



Chichester District Council

Partnerships Guidance 2015

1. Introduction

Welcome to the new partnership guidance for Chichester District Council. This document sets out what CDC considers to be partnership working, what the responsibilities for members and officers involved in partnership working are and what governance should be put in place when being involved in or creating a partnership.

2. Definition of Partnerships

A partnership is

“ A process in which two or more organisations or groups work together to achieve a common goal, and do so in such a way that they achieve more effective outcomes than by working separately”
(Working in Partnership: A sourcebook)

The following list is the agreed definitions of the different kinds of partnerships that will be listed in the CDC Annual Partnerships report.

- **Strategic Partnership** – a partnership set up to have a strategic overview of a certain subject e.g. health and wellbeing or community safety. They will not directly deliver a service but could commission services through partners or set up Task and Finish groups to deliver upon their objectives.
- **Strategic Service Delivery Partnerships** – Involves the delivery of services by one body on behalf of another or through joint working, aspires to deliver more value for money, can include elements that are not contractually defined but left to partners to agree the way forward. Collaborative relationships between local authorities and other organisations in the public, private and / or voluntary sectors
- **Community Partnerships**- Groups set up by the by a community to deal with a local issue. The council will be involved as an interested partner, we may possibly put resources into it but we do not oversee the partnership. Some community partnerships are interested in helping us to deliver services or maintain local facilities (e.g. Friends of the parks) and need support from the council.
- **Task and finish/Project groups** – usually set up under a strategic partnership. These time limited task and finish groups will be partners working together to deliver a specific aim of the strategic partnership.

In order to prevent confusion the following is a list of what is **NOT** a Partnership; these will not be included in the Annual Partnership report as they should be monitored in other ways e.g. annual reports to council, performance reports, and financial reports:

Title	Description
Shared Services	Where an officer/s is contracted to work for two or more organisations to deliver the same service. There will need to be an agreement between the organisations as to the standard of the service and the monitoring of the work.
Joint commissioning	Joint commissioning involves multiple parties with diverse skills and aligned priorities collaborating to deliver outcomes, to better meet the needs of communities. The process should ensure the effective use of combined resources to deliver against local priorities
Grants	Where we agree to give organisation/s money to deliver a project that fits with our priorities. The expenditure of this money will be reported upon.
Contracts	Where we pay another organisation (company, partnership, community group other council) to deliver a service for us. We will work closely with the contracted organisation to ensure the service meets our needs.
Networks	Where officers or members of different organisations meet to share knowledge, best practice and develop ways of working together. These can often lead to further partnership work.
Subscription Service	Where we pay an organisation (this could be a company, partnership) for a service. However in some cases we do have a say in how this service is run.
Social Enterprise	A business with primarily social objectives whose surpluses are principally reinvested for that purpose. (E.g. Community shop). These enterprises are usually owned by the community and a trust set up to organise its management. Chichester District Council could be a partner or a funder or both.
Community Development Trusts	A development trust is usually a company limited by guarantee with charitable status. Profits cannot be distributed to members, but must be used for the further benefit of the local community. The membership of a trust is drawn from a geographically-defined area; members may be both individuals and organisations or just organisations. The board of a Trust is made up of representatives from the public, voluntary/community and private sectors; these (along with individuals and additional funders if appropriate) may be elected from 'voting sections' of the membership.
Trust Boards	The board of a Trust is made up of representatives from the public, voluntary/community and private sectors; these (along with individuals and additional funders if appropriate) may be elected from 'voting sections' of the membership. The board is the policy-making body, and is unpaid; paid staff may be employed to carry out the day-to-day operations of the trust. CDC members are nominated to a number of trusts including Festival theatre, Cowdray heritage trust, and rural mobile youth trust.
Limited Companies	Partnerships or projects can turn into limited companies with their own finances and accountability. E.g. Visit Chichester but we may have a member on the board and have a vested interest in what it does.

If you want advice on any of the above please contact Amy Loaring.

3. Setting up a partnership/ or developing partnership working

In essence, partnerships that are successful can show:

- **Good governance:** the partnership is consistent and well managed- i.e. 'fit for purpose'
- **Value For Money:** the resources available have been used economically (inputs), efficiently (process) and effectively (outputs/outcomes)
- **Added value:** something is delivered that could not have been achieved by any other form of working arrangement
- **Outcomes:** the partnership can clearly demonstrate the impact it has had

Any partnership that is set up will need to plan outcomes. These outcomes should fit with priorities of the Council's Corporate Plan or the priorities of Chichester in Partnership. Your partnership should also set out a high level objective or vision for itself in order to justify its existence.

If you are joining a partnership that already exists, reduce the risk to Chichester District Council by checking that the partnership has suitable governance arrangements set in place and that its aims align with our own. If you are unsure please talk to the Partnerships Officer.

Before you set up a partnership working arrangement, you need to think carefully about what this arrangement will mean in terms of both risk and resources. Creating or joining a partnership is only one of many ways to deliver an outcome, and you need to consider carefully if a partnership is the most effective delivery mechanism. Is the issue something that really needs to be tackled by a range of partners or could it be progressed through a single organisation or joint working? If it is high risk should it be delivered through a contract or service level agreement? If you are not sure than talk to the Partnerships Officer

4. Roles and responsibilities

4.1 Councillors

- The Leader of the Council is the lead member for partnerships.
- The Overview and Scrutiny Committee has responsibility for holding particular partnerships to account through statute, for example Chichester in Partnership. It can also hold individual organisations or partnerships contributed to by the council to account for their performance against action plans or agreed target.
- The Corporate Governance and Audit Committee has a role to ensure that the council's contribution to partnership working is effective and that governance and risk arrangements are appropriate. CGAC will receive an annual report on the Council's partnerships that will inform them of governance arrangements.
- Councillors attending partnership meetings should report decisions and progress made to the relevant CDC officer.
- Members attached to partnerships, whether in a voluntary or representative capacity, will conduct themselves within the Members Code of Conduct, which includes declarations of interest, to ensure that the reputation of the Council is not at risk.

4.2 Corporate role

- Corporate governance and Audit Committee has responsibility for monitoring the impact of our involvement in partnerships and will receive the Annual report on partnerships.
- Heads of Service are responsible for ensuring partnerships are adding value, accountable, deliver agreed outcomes and report back. And that all partnerships within their service are included in the Annual Service plans.

4.3 Officer responsibilities

- Provide a point of contact between the council and the partnership.
- Assist the partnership's work with the council.
- Ensure that the partnership's planned outcomes align with the Corporate Plan of the council.
- Facilitate the council's input into the partnership.
- Support the council's representative(s) on the partnership.
- Review performance against agreed procedures, outcomes, and targets and submit a formal report to accountable bodies as required.
- Report on an exception basis to their manager if any issues arise.
- Alert relevant officers to any issues e.g. Legal, Internal Audit, Personnel.
- Undertake an annual evaluation of the partnership's activity and make recommendations about actions required.
- To assist in ensuring equality duties are met and report any risks.
- Officers who attend or set up a partnership will be expected to ensure that good governance arrangements are set in place.
- Ensure that minutes of meetings are taken and any decisions taken are noted.
- Ensure partnership is included on the annual service plan.

5. Governance of Partnerships

All partnerships that the council is involved in must have the following in place:

5.1 Terms of reference

It is essential that each partnership that CDC is involved in has suitable governance arrangements in place set out in a formal Agreement or Terms of Reference. The specific requirements will vary for each partnership, and as many partnerships start off as loose arrangements and develop in importance, requirements may also change over time and so should be reviewed regularly. However basic terms of reference should include:

- Overall purpose of the partnership
- Lead / accountable partner organisation
- Administration arrangements
- Exit strategy

5.2 **Action Plan** with SMART (Specific, Measureable, Achievable, Realistic and Time bound) outcomes, outcome measures and planned timescales. A partnership must be able to articulate what success would look like.

Outcomes are conditions of well-being stated in plain language, which can be

easily understood and recognized as important (e.g. a prosperous economy or a clean environment).

Indicators are measures that quantify the achievement of results (e.g. the unemployment rate helps quantify economic prosperity; river water quality helps quantify a clean environment).

By identifying outcomes and indicators your partnership will make a strong case for resources and be able to validate its existence.

When planning partnership work programmes and a performance management system, it is vital that Government targets are considered in tandem with local aims. This is important for several reasons:

- If a partnership's aims are aligned to/can work towards achieving Government targets, this may lead to further resources.
- There may be opportunities to link to other partnerships or projects which will increase the capacity of the partnership to achieve good results for Chichester district bodies such as the local authority or the NHS. By necessity they must include Government targets in their work programmes as a priority, so successful partnership working with such organisations will more than likely mean working around these agendas.

So you can make the best use of the opportunities given by taking into consideration Government, non-negotiable targets, it is useful to set out clearly what the partnership can contribute to these targets and what else the partnership is doing over and above this – the extra value that the partnership is providing.

5.3 Risk Assessment

Problems arise in partnerships when governance and accountability are weak and when leadership, decision-making, scrutiny systems and processes such as risk management, are under-developed. In order to minimise such risks, Chichester District Council must meet key responsibilities for each partnership we have. We must:

- Be able to provide assurance that the risks associated with working in partnership with another organisation have been identified and prioritised and are being appropriately managed.
- Ensure that if the partnership is delivering a project that a Project Initiation Document (PID) is completed with all risks identified. If Council resources are being used to deliver the project then it will need to be approved by the relevant council authority.
- Consider that if significant resources are involved that Service Level Agreements or contracts are put in place to safeguard delivery and mitigate risks.
- Mitigate the risks if a partner decides to leave a partnership.
- Ensure the partnership has effective risk management procedures in place, including:
 - Financial risk.
 - Legal risk.

- Reputational risk.
- Resource conflicts.
- Where the delivery of an outcome is key to the council's objectives
- Risk specific to the nature of the partnership or its objectives.
- And a viable exit strategy should the partnership fail

These risks should be identified and then be added to service risks in your annual service plan.

5.4 Set Financial arrangements

When working in partnership projects are likely to be grant funded from external sources, we may be commissioned to deliver a service by or with other partners or we may set up projects that are delivered jointly with partners. Below is a simple checklist of things you need to consider before you sign any funding agreement or contract on behalf of the council

Costings	Have you considered and included all the financial on costs of staff? not just salary. E.g. redundancy costs, travel costs, training.
	Consider who the accountable body for your partnership will be? If the council is to become the accountable body then the Finance Department of the Council should be consulted before proceeding further or making commitments to partners.
	Have you sourced the costs of equipment needed? E.g. computers, phones etc.
	Have you liaised with finance on how the money will be managed? E.g. budget codes to identify all spending
	Chichester District Council has its own financial regulations. You need to ensure that the partnership relationship should not contradict this but seek to encapsulate those standards.
Performance Requirement	Understand the performance outcomes you will be expected to deliver and report on. E.g data collection and reporting mechanisms
	Have you considered the impact to your service and other CDC services of the requirements of your project/ service?
Exit Strategies	Ensure that an exit strategy is put in place for when the funding ends?
	Have you considered the impact if CDC or a partner organisation have to default on its obligations?
	Have you considered the impact on the community when the project/ service ends?
	Have you mitigated the reputational risk to the council if the project/ service ends?
	Have you checked any contract with legal services?

If you want help in the development of any of the above you should contact Amy Loaring, who can advise you and provide templates.

5.5 Exit Strategy

The exit strategy of a partnership is often forgotten when developing the governance. This should be considered at the start. The governance

arrangements should reflect what happens should a partner leave a partnership e.g. dealing with contracts, employment costs, capital costs etc. But also cover how the partnership or partnership project would come to an end. If a partnership is coming to the end of its agreed purpose there needs to be sufficient time allowed for review and evaluation.

Lead officers and members should be part of this discussion and exercise. A report detailing the rationale for ending the partnership must be reported to CMT, detailing any outcomes, weaknesses, learning points and areas of best practice and the impact on the community. Once CMT have agreed the outcomes the report can progress to any other accountable groups such as Cabinet who will make the decision to end our involvement in a partnership.

5.6 Lines of Accountability

There can be a number of bodies that a partnership needs to report progress and achievements to, not least the public that they are working for.

When setting up a performance management system, bear in mind to whom the partnership is accountable and how the partnership's work will be reported back to them. Where funding is received by the partnership, there will more than likely be very specific ways of reporting back to the funding body. However, there are some other ways in which a partnership can be held accountable for its work:

- Partnership sub-groups can be asked to report back to a steering group, or equivalent governing body within the structure.
- Strategic Partnerships should report to Corporate Governance and Audit Committee. This should be done with annual reports setting out the partnership's progress, using data from its performance management process and distributed to stakeholders and the public.
- Officers need to ensure the integration of work plans into individual partner's own business plans, so officers are held accountable through their organisation's own systems.
- Communication and consultation with the public, with particular care taken to communicate with minority groups in the District

To make sure the partnership is well governed, you need to think about how you involve councillors in the partnership. As the democratically elected representatives of the area, they should be included in any partnership involving public sector bodies – either as a member on the partnership, through overview and scrutiny arrangements or via communication and consultation to find out their ward's needs. They are also useful people to involve even if a public sector organisation isn't involved as they will have a wealth of local knowledge and influence.

5.7 Regular reviews

Partnerships need to be regularly reviewed to ensure that they are fit for purpose. Partner organisations should be involved in this review. Partnerships should review:

- Whether they are achieving their outcomes,
- That the outcomes are still relevant ,

- That the list of identified risks are up to date
- That the purpose of the partnership is still suitable.

6. Partnerships Annual Report

The council needs to know what partnerships exist within the district and how effective they are. We need to know which are important to us and which we have an active involvement in. The purpose of collecting information on partnerships is to:

- Provide clarity regarding which partnerships we are involved in and why, who is leading and how progress is reported;
- To have baseline information in which annual reviews can be assessed against;
- Make sure that the key principles of partnership working (good governance) are in place and those partnerships that we are involved in are as efficient and effective as possible.

Therefore the Partnerships Officer collates information on partnerships from the Service Plans on an annual basis and this is taken to the Corporate Governance and Audit Committee for assessment.

In summary

When becoming involved with or setting a partnership you need to ensure the eight following systems are in place:

1. Terms of reference
2. Action Plan
3. Outcomes
4. Accountability
5. Exit Strategy
6. Risk Assessment
7. Review
8. Finance Arrangements

Please notify your Head of Service/ Director and Amy Loaring if you are considering setting up a new partnership or reviewing an existing one.