

BUDGET & PERFORMANCE PANEL

Partnerships

23 October 2012

Report of Assistant Head of Community Engagement (Partnerships)

PURPOSE OF REPORT

This report is to update Budget and Performance Panel on current partnership arrangements and recent developments.

This report is public **delete as appropriate*

RECOMMENDATIONS OF Assistant Head of Community Engagement (Partnerships)

It is recommended that

- (1) **Budget and Performance Panel members note the information provided on the council's current partnership working arrangements**

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The council's Corporate Plan 2012 – 2015 States that "It is recognised that the council is working together more and more with partners, with the community as well as internally across the council. This has become an important way of doing business and is likely to be crucial in delivering local services efficiently, effectively and sustainably in the future. In this context, it can be seen that **Working Together is Partnership** is an increasingly important way of working that cuts across all operational areas and service delivery".
- 1.2 During the last twelve months some significant changes and new developments have taken place which have reinforced the importance of working together but have emphasised the need to ensure that partnership arrangements add value and help to achieve results.

2.0 Partnership arrangements

Local Partnerships

- 2.1 For some years the district had an LSP (Local Strategic Partnership), a very broad structure with a range of governance, thematic, working and special interest groups. Partners across all sectors participated in LSP related groups in a variety of ways.

- 2.2 Where at one time, LSP's were statutory partnerships, this obligation was removed in 2011, providing an opportunity to consider what partnership working arrangements would work best for the district.
- 2.3 In November 2011, the council's Cabinet agreed the approach to partnership working in the future (Minute 57 refers). Reflecting the challenging economic issues and extreme pressures on public sector budgets, it was agreed that partnerships need to be cost effective, purposeful, offer clear added value and have a sharp focus on outcomes to be achieved. Cabinet agreed that partnership working was more important than ever but that the time for the LSP had passed.
- 2.4 Following this, in early 2012, the LSP agreed to dissolve and the final event was held very recently to celebrate the achievements of many of the projects.
- 2.5 Partnership arrangements continuing separately into the future are as follows:
- District Children's Trust
 - Community Safety Partnership
 - Health and Well Being Partnership
 - Economy (working with the Chamber of Commerce)
 - Public sector Leader's Group
 - Arts Partnership
 - Community Leader's Group (now Communities Together)
 - Lancaster Area Committee of Parish Council's
 - Voluntary, community and faith sector (developing around existing forums and an infrastructure group)

Working Together with Families

- 2.6 The council is working with Lancashire County Council, other partners and families to develop and deliver an important initiative known as *Working Together with Families*. This initiative will help to support troubled families with complex needs by working with them in a multi agency way. To succeed, the key agencies that would normally be involved will need to work together to communicate with families and to find joint solutions.
- 2.7 The learning from *Working Together with Families* is expected to be valuable in terms of a multi agency approach to many situations in the future.

Partnership Evaluation and Development

- 2.8 Where partnerships are identified as important, the council will wish to ensure that they are efficient and effective. In some cases, the council has specific responsibilities for the management of partnerships.
- 2.9 A mechanism for identifying (mapping) the number and type of partnerships that the Council is involved in and an approach to evaluating the effectiveness and performance of key partnerships has been developed. Principally, this includes a method of assessing the level of '*significance*' of each partnership towards the achievement of corporate priorities and a 'toolkit' aimed at evaluating both the effectiveness of individual partnerships and the Council's involvement in them.
- 2.10 Whilst the toolkit is available to all partnerships, officer support is very limited and will be available to those partnerships that have been identified as

significant and on a prioritised basis.

- 2.11 A database has been created which will provide an overview key partnerships helping the council to achieve its priorities and will afford a means of enabling Budget and Performance Panel to '*scrutinise the performance of the Council's major partnerships*' in line with its Terms of Reference.

Revenues and Benefits Shared Service

- 2.12 The Council entered into a formal shared service arrangement with Preston City Council with effect from 1 July 2011 to provide a Revenues & Benefits service across both city council areas.
- 2.13 A Joint Committee is in place to administer the arrangement, with leader and portfolio holder representation from both Councils. The Committee meets twice per year to review and approve the detailed budget, together with the 3 year business plan, including performance targets.
- 2.14 The shared service arrangement is proving highly successful, operating within budget projections, with the opportunity to create additional savings through previous investment in new technology and software. It has a challenging year ahead, in implementing welfare reforms and any local taxation changes.

3.0 Conclusion

- 3.1 Partnership working is evident across the council's activities and is demonstrated in a number of formal arrangements. The potential to achieve efficiencies in the future by working with partners is likely to be very important.

CONCLUSION OF IMPACT ASSESSMENT (including Diversity, Human Rights, Community Safety, Sustainability and Rural Proofing)
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No direct implications as a result of this report

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

No direct implications as a result of this report

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

No direct implications as a result of this report

OTHER RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

Human Resources:

No direct implications as a result of this report

Information Services:

No direct implications as a result of this report

Property:

No direct implications as a result of this report

Open Spaces:

No direct implications as a result of this report

SECTION 151 OFFICER'S COMMENTS

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

MONITORING OFFICER'S COMMENTS

The Monitoring Officer has been consulted and has no further comments

BACKGROUND PAPERS

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