

BUDGET & PERFORMANCE PANEL

Partnership Mapping & Evaluation

24 February 2009

Corporate Director (Finance & Performance)

PURPOSE OF REPORT

To inform Members of progress made in undertaking a 'mapping' exercise to determine the number, type and purpose of partnerships that the Council is involved in, and the ongoing development of a framework for evaluating and monitoring partnership performance and effectiveness.

This report is public

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1. That progress on the mapping and evaluation of partnerships be noted**
- 2. That the Budget & Performance Panel endorse the evaluation during 2009/10 of the eight significant partnerships identified in the report.**
- 3. That the results and outcomes arising from the completed evaluations be reported to the Budget & Performance Panel for consideration and scrutiny.**

1 Introduction

- 1.1 In July 2008, members of the Panel considered proposed actions to strengthen performance management in relation to partnerships and to introduce a framework for reviewing and evaluating the effectiveness of partnerships and the Council's involvement in them.
- 1.2 The Panel supported recommendations relating to:
 - the adoption of a corporate definition of what this Council means by a 'partnership' and the types of partnership covered by that definition;
 - the use of tools and techniques for the purpose of identifying (or 'mapping') the number and types of partnership within the adopted definition, and to evaluate the effectiveness of those partnerships considered to be of 'major' significance to the Council in achieving corporate objectives and priorities; and;
 - the Budget and Performance Panel being responsible for the future scrutiny of the effectiveness of partnership working.
- 1.3 The proposed definition and evaluation tools and techniques were subsequently approved by the Individual Cabinet Member with responsibility for Rural Areas, Performance Management and Efficiency in August 2008 and in September 2008, following Council approval, the Budget and Performance Panel were formally given responsibility for the overview and scrutiny of the Council's partnerships and their terms of reference amended accordingly.
- 1.4 In October 2008, a project team lead by the Corporate Director (Finance and Performance) was set up to undertake the partnership mapping and evaluation work and to develop a framework for partnership performance monitoring and evaluation. This report sets out the progress made to date and the plans being made for the coming months and in 2009/10 to evaluate the effectiveness and performance of eight partnerships identified as being of 'major' significance to the Council.

2 Progress to date

- 2.1 Several key benefits arising from the core objective of the project have been identified including successful application of the partnership performance framework which will '*...provide a clear vision of individual partnerships and their intended outcomes for citizens and service users, and information needed to make best use of resources, value for money and efficiencies.*'
- 2.2 During December 2008, the Project Manager and other members of the project team met with all Service Heads and other lead officers involved in partnership working. The approach taken during the mapping exercise has successfully produced an up-to-date list of Council partnerships (59 compared to an original list of 128) which meet the adopted definition and which have been categorised into relevant types of partnership
- 2.3 Using a simple scoring mechanism, known as the *Partnership Assessment Scorecard (PAS)*, the level of 'significance' (Limited/Moderate/Major) of each partnership towards the achievement of corporate objectives and priorities has been determined. This will facilitate a means of determining an appropriate level of treatment of each partnership which reflects its impact on the Council's overall service planning and delivery arrangements.
- 2.4 The mapping exercise has been widely welcomed by Service Heads/lead officers who consider the scores produced to be an accurate reflection of the impact and importance of individual partnerships against key aspects of partnership working, such as value for money, risk management and governance arrangements.
- 2.5 Of the 59 partnerships identified, 23 have been scored as being of 'major' significance to the Council, 21 as 'moderate' and 15 with a 'limited' significance (See Appendix A)
- 2.6 Running concurrently with the mapping exercise has been a pilot study of the *Partnership Development and Evaluation Toolkit* (the toolkit) aimed at testing its robustness and effectiveness in practice and as a means of informing the ongoing development of the partnership performance framework.
- 2.7 The pilot has been undertaken by the Community Safety and Museums partnerships. Although these have yet to be fully assessed, initial feedback has been very positive in that the toolkit has enabled each partnership to assess how effective current working arrangements are, identifying in the process, activities that they do well and other areas where improvements can be made.

3 Forward Plan

- 3.1 Over the coming months a number of tasks will be undertaken by the project team, including the compilation of a register/database of all the partnerships identified which will provide a central point of reference about their activities, purpose, governance and overall performance.
- 3.2 In the future this register should help to inform decision making regarding the Council's continuing involvement in individual partnerships and the budget process, as well as provide a means of ensuring that major partnerships annually report on their overall effectiveness through assurance statements in support of the Council's Governance Statement.
- 3.3 Informed by the results of the mapping exercise and knowledge of individual partnerships purpose and objectives, the project team have identified a possible eight partnerships (highlighted in Appendix A) to be evaluated during 2009/10. The eight recommended have subsequently been considered and endorsed by the Performance Management Group and Corporate Management Team.
- 3.4 It is suggested that outcomes/action plans arising from the completed evaluations be considered by the Performance Management Group and subsequently reported to the Budget and Performance Panel for scrutiny.

4 Conclusion

- 4.1 The project has made a good start and is considered to be 'on track' in terms of the forecasted delivery of the perceived benefits, based on the positive feedback and results arising from the mapping exercise, and the experience of the pilot studies testing the effectiveness and usefulness of the *Partnership Development and Evaluation Toolkit*.
- 4.2 It is clear, however, that a lot more has yet to be done to develop and firmly establish a corporate framework for working in partnership and for assessing partnership performance, including that of the Council itself. A further report on progress, and outcomes from the partnership evaluations will be submitted to the Budget & Performance Panel during 2009/10.
- 4.3 In the longer term, corporate establishment of the partnership performance framework will demonstrate that the Council's partnerships embed risk management as part of their arrangements for setting priorities, policy making, financial planning and performance management, all of which are key aspects of the external use of Resources and Comprehensive Area Assessment inspections.

RELATIONSHIP TO POLICY FRAMEWORK

Effective partnership working and the Council's responsibility to provide vision and leadership to local partnerships is a key component of the Council's corporate plan. Strengthening performance management of partnerships is a corporate priority for the Council during 2008/09.

CONCLUSION OF IMPACT ASSESSMENT

(including Diversity, Human Rights, Community Safety, Sustainability and Rural Proofing)

None identified arising from this report

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

None as a direct result of this report, although as work progresses there will be a need to develop effective links with the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) and supporting processes to ensure that key financial implications and risks arising from service delivery through working in partnership are reflected and addressed within the Council's existing financial planning arrangements

SECTION 151 OFFICER'S COMMENTS

The Section 151 Officer has been consulted and has highlighted the need to ensure that as the partnership framework becomes established there will be a need to update the Council's Financial Regulations and Procedures and Contract Procedure Rules as appropriate.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no legal implications directly arising from this report.

MONITORING OFFICER'S COMMENTS

The Monitoring Officer has been consulted and as no further comments

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Partnership mapping and evaluation project documentation

Contact Officer: Robert Bailey

Telephone: 01524 582018

E-mail: rbailey@lancaster.gov.uk

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