

REPORT TO BANFF AND BUCHAN AREA COMMITTEE – 2 OCTOBER 2018

REVISED PARTNERSHIP WORKING POLICY

1 Recommendations

The Committee is recommended to:

- 1.1 Discuss the revised Partnership Working Policy and provide comment as appropriate in order to inform the final policy to be approved at November Business Services Committee; and
- 1.2 Note the accompanying Partnership Working Procedure and assessments attached in the appendices.

2 Background / Discussion

- 2.1 The Council's current Partnership Working Policy (the policy) was approved by the Policy and Resources Committee in April 2014.
- 2.2 A review of the policy has been undertaken in adherence to the Policy Review Framework in Part 4A of the Scheme of Governance. The process remains the same but with a new widely accessible internal Register of Partnerships being developed. The policy is attached at Appendix 1.
- 2.3 The policy aims to ensure that any partnership working arrangements that the Council and/or Health & Social Care Partnership (H&SCP) are involved in are in line with the Council's Strategic Priorities and that any risks associated have been mitigated. It is important that partnership arrangements produce benefits that outweigh the costs.
- 2.4 The policy provides a definition for a partnership, which excludes professional bodies and membership organisations, informal networking groups, short life task groups and contractual relationships. The policy requires all services to follow a brief procedure when considering committing the Council or the H&SCP to involvement in a partnership, and also reviewing that involvement on a two-yearly basis. The relevant policy committee must agree to initial involvement in a partnership, and must also agree whether it is appropriate to leave a partnership. The procedure is attached at Appendix 2.
- 2.5 The procedure details that a short partnership assessment and a short risk assessment must be completed before entering the partnership and every two years thereafter. As stated in the procedure, these will be presented at the relevant policy committee with a recommendation on whether to participate in the partnership. If a significant risk is identified due to involvement, an annual report from the partnership must then be presented at the relevant committee and a full risk register must be developed with support from the appropriate Risk Manager. The assessments are attached at Appendix 3.

- 2.6 Statutory partnerships do not require to participate in the policy because of the legislative governance and monitoring arrangements in place however following the procedure associated with the policy would be suggested as best practice.
- 2.7 In order to evidence compliance with the policy, and also to support lead officers to manage involvement in a partnership, a new Register of Partnerships tool is being developed. This is a simple tool that allows recording of information about each review, and is accessible to all officers in all services. The Council's Policy, Performance and Improvement Team will provide a supporting role in ensuring services can adhere to the policy. Heads of Service have been requested to provide details of partnerships that their service is currently involved in.
- 2.8 Comments received from area committees will be considered and incorporated into the report considered by Business Services Committee in November seeking policy approval.
- 2.9 The Finance and Monitoring Officer for Banff and Buchan Area Committee have been consulted in the preparation of this report and their comments are incorporated within the report and are satisfied that the report complies with the Scheme of Governance and relevant legislation.

3 Scheme of Governance

- 3.1 The Committee is able to consider [and take a decision on] this item in terms of Section B.1.2 of Part 2A of the Scheme Governance which allows it to consider, comment on, make recommendations to any other appropriate Committee on any matter or policy which impacts their Area.

4 Implications and Risk

- 4.1 An equality impact assessment has been carried out as part of the development of the proposals set out above. It is included as Appendix 4 and no impact has been identified.
- 4.2 There are no staffing, financial or Town Centre First Principle implications arising directly from this report.
- 4.3 The following Risks have been identified as relevant to this matter on a Corporate Level:

ACORP005 Working with other organisations (e.g. supply chains, outsourcing, partnership working and commercialisation)

The policy aims to mitigate any risks to the Council of partnership working by ensuring that the aims of the partnership are in alignment with the Council's strategic priorities, and that if a significant risk is posed, then a full risk register will be completed and an annual report taken to committee.

Ritchie Johnson
Director of Business Services

Report prepared by Erin Wood, Policy Officer 13/09/18

Appendix 1

Policy Title

Partnership Working Policy

Summary Table

Policy Status (circle as appropriate)	<i>Approved and finalised</i>
	<i>Subject to consultation</i>
	<i>Draft</i>
Responsible Officer	<i>Erin Wood, Policy Officer, PP&I Team</i>
Policy Sponsor	<i>Amanda Roe, Service Manager, PP&I Team</i>
Authorised by	<i>Business Services Committee</i>
Approval Date	
Review Date	<i>November 2018</i>

1. Policy Statement

The policy provides governance for when the council or Health and Social Care Partnership are committing to participation in a partnership, with the aim of minimising any risk to both. It ensures that there is reduced risk of partnerships being entered into or continuing when they are not aligned with the council's Strategic Priorities. It is recognised that the council works in partnership formally and informally to deliver the priorities for the council and working in partnership should be encouraged as normal business.

2. Scope

The policy applies to all council services and the Health & Social Care Partnership.

For the purposes of this policy, a partnership has:

- an agreed framework for jointly delivering common goals, with
- shared risk and resources, which provide
- identified added value and measurable impact, based on
- shared accountability for outcomes, which cannot be cost effectively obtained in other ways

This excludes:

- professional bodies or membership organisations - representative bodies which could either include a member from each of the 32 local authorities or a body that has members which pay a fee to receive services
- informal networking groups - groups that exist to inform stakeholders with common interests rather than deliver outcomes
- contractual relationships - includes those relationships bound by a Service Level Agreement or similar, or anything procured
- short-life task-and-finish groups – groups which are brought together in the short term to deliver on a task and then cease to meet

Statutory partnerships that the council must participate in are not subject to the terms of this policy. This is where the actual partnership is a statutory one (e.g Health and Social Care Partnership, Community Planning Partnership), rather than a non-statutory partnership being formed to undertake work that is statutory (e.g GIRFEC Partnership facilitating the Children’s Services Plan)

There may be other working relationships that do not fit the partnership definition, and may not adhere to the excluded categories above. In those cases, the Head of Service should determine whether the policy should be followed.

3. Principles

The policy aims to ensure that any partnership working arrangements that the council is involved in are in line with the council’s [Strategic Priorities](#) and that any risks associated have been mitigated.

The decision to enter into a non-statutory partnership must be agreed by the relevant policy committee.

A short partnership assessment and a short risk assessment must be undertaken before joining a partnership and every two years thereafter. It is important that the partnership produces benefits that outweigh its costs, supports the [Council Plan](#) including the strategic priorities, and considers priorities of statutory arrangements such as the Children’s Services Plan, Community Planning, Community Justice and NESTRANS.

A process for the initial assessment and subsequent reviews are detailed in the “Partnership Working Procedure”. This also highlights that an exit strategy should be prepared for when leaving a partnership. A Register of Partnerships has been established to keep a record of all partnerships the council is currently involved in and whether they have adhered to the policy by undertaking regular reviews.

If participation in a partnership is a statutory requirement for the council, the assessments should still be completed as best practice guidance. There is no requirement for a statutory partnership to gain approval from a policy committee

4. Related Links

Partnership Working Procedure
Partnership Working Procedure - Partnership Assessment
Partnership Working Procedure - Risk Assessment
[Aberdeenshire Council Plan 2017-22](#) including strategic priorities

5. Index of Documents

a) Policy

Revision Date	Previous Revision Date	Summary of Changes
12 th September 2018	2014	-Correcting out of date information -Creation of procedure to support brief policy -Register of Partnerships tool to be developed as a log -Process remains broadly similar -Addition of reference to policy covering H&SCP

b) Distribution

Name	Title
Ritchie Johnson	Director of Business Services
Stephen Archer	Director of Infrastructure Services
Laurence Findlay	Director of Education and Children's Services
Adam Coldwells	Chief Officer, Health and Social Care Partnership
Norrie Crichton	Risk Manager

Partnership Working Procedure

1 Procedure

This procedure provides guidance in implementing the council's Partnership Working Policy. The policy also applies to the Health and Social Care Partnership (H&SCP).

Lead officers are defined as those council officers who are the lead for their service's involvement in the partnership concerned, or in some cases, a cross-service lead for the council.

A Register of Partnerships is a tool that will be available for recording compliance with the policy. It is a way to support lead officers to manage involvement in a partnership and can allow the organisation to see if there are existing partnerships with a similar remit that could avoid the unnecessary creation of a new partnership.

All services participating in partnership working arrangements must complete the assessment steps below **however** if participation in a partnership is a statutory requirement for the council, the assessments below are suggested as best practice guidance.

For the avoidance of doubt, the decision to enter into a partnership must be agreed with the relevant policy committee (in the case of the H&SCP this would be the Integration Joint Board) unless, as above, the partnership is a statutory requirement.

2 Definition of Partnership for the Purposes of this Policy

As stated in the Partnership Working Policy, a partnership has:

- an agreed framework for jointly delivering common goals, with
- shared risk and resources, which provide
- identified added value and measurable impact, based on
- shared accountability for outcomes, which cannot be cost effectively obtained in other ways

This excludes:

- professional bodies or membership organisations - representative bodies which could either include a member from each of the 32 local authorities or a body that has members which pay a fee to receive services
- informal networking groups - groups that exist to inform stakeholders with common interests rather than deliver outcomes
- contractual relationships - includes those relationships bound by a Service Level Agreement or similar, or anything procured
- short-life task-and-finish groups – groups which are brought together in the short term to deliver on a task and then cease to meet

Statutory partnerships that the council must participate in are not subject to the terms of this policy.

Heads of Service or Lead Officers can use the guidance above to make a judgement on the nature of the joint working. However, some examples are as follows:

Partnership – Tackling Poverty & Inequalities Partnership; Aberdeenshire Refugee & Asylum Strategic Group

Professional or membership body – Society of Chief Officers of Trading Standards Scotland (SCOTSS)

Informal networking group – Northeast Agricultural Advisory Group (NESAAG)

Short-life task and finish group – Community Planning Partnership Communications Working Group

A partnership should have a document that formally states the conditions for joint working, like a partnership agreement.

3 Joining and Reviewing a Partnership – Partnership Assessment

All lead officers must complete the short Partnership Assessment. This must be done before joining a partnership and every two years thereafter. It is important that the partnership produces benefits that outweigh its costs and supports the Council Plan including the strategic priorities, and considers priorities of statutory arrangements such as Health and Social Care, the Children’s Services Plan, Community Planning, Community Justice and NESTRANS.

The completed Assessment must be uploaded onto the Register of Partnerships tool. The completed Assessment will be presented to the relevant committee to inform its decision on membership of the partnership. The committee will review membership of the partnership every two years.

4 Assessing Risk to the Council / H&SCP – Risk Assessment

The lead officer must complete the short Risk Assessment to assess the level of risk to the council or H&SCP of joining the partnership, and also every two years when reviewing the partnership. If the level of risk is regarded as ‘significant’, then the lead officer must also complete a full risk register in consultation with the appropriate Risk Manager. This will ensure that risk to the council or H&SCP is managed and mitigated where appropriate.

The completed Risk Assessment must also be presented to the relevant committee to inform its decision on membership of the partnership. The result of the Risk Assessment must also be recorded on the Register of Partnerships tool. If a risk register is required, this must also be presented to the policy committee.

5 Annual Report Requirement

Where a partnership's level of risk is highlighted as 'significant' by the Risk Assessment, the lead officer must submit an annual report to the relevant policy committee. The report should contain both financial and performance information for the previous year.

The annual report must be uploaded onto the Register of Partnerships tool.

6 Leaving a Partnership

This section does not apply to statutory partnerships.

The council or H&SCP may wish to leave a partnership when:

- the purpose of the partnership has been served and it is no longer needed
- the partnership has adopted a policy position that conflicts with the council's / H&SCP's to a significant degree and is not resolvable by negotiation
- budget constraints and priorities make it no longer feasible to maintain support for the partnership
- the partnership has failed to achieve its purpose and agreed outcomes

The terms on which the council or H&SCP might leave a partnership will be agreed before the partnership commences. The appropriate committee will make the final decision on whether the council or H&SCP should leave a partnership.

The relevant partnership's governance agreement should make provision for giving notice of intention to leave. Except in urgent or exceptional circumstances, it is good practice for the council to give at least six months and up to one year's notice of its intention to leave a partnership. Members of the partnership will be consulted before any decision is made. The council or H&SCP will seek to minimise any difficulties that arise for partners as a result of its decision to leave the partnership. As well as providing as much notice as possible, this may involve phasing out its funding, accepting some of the liabilities of the partnership, or supporting the partnership to obtain alternative sources of funding.

Start-Up Assessment

Partnership Working Policy - Partnership Assessment

This should be completed every two years as per the terms of the Partnership Working Policy.
 This information will be presented to the relevant policy committee to inform its decision on membership of the partnership

Areas for consideration	Assessment	Comment/Proposed Action
Is the partnership a statutory partnership?	▼	
If yes, please state the legislation in the comment box. (Please continue to go through the assessment for best practice purposes, rather than to assess whether there should be participation in the partnership).		
The partnership has set outcomes or objectives to be achieved	▼	
The partnership's aims and any commitment of budget fit with the council's strategic plan and priorities (http://www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/council-plan)	▼	
The partnership follows the Account Commission's Code on Following the Public Pound / financial regulations and agrees appropriate arrangements for allocating start-up and running costs (http://www.audit-scotland.gov.uk/uploads/docs/report/2004/hr_040311_following_public_pound.pdf)	▼	
The partnership makes links to the CPP's Local Outcomes Improvement Plan priorities where relevant (http://www.ouraberdeenshire.org.uk/our-priorities/local-outcomes-improvement-plan/)	▼	
All other appropriate bodies have been invited to participate in this partnership	▼	
The partnership ensures equality of opportunity for all and complies with statutory duties (equalities, socio-economic, town centres first principle) as required	▼	
The partnership has a document such as an agreement, remit or memorandum of association to define its role, powers and how it carries out its business	▼	
The partnership makes a formal annual report that includes annual accounts and performance to its members and other bodies if necessary	▼	
Appropriate status and voting rights are accorded to the council in the partnership	▼	
Members of the partnership's top-level decision-making group can be recalled by their nominating bodies	▼	
The risks faced by the partnership are shared between partners	▼	
The partnership has a complaints process or agrees to adopt the complaints process of a member organisation	▼	

Start-Up Assessment

Meetings of the partnership's top-level decision-making group are open to the public	▼
The public is entitled to see reports considered by the partnership's top-level decision-making group	▼
Minutes of the partnership's meetings are made publicly available	▼
The partnership's top-level decision-making group has a quorum for meetings	▼
Members of the partnership's top-level decision-making group are appointed for a limited period of time	▼
There are agreed arrangements for dissolving the partnership	▼
There are clear arrangements for the council / H&SCP to exit the partnership	▼
There is a procedure for ensuring members who declare conflicts of interest take no part in decision	▼
The requirements on elected members representing the council on any partnership groups are compatible with the code of conduct for councillors	▼
Cost / Benefit Analysis	Response
Please detail the staffing and financial implications of running the partnership, including those on other council services and partners	
Please state the source of any funding received by the partnership	
Please describe the benefits of council / H&SCP participating in the partnership	
The partnership is sustainable and is the best way of achieving its aims and outcomes	▼

▼

Annual Risk Assessment

Partnership Name:	Completed by:
Date:	

All partnerships must be recorded in the Register of Partnerships on Arcadia
 This table assesses whether your partnership should be recorded as a **significant** partnership requiring a Risk Register (from the Risk Management Team).
 Please enter the score in the last column for the statement which most closely represents your partnership.

Impact No.	Description	Minor (Score 1)	Important (Score 2)	Significant (Score 3)	Major (Score 4)	Score
1	The Council / H&SCP contributes to the partnership by direct funding and/or indirectly through staff resources, work done etc.)	< £10K per annum	£10K to < £50 k per annum	£50K to < £100k per annum	> £100k per annum	
2	The partnership's success is critical to the achievement of one or more of the Council's Strategic Priorities.	Not directly linked to a strategic priority (this needs to be flagged up to the policy committee in this case)	Linked to a strategic priority	Significant contributor to success of a strategic priority	Essential to the achievement of a strategic priority	
3	Failure of the partnership would have an impact on the Council's / H&SCP's reputation.	Threat of adverse comment in local press or the equivalent that Corporate Communications consider to be of material concern to the Council / H&SCP.	Actual adverse comment in local press or the equivalent that Corporate Communications consider to be of material concern to the Council / H&SCP.	Individual press reports in national media that Corporate Communications consider being of material concern to the Council / H&SCP.	Concerted, widespread or recurrent critical coverage of the Council / H&SCP or for a specific event in the media	
4	The extent to which partnership expenditure is controlled by the Council / H&SCP.	The Council / H&SCP has full control over expenditure decisions.	The Council / H&SCP has veto on expenditure decisions.	The Council / H&SCP is a party to expenditure decisions.	The Council / H&SCP has no control over expenditure.	
5	The partnership takes decisions on behalf of or which are binding on the Council / H&SCP	The Partnership does not take decisions on behalf of the Council / H&SCP	The Partnership does not take decisions on behalf of the Council / H&SCP but representatives with decision-making authority attend the partnership and consider and influence its recommendations.	The Partnership does not take decisions on behalf of the Council / H&SCP but representatives with decision-making authority attend the partnership and agree to be bound by its decisions.	The partnership has decision-making responsibilities directly delegated to it from the Council / H&SCP.	
6	The Council / H&SCP has set up the partnership in order to receive additional funding and/or meet Statutory or Regulatory requirement.	Not required by law or to receive funding.	Indirect or limited links to successful achievement of funding.	Direct links to successful achievement of funding.	The Council / H&SCP is required to participate in this partnership by law or to receive specific funding.	
Total Score						0
Maximum Possible Score						24
Impact %						0.00%
Evaluation						Not Significant

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Stage 1: Title and aims of the activity (“activity” is an umbrella term covering policies, procedures, guidance and decisions).	
Service	Business Services
Section	Policy, Performance and Improvement
Title of the activity etc.	Revision of Partnership Working Policy
Aims of the activity	A review of the council’s Partnership Working Policy within the 5 year period. The policy is to ensure that the council enters into partnership working arrangements which are aligned to the strategic priorities and where the benefits outweigh the costs. It involves an internal procedure with the outcome being that the council does or does not participate in a partnership.
Author(s) & Title(s)	Erin Wood, Policy Officer

Stage 2: List the evidence that has been used in this assessment.	
Internal data (customer satisfaction surveys; equality monitoring data; customer complaints).	Collecting information from each service on which partnerships the council is currently involved in
Internal consultation with staff and other services affected.	Legal Team, Risk Management Team, Heads of Service, other officers from economic development and children’s services were consulted on the draft Policy, Procedure, short Partnership Assessment and short Risk Assessment.
External consultation (partner organisations, community groups, and councils).	N/A
External data (census, available statistics).	N/A
Other (general information as appropriate).	N/A

Stage 3: Evidence Gaps.	
Are there any gaps in the information you currently hold?	Comprehensive information on the partnerships that the council is currently involved in. This will be input into a database accessible to all council staff. It is a way to support lead officers to manage involvement in a partnership and can allow the organisation to see if there are existing partnerships with a similar remit that could avoid the unnecessary creation of a new partnership.

Stage 4: Measures to fill the evidence gaps.		
What measures will be taken to fill the information gaps before the activity is implemented? These should be included in the action plan at the back of this form.	Measures:	Timescale:
	Request to Heads of Service to provide this information	By end of September 2018

Stage 5: Are there potential impacts on protected groups? Please complete for each protected group by inserting "yes" in the applicable box/boxes below.				
	Positive	Negative	Neutral	Unknown
Age – Younger	Yes			
Age – Older	Yes			
Disability	Yes			
Race – (includes Gypsy Travellers)	Yes			
Religion or Belief	Yes			
Gender – male/female	Yes			
Pregnancy and maternity	Yes			
Sexual orientation – (includes Lesbian/ Gay/Bisexual)	Yes			
Gender reassignment – (includes Transgender)	Yes			

Marriage and Civil Partnership	Yes			
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Stage 6: What are the positive and negative impacts?

Impacts.	Positive (describe the impact for each of the protected characteristics affected)	Negative (describe the impact for each of the protected characteristics affected)
Please detail the potential positive and/or negative impacts on those with protected characteristics you have highlighted above. Detail the impacts and describe those affected.	All - A risk adverse approach and alignment with council priorities should impact positively on any services the council then provides	

Stage 7: Have any of the affected groups been consulted?

If yes, please give details of how this was done and what the results were. If no, how have you ensured that you can make an informed decision about mitigating steps?	N/A
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Stage 8: What mitigating steps will be taken to remove or reduce negative impacts?

These should be included in any action plan at the back of this form.	Mitigating Steps	Timescale

Stage 9: What steps can be taken to promote good relations between various groups?	
These should be included in the action plan.	N/A

Stage 10: How does the policy/activity create opportunities for advancing equality of opportunity?
The policy ensures that the council is entering into partnerships where the activity is aligned to the council's Strategic Priorities, therefore, will advance equality of opportunity as guided by the priorities.

Stage 11: What equality monitoring arrangements will be put in place? How the EIA will be used to monitor the proposal	
These should be included in any action plan (for example customer satisfaction questionnaires).	N/A

Stage 12: What is the outcome of the Assessment?		
Please complete the appropriate box/boxes	1	No negative impacts have been identified –please explain.
	The policy is to ensure that the council enters into partnership working arrangements which are aligned to the strategic priorities and where the benefits outweigh the costs. This means that due to a more informed decision making process around partnerships there should be a positive impact on the council. Therefore, a positive impact on the services it delivers to communities in general, and following that, on those with protected characteristics. The policy involves an internal procedure with the outcome being that the council does or does not participate in a partnership.	
	2	Negative Impacts have been identified, these can be mitigated - please explain. * Please fill in Stage 13 if this option is chosen.
	3	The activity will have negative impacts which cannot be mitigated fully – please explain. * Please fill in Stage 13 if this option is chosen

* Stage 13: Set out the justification that the activity can and should go ahead despite the negative impact.

N/A

Stage 14: Sign off and authorisation.

Sign off and authorisation.	1) Service and Team	Business Services, CC&I, Policy, Performance and Improvement Team		
	2) Title of Policy/Activity	Partnership Working Policy (if appropriate)		
	3) Authors: I/We have completed the equality impact assessment for this policy/activity.	Name: Erin Wood Position: Policy Officer Date: 29/08/18 Signature:	Name: Position: Date: Signature:	
		Name: Position: Date: Signature:	Name: Position: Date: Signature:	
	4) Consultation with Service Manager	Name: Amanda Roe Date: 30/08/18		
	5) Authorisation by Director or Head of Service	Name: Position: Date:	Name: Position: Date:	
	6) If the EIA relates to a matter that has to go before a Committee, Committee report author sends the Committee Report and this form, and any supporting assessment documents, to the Officers responsible for monitoring and the Committee Officer of the relevant Committee. e.g. Social Work and Housing Committee.	Date:		
	7) EIA author sends a copy of the finalised form to: equalities@aberdeenshire.gov.uk	Date:		
(Equalities team to complete) Has the completed form been published on the website? YES/NO			Date:	

