

# STANDARDS COMMITTEE

## PROTOCOL FOR LOCAL AUTHORITY PARTNERSHIP WORKING 7th October 2010

### Report of the Monitoring Officer

#### PURPOSE OF REPORT

To enable the Committee to consider the Protocol for local authority partnership working recently published by Standards for England.

**This report is public**

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

- (1) **That the Protocol be welcomed and that the Partnerships section of the Community Engagement Service be encouraged to promote the Protocol within its work programme, subject to the availability of resources.**

#### 1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 In August 2010, Standards for England (SfE) published a Protocol for local authority partnership working, which was developed in conjunction with Manchester City Council.
- 1.2 A copy of the Protocol and explanatory information published by SfE is appended to this report.
- 1.3 Members will note that SfE suggest that standards committees could act as promoters of the partnership protocol, and oversee its implementation, and play an active role when any issues arise in a partnership.
- 1.4 Some work has already been undertaken by this Council in respect of the governance arrangements for partnerships, and this has been reported to the Audit Committee and to the Budget and Performance Panel. Following an audit review undertaken during 2007/08, Internal Audit took a lead role in developing performance management and governance arrangements relating to partnership working, and a project team was established to undertake a 'mapping' exercise to determine the number and types of partnership the Council is involved in and to evaluate the effectiveness of those partnerships considered to be of a major significance to the council in achieving corporate objectives and priorities.
- 1.5 Informed by the results of the mapping exercise and an increased knowledge of the purpose and objectives of each partnership, the project team developed a work

programme aimed at evaluating some of the council's major partnerships during 2009/2010 using a *Partnership Development and Evaluation Toolkit* that had previously been developed by the Principal Auditor and other officers of the council.

- 1.6 As a development tool the toolkit was designed to enable partnerships to take stock of how effective their partnership working arrangements are and to help those experiencing difficulties to identify where remedial action can be taken. As an evaluation tool it gives partnerships an opportunity to assess themselves against a set of key criteria covering key aspects of working in partnership. With a section dedicated to the council's involvement in the partnership, the toolkit aims to provide an important means of assessing the costs, risks and opportunities arising from its ongoing contribution and future participation in individual partnerships.
- 1.7 The partnership evaluations undertaken to date are also informing ongoing work to establish effective partnership governance arrangements within individual partnerships and the council which are currently underdeveloped and inconsistent. So far this has led to the production of risk registers within partnerships and for the more significant risks/opportunities to be incorporated within the council's strategic risk register, and the development of a Code of Practice for Working in Partnerships which seeks to provide a corporate framework for effectively engaging with, and entering into, new partnerships.
- 1.8 As part of developing effective partnership, governance and performance management work is also underway to establish a mechanism for key partnerships to produce an annual report on their activities incorporating assurances on their systems and processes as part of the overall governance framework. Details from this annual report as well as outcomes from partnership evaluations will be incorporated within a register (database) which, once established, will provide a central point of reference of the council's partnerships and provide a mechanism to ensure that they are, and remain, relevant to the successful delivery of priorities and objectives.

## **2.0 Proposal Details**

- 2.1 Since the 1st April 2010, the newly formed Community Engagement Service within the Council has included a section dealing specifically with partnerships, and it seems appropriate that the further development of this area of work is undertaken by this team subject to the availability of resources.
- 2.2 It would therefore seem appropriate for this Committee to encourage the use of the SfE Protocol as this work develops, and for any progress or issues to be reported back as appropriate.

## **3.0 Details of Consultation**

- 3.1 There has been no consultation, other than with the Assistant Head of Community Engagements (Partnerships).

<p><b>CONCLUSION OF IMPACT ASSESSMENT</b> <b>(including Diversity, Human Rights, Community Safety, Sustainability and Rural Proofing)</b></p>
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<p>None arising from this report.</p>
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**FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

None directly arising from this report. The work would be carried out as and when staff resources are available.

**SECTION 151 OFFICER'S COMMENTS**

The Section 151 Officer has been consulted and has no further comments.

**LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

None directly arising from this report.

**MONITORING OFFICER'S COMMENTS**

The report has been prepared by the Monitoring Officer in her capacity as adviser to the Standards Committee.

**BACKGROUND PAPERS**

None

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