 5.2 The review of current partnerships and process for assessing potential partnership working will support the delivery of the Councils strategic objective – To develop the leadership, capacity and capability to deliver future improvements.

6.0 REPORT

- 6.1 The toolkit outlines the approach to be applied when the Council is considering joining or introducing new partnerships and also reviewing existing arrangements. It provides a basis for examining the key issues that require consideration, to ensure that any potential problems identified in relation to partnership working are confronted, assessed, overcome and avoided in the future. The draft Partnership Governance Toolkit is attached at Annex A.
- 6.2 The main objective of the toolkit is to ensure that the Council participates in successful partnerships that have robust governance arrangements.
The six principles of good governance in partnerships are:
- i) Focussing on the purpose of the partnership and on outcomes for the community including citizens and service users and creating and implementing a vision for the local area;
 - ii) Working together to achieve a common purpose with clearly defined functions and roles;
 - iii) Promoting the values of the partnership and demonstrating the values of good governance through behaviour;
 - iv) Taking informed and transparent decisions which are subject to effective scrutiny and managing risk;
 - v) Developing the capacity and capability of the partnership to be effective;
 - vi) Engaging with local people and other stakeholders to ensure robust local public accountability.

Governance arrangements should be proportionate to the risks involved.

- 6.3 The eight partnership standards proposed for the Council are:
- i) Partnerships should have clear objectives that are realistic and measurable and link to the achievement of the Council's corporate objectives;
 - ii) There should be clear organisational and staffing arrangements in place, with clear accountabilities for those involved in the partnership and clarity with regard to the resources committed to it;
 - iii) Partnerships should have robust management and appropriate decision making mechanisms in place. They should have a constitution and/or terms of reference and defined standards as to the way individuals within partnerships should behave;
 - iv) Partnerships should have robust performance management arrangements for

monitoring and reviewing how successfully targets are being met and sharing review findings amongst partners;

- v) Partnerships should have robust financial arrangements in place, with clear budget setting and monitoring procedures and clear financial regulations and schemes of delegation;
- vi) Partnerships should have a clear process for identifying, prioritising and managing risks. Business continuity arrangements should also be in place;
- vii) Partnerships should have a transparent process for information sharing within the partnership and public engagement arrangements where there is communication with service users and the wider public;
- viii) Partnerships should have clear exit arrangements that allow for minimal disruption and the reallocation of resources.

6.4 Both employees and elected members of the Council are expected to use the toolkit for both new and existing partnerships.

6.5 The partnership toolkit includes a checklist for assessing the health of a partnership and guidance on the application of the eight principles.

6.6 The partnerships currently included in the Councils list of significant partnerships will be reviewed first. The lead officer for each partnership will undertake the review and complete the significance matrix. This will then be endorsed by SMT. Lead officers for existing partnerships will then be expected to produce an improvement plan and timescale for delivery of the appropriate level of governance arrangements.

7.0 RISK ASSESSMENT

7.1 The risks inherent in partnership working need to be identified and managed in line with the Councils Risk Management Strategy. Those partnerships identified as significant to the organisation will be required to produce a Risk Register and Action Plan and present this annually to the overview and scrutiny committee. This should be managed through Covalent.

8.0 CONCLUSION

8.1 The Partnership Governance Toolkit should enable the Council to effectively manage the delivery of improved outcomes through partnership, management of the risks associated with a particular partnership and monitoring the value added through partnership working.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

RDC Annual Governance Statement Action Plan – June 2009
Partnership Improvement Programme Action Plan – June 2009

OFFICER CONTACT:

Please contact Clare Slater, Head of Transformation, if you require any further information on the contents of this report, Tel: 01653 600666 ext. 347. clare.slater@ryedale.gov.uk