

BUDGET & PERFORMANCE PANEL

Partnership Evaluations and Governance Arrangements

20 October 2009

Corporate Director (Finance & Performance)

PURPOSE OF REPORT

To inform the Budget & Performance Panel of progress against the agreed work programme for the evaluation of eight major partnerships during 2009/10 and the ongoing work being undertaken to establish a performance management framework for partnerships

This report is public

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1. That Budget & Performance Panel note and comment upon progress against the work programme for 2009/10 and the proposed approach for evaluating key partnerships during 2010/11 and beyond.**
- 2. That Budget & Performance Panel note and comment upon the ongoing plans to develop and establish formal governance and assurance arrangements within partnerships as part of the Council's governance framework.**

1 2009/10 Work Programme

- 1.1 Outcomes and actions arising from the evaluations of the Community Safety and Museums Partnerships, previously reported to the Performance Management Group and the Budget and Performance Panel, have now been considered and approved by each of the partnership boards. Work is currently ongoing to implement agreed actions and monitoring arrangements are in place for progress to be reported to each partnership board.
- 1.2 Outcomes and feedback from the ongoing evaluations of the eight partnerships chosen to be assessed during 2009/10 continue to be positive and indicate that the *Partnership Development and Evaluation Toolkit* continues to provide a valuable opportunity for individual partnerships to identify what they do well and areas where there is scope for further development. One partnership responded that the evaluation was '*an invaluable framework for assessing the partnerships status and a meaningful process through which we can develop*'.
- 1.3 Two partnership evaluations have so far been completed, or are nearing completion – one being a review of the CCTV arrangements in partnership with the Police and the other the Key Cultural Partnership.
- 1.4 Understandably, given that the management and operation of CCTV in the district is a partnership only between the Council and the Lancashire Constabulary, not all questions within the toolkit directly applied. Nevertheless, significant areas of development have been identified, including the need to adopt formal arrangements for reporting on, and being accountable for, the efficiency and effectiveness of the CCTV scheme. Given that the main purpose of CCTV is to reduce crime it has been proposed that arrangements should be formalised within the responsibilities of the Community Safety Partnership.

- 1.5 The evaluation of the Key Cultural partnership has identified a number of risks/opportunities, mainly around their focus, role and purpose, the need for clear objectives and a review of its membership going forward. The evaluation has enabled the partnership to assess, for the first time, its strengths and weaknesses and is considered to be extremely timely given that the strategic role of the Key Cultural Partnership is seen as being a key element in delivering the district Arts Strategy.
- 1.6 The target dates for the commencement of the evaluations of the Luneside East and Shoreline Management Partnerships have slipped due to other work commitments and are now planned to be completed between October and December 2009.
- 1.7 Arrangements for the evaluation of the Lancashire Supporting People Partnership are currently under review as officer involvement in the partnership has recently transferred from Health and Strategic Housing Services to Planning Services (Forward Planning team) the relevant posts for which are currently vacant. Once back to full capacity it is considered 'critical' that the Council re-engages with the supporting people agenda and, specifically, the partnership.
- 1.8 Budget and Performance Panel are asked to endorse the decision of the Performance Management Group to withdraw evaluations of the Lancashire Economic Partnership (LEP) and West End Partnership (WEP) from the work programme on the grounds that the Council is already contributing to an evaluation of the LEP being carried out by the North West Development Agency, and the WEP is no longer receiving administrative support from the Council. Instead of receiving our own evaluation reports on these two partnerships, the Council will receive a copy of the NWDA evaluation report on the LEP and also an end of project report in respect of the WEP.

2 Work Programme 2010 onwards

- 2.1 As has been previously reported to PMG the mapping exercise identified the number and type of partnerships the Council was involved in and provided a basis for determining the level of 'significance' of each partnership towards the achievement of council priorities and objectives and service planning and delivery. This exercise identified 23 partnerships being of 'major' significance to the council, 21 as moderate and 15 with a limited level of significance.
- 2.2 The initial intention was to undertake an evaluation of all partnerships of a major and moderate significance level - the eight partnerships selected for review during 2009/10 being the first of these. Experience from the evaluations to date together with further consideration of the ongoing development of the partnership performance management framework suggests that the most effective approach would be to evaluate **only** those partnerships that have a direct involvement in delivering local priorities arising from the Sustainable Community Strategy and the Council's corporate plan – the majority of which are, in fact, partnerships assessed as having a major level of significance in achieving the council's priorities.
- 2.3 Whilst recognising the value of partnerships that involve the Council in developing relationships and networking with other partners, the proposed approach will enable resources to be concentrated on the evaluation of key partnerships – which potentially carry higher risks - to be built into the council's business planning process and their action planning and performance to be monitored through either the Lancaster District Local Strategic Partnership's or the council's Performance Management Frameworks.
- 2.4 Budget and Performance Panel are asked to consider and comment on this proposed approach following which a revised work programme to review these partnerships from 2010 onwards will be developed. For information the list of partnerships indicating their assessed levels of significance is attached, those highlighted being the ones chosen to be evaluated during 2009/10

3 Partnership Governance arrangements

- 3.1 The requirements of Regulation 4 of the Accounts and Audit Regulations and the CIPFA/SOLACE Governance Framework make it clear that the Annual Governance Statement relates to the governance of the 'whole organisation', including its partnership activities.
- 3.2 The council has already put in place a number of basic elements needed for effective partnership governance (as defined by the CIPFA Finance Advisory Network) including:
 - A formally adopted definition of what the Council means by a 'partnership', and the;
 - Undertaking of a review of the council's partnerships to assess which are key to its operations and which are more minor (the mapping exercise) and the production of an updated list of partnerships highlighting key partners
- 3.3 The partnership evaluations undertaken to date are informing the continuing work to develop and establish effective governance standards within individual partnerships and the overall partnership framework, including the production of risk registers and the actions arising from them which are being reviewed by the Risk and Insurance Manager to assess the impact of high level risks and opportunities on service delivery.
- 3.4 The evaluations have also highlighted underdeveloped and inconsistent governance arrangements within partnerships. In view of this, the Partnership Mapping and Evaluation Team are developing a Code of Practice for Working in Partnerships which seeks to provide a corporate framework for engaging with, and entering into, new partnerships. The Code includes a checklist for assessing the need for a partnership arrangement and the elements that need to be in place to develop a successful partnership, and a suggested format/template for a formal partnership agreement that must be signed by all partners before any commitment to the partnership is entered into and a procedure for obtaining approval for the council to enter into a partnership. For existing partnerships the Code provides an opportunity for them to review their governance arrangements.
- 3.5 The Code should be completed in time to be considered by the Performance Management Group in November and will, in the future, be supported by other standard policies and processes that partnerships may adopt to save them time and concerns in developing their own and which should simplify any review of partnership governance arrangements.
- 3.6 Also under development, is a register (database) that will provide a central point of reference about partnership activities and purpose and their overall governance and performance arrangements. Once established the register should provide a process to ensure that partnerships are (and remain) relevant to the council's priorities and objectives.
- 3.7 A final element that has yet to be fully established is a mechanism for partnerships to provide assurance on their systems and processes in line with the principles of the governance framework. It is suggested that the council's major partnerships should produce an annual report on their activities and that this should incorporate assurances on their governance arrangements and, subject to the views of Budget and Performance Panel, a standard document/template will be developed for this purpose.
- 3.8 In line with their Service Business Plan it is considered that Corporate Strategy should be responsible for maintaining this register and ensuring that the council receives annual reports from its key partnerships about their activities, governance and performance. The views of Budget and Performance Panel are sought.

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.

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 Deputy Section 151 Officer has been consulted and re-iterates the Section 151 Officer's previous comments that there is a need to ensure that as the partnership framework becomes established the Council's Financial Regulations and Procedures and Contract Procedure Rules will need to be updated 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 has no further comments.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Partnership Mapping and Evaluation project documentation

Contact Officer: Robert Bailey

Telephone: 01524 582018

E-mail: rbailey@lancaster.gov.uk

Ref: 07/0735 B&PP report 091020