

North Yorkshire Strategic Partnership - Executive

8 January 2009

Partnerships Governance

1 Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To inform the NYSP Executive of work underway within NYCC to develop a framework which will assist in self-assessment and action planning around partnerships governance.
- 1.2 To seek the support of NYSP Executive members in progressing action planning arising from the self-assessment across a range of partnerships in 2009.

2 Background

- 2.1 The growing importance of partnership working to deliver the objectives of the County Council and other statutory and non statutory agencies has, over the last few years, led to an increase in the number and complexity of those partnerships. Many of these partnerships involve the same statutory and voluntary partners and many partnerships are in fact linked to or directly stem from the North Yorkshire Strategic Partnership (NYSP) itself.
- 2.2 With this growing importance comes a need to ensure that we have good governance in place to ensure these partnerships successfully deliver the outcomes sought, and do so in a way that is managed effectively, and recognises the potential risks that arise from this way of working.
- 2.3 The need to carry out an assessment, and where necessary implement improvement action, is reinforced by the increased prominence given to these matters by the Audit Commission in setting the framework for the Use of Resources Assessment. This will continue into the new CAA arrangements, and will be an important issue for the overall area assessment across different agencies and partnerships.
- 2.4 In response to these developments, and bearing in mind that partnerships vary widely in terms of the degree of 'formality' around their governance arrangements and structures, the County Council developed some initial Partnership Guidance in 2006 which set out best practice on a range of partnership issues and formed a self assessment framework against which it would be possible to gauge the current state of their development. However, this was not launched formally at the time and hence has not been used systematically across existing or new partnerships.
- 2.5 During 2008, therefore, the County Council identified the need for a comprehensive overview of all partnerships in which it has some involvement, to evaluate the status of their development. There has also been an identified gap around having a comprehensive and up-to-date list of all partnerships.

3 Partnerships Governance Pilot

- 3.1 With the aim of developing this earlier work into a more rounded and cohesive approach, a pilot project was initiated within NYCC during summer 2008, taking as its initial focus the review and development of this early partnerships guidance. In parallel with the review of the guidance, an online toolkit was developed to aid self-assessment. One of the outputs of the toolkit is to generate a draft improvement action plan. A Steering Group was formed to test both the guidance and the toolkit. Representatives were selected from across different directorates within NYCC who were involved on a mix of partnerships of a strategic or operational nature. These were:
- the North Yorkshire Strategic Partnership (focussing on the Executive and Partnership components);
 - the Children and Young People’s Strategic Partnership;
 - the “95 Alive” Road Safety Partnership; and
 - the Supporting People partnership.
- 3.2 This first stage of the work was a self assessment, from the NYCC perspective, of matters that may need to be developed in these partnerships. If these matters are to be progressed, however, there will be a need for all partners involved to work together to agree and prioritise any improvement action. A similar approach will be needed as the assessment is rolled out to other partnerships.
- 3.3 This suggests a collaborative approach to developing these approved governance arrangements would be the best way forward. This can then tie in with any similar pieces of self assessment work being carried out elsewhere on other partnerships.
- 3.4 In respect of the pilot areas, the Steering Group concluded that the approach adopted is useful as a self assessment tool and a way of commencing action planning for improvement. A few usability issues were identified within the online toolkit which have now been resolved and the guidance has been updated to include revised wording where it was identified that this was required. Appendix 1 illustrates the headline issues contained within the revised partnerships guidance.
- 3.5 Once action plans were generated for the above partnerships, much of the capacity required to take things forward was found to centre around identifying and developing protocols to deal with any gaps in governance arrangements (e.g. Terms of Reference). The scope of these tasks and the capacity required to support the workload has been very difficult to measure, due largely to the disparate nature of the partnerships involved and the degree to which each already had formal governance arrangements in place. The key next step will be the sharing of initial conclusions from the self assessment with partners, and gaining acceptance of the need to develop approaches and protocols to deal with any governance gaps that have been identified.

4 Engagement of NYSP Partners

- 4.1 Arising from the pilot, the NYCC Management Board has set a timetable for rollout of the self assessment process based on a risk assessment model, which will aim to prioritise work on those partnerships which are of most strategic importance in terms of delivering service outcomes, and also those partnerships that carry significant levels of risk; financial or otherwise.
- 4.2 As highlighted above, many of the most significant partnerships in which NYCC is involved come within the umbrella of the NYSP and the Thematic Partnerships. The same partners within the statutory and voluntary sector appear consistently across the many individual partnerships in place. Critical to the implementation of the approach will be the engagement of NYSP partners within their respective partnerships and the commitment of all partners to supporting the action planning process.
- 4.3 Attached at Appendix 2 is a draft list of current partnerships. This is currently being considered by Directorates, and there will still be gaps in this list and hence it is currently a work in progress. An updated list will be presented at the meeting, and any further comments on completeness will be welcome.
- 4.4 The intention is that implementation of the governance framework within NYCC will be led by Steering Group members from mid-January 2009. They will provide training and familiarisation around the guidance and toolkit with NYCC lead officers from partnerships starting with those judged high risk in the risk assessment process. Following this, the partnership officers will be able to carry out their assessments and develop an action plan to identify shortfalls in governance arrangements and where protocols and approaches could be developed. From April 2009, it is then proposed that key strategic partners to these partnerships are engaged for their input into agreeing and progressing the action plans.
- 4.4 Clearly there is a shared benefit to all organisations involved in partnerships, to be assured that appropriate governance arrangements are in place. In particular, it should be noted that NYCC will not be the lead or accountable body in all cases. If the approach is to be successful, therefore, it is critical to achieve a consensus agreement of all NYSP Executive partners to progressing this work within their respective partnerships next year. Agreement of NYSP Executive Members is sought to progress this work within their organisations, and identifying the officers and resources to support the assessment work and the implementation of any improvement action required

5 Actions Arising for Consideration by the NYSP

- 5.1 The intention would be to report to the next NYSP Executive in April 2009, by which time further information should be available from the assessment work noted above.

6.0 Recommendations

That NYSP Executive members:

- 6.1 agree to support the progress of work arising from governance assessments in 2009 across all partnerships;
- 6.2 receive a further report at their April meeting; and
- 6.3 make any comments on the completeness of the draft list of partnerships at Appendix 2.

7 Appendices

- 7.1 Appendix 1 – Headline issues from current draft of Partnerships Guidance
- 7.2 Appendix 2 – Draft List of Key Partnerships as at December 2008

Geoff Wall
Assistant Director – Projects / Chair of Partnerships Pilot Steering Group
North Yorkshire County Council

Diane Parsons
Senior Policy and Partnerships Officer
North Yorkshire County Council

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Appendix 1 – Headline issues from current draft of Partnerships Guidance

The Partnerships Guidance poses a series of questions about a variety of aspects of a specific partnership and gives related advice for improving the effectiveness of the working arrangements of the partnership. The guidance is written in the context of NYCC's involvement in a partnership. It is arranged to give advice on best practice across the following key areas. Questions posed within the guidance are outlined below:

1. The Partnership's Raison D' Être and NYCC's Involvement
 - Has an appraisal been undertaken to establish whether the proposed partnership is an effective vehicle for delivering the required services/objectives?
 - Does the partnership have a clearly stated long-term aim or purpose that is agreed by partnership members?
 - Have designated NYCC contacts for the partnership been identified at officer, Corporate Director and Member (if appropriate) levels as well as in relation to any specific roles undertaken by NYCC (e.g. Accountable Body)?
 - Has NYCC appraised and approved its involvement in the partnership?

2. The Partnership's Corporate Governance Arrangements
 - Does the partnership have a constitution or similar document to govern decision-making?
 - Does the partnership have an agreed membership and procedures for altering its membership?
 - Does the partnership have a defined structure and scheme of delegation?
 - Does the partnership have agreed decision-making procedures?
 - Does the partnership have procedures for the appointment of key officers/posts – e.g. Chair, Treasurer, Secretary, Auditor?
 - Does the partnership have a written agreement of roles and responsibilities of the individual partners?
 - Does the partnership have in place procedures for altering its arrangements, objectives etc?
 - Does the partnership have agreed procedures for dealing with conflicts of interest?
 - Does the partnership have agreed procedures for dealing with disputes?
 - Does the partnership have a joint complaints procedure?
 - Does the partnership undertake regular risk assessments and allocations?
 - Has the partnership assessed its need for professional support and put in place formal arrangements for the provision of this support (includes Legal, Financial, HR, Operational, Property, IT etc)?

3. The Partnership's Interaction with the County Council's Decision-Making Arrangements
 - Have any powers of the County Council been delegated in relation to the partnership – whether to the partnership, individual County Council officers or individual members?
 - Could any decisions made by the partnership set or influence the Council's policy framework?
 - Will the partnership make recommendations to the Council?
 - Have any operational or financial implications of the partnership's planned activities been reflected in relevant plans prepared by the County Council?
 - Will County Councillors sit on the partnership?

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- Will the partnership have its own code of conduct for members of the partnership?
 - Are arrangements in place to ensure that Members of the County Council involved in the partnership are fully inducted?
 - Will decisions be made by Members or County Council officers on behalf of the partnership?
4. The Effectiveness of the Partnership
- Has the partnership established systems for collecting, evidencing and utilising performance management information for its activities?
 - Has the partnership established an application, appraisal and approval procedure for proposed projects or activities?
 - Has the partnership established a process for monitoring and reporting on the performance of approved projects or activities?
5. The Partnership's Human Resources Arrangements
- Will the partnership require dedicated 'partnership' staff in order to carry out its activities?
 - Will the partnership be dealing with "new" roles or posts?
 - Is it possible that staff will be seconded or transferred to/from NYCC in order to carry out partnership activities?
 - Are there arrangements/policies/principles in place in relation to the employment of staff?
 - Are individuals currently employed by NYCC likely to have changes to their current role, terms and conditions or arrangements?
 - Have decisions/plans been made as to what will happen to the roles/posts if/when the partnership ends?
 - Is it likely that the partnership will utilise volunteers in order to carry out partnership activities?
6. The Partnership's Funding and Financial Arrangements
- Will the partnership undertake financial activity?
 - Will NYCC have a significant role in the partnership? For example will it:
 - have the role of accountable body, treasurer or have overall responsibility for the finances of the partnership
 - undertake the role of lead agency or has overall responsibility for the operational management of the partnership
 - have responsibility for the delivery of individual projects or specific aspects of the partnership's activity
 - Has the partnership approved a set of financial regulations?
 - Does the partnership have in place detailed guidance on financial procedures and processes?
 - Has the partnership made arrangements for complying with the terms and conditions attached to its various funding streams?
 - Has the partnership made arrangements for ensuring that the overall funding package is in place and is comprehensive, congruent and supports the partnership's aims and objectives?
 - Does the partnership have procedures for reviewing and reporting on its financial performance and linking this to the operational performance of the partnership?
 - Has the partnership made arrangements for the internal and external audit of its finances and activities?
 - Has the partnership established that its activities are conducted in accordance with VAT regulations?

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- If NYCC does not play a major role in the financial management of the partnership, has the NYCC representative on the partnership satisfied themselves that sound financial arrangements are in place for the management of the partnership and its activities?

7. Other Operational Issues

- Does the Partnership have agreed arrangements for holding meetings, setting agendas, recording minutes, distributing agendas, reports and minutes and publishing information etc?
- Will the partnership publish minutes, reports or other written material (other than press releases)?
- Will any published material be published in the name of NYCC?
- Will NYCC be able to approve all documents before they are sent out?
- Will the partnership make statements to the press?
- Will these statements be prepared by the County Council's Communications Unit?
- Will statements be expressed as being those of the whole partnership or an individual partner?
- Does the partnership have agreed reporting protocols and procedures?
- Has the partnership considered the implications of, and put in place arrangements to comply with, Data Protection legislation?
- Has the partnership considered the implications of, and put in place arrangements to comply with, Freedom of Information legislation?
- Has the partnership considered the implications of, and put in place arrangements to comply with, Equalities requirements?
- Does the partnership have adequate procedures to ensure children and vulnerable adults are protected?
- Has the partnership assessed its need for the utilisation of fixed assets, and put in place arrangements for providing and managing the required fixed assets?

8. The Partnership's Exit Planning and Arrangements

- Are events that could trigger the winding up of the partnership documented within the partnership procedures?
- Has the partnership agreed procedures that will be used for winding up the partnership?
- Has the partnership identified and allocated to partners what the residual responsibilities of the partnership will be?
- Has the partnership established wind-up and continuing funding requirements including identifying sources of funding?
- Has the partnership made arrangements for retaining and/or distributing the "results" of the partnership's activities (Best Practice, Management Information, VFM Reports etc)?
- Has the partnership planned an exit review/appraisal against partnership's purpose and targets?

The guidance is reflected in the structure of an online toolkit. An assessment of the partnerships development against these best practice guidelines then leads to the generation of a draft action plan which commences the process of working with partners to identify gaps in governance arrangements and whether particular protocols or approaches need to be developed.

Appendix 2 - Draft List of Key Partnerships as at December 2008

The bulk of the list is divided for convenience into groups that align with the NYSP and its six thematic partnerships, plus an 'others' list. Some partnerships have key relationships with more than one NYSP thematic partnerships, but are only listed under one area to avoid duplication. Placing of a partnership in a group does not imply that it reports (or should report) to that thematic partnership.

A brief risk assessment (financial risk, reputation risk and service delivery risk) will be required for each partnership to prioritise use of the partnership governance toolkit.

Strategic Partnerships

NYSP – Partnership and Executive

Craven Local Strategic Partnership

Hambleton Strategic Partnership

Harrogate District Strategic Partnership

Richmondshire Local Strategic Partnership

Ryedale Strategic Partnership

North Yorkshire Coast Community Partnership

Selby Local Strategic Partnership

Adult Services

NYSP Adult Services Partnership

Older People's Partnership Board

Physical and Sensory Impairment Partnership Board

(Adults) Workforce Planning Partnership Group

Safeguarding Adults Board

Craven and Harrogate Learning Disabilities Partnership Board

Hambleton and Richmondshire Learning Disabilities Partnership Board

Scarborough, Whitby and Ryedale Learning Disabilities Partnership Board

Selby Learning Disabilities Partnership Board

Children and Young People

NYSP Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership

Local Safeguarding Children's Board

Early Years and Childcare Partnership

Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services Steering Group
Play Partnerships (seven - one per district)
Youth Offending Team
School Sports Partnerships (NY and District)

There are also a number of 'sub-partnerships' that report directly to the Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership:

- *Multi-agency Looked After Children Partnership (MALAP)*
- *Behaviour and Attendance Partnerships*
- *Strategic Commissioning Group of 14-19 Partnership*

Healthier Communities

NYSP Healthier Communities Thematic Partnership
North Yorkshire Sports Partnership
Teenage Pregnancy Strategy Group

Safer Communities Forum

York & North Yorkshire Safer Communities Forum
Safer Craven Community Partnership
Hambleton Community Safety Partnership
Harrogate & District Safer Communities Partnership
Richmondshire Community Safety Partnership
Safer Ryedale Partnership
North Yorkshire Moors and Cost Safer Communities Partnership
Selby District Community Safety Partnership
Domestic Abuse JCG
Violent Crime JCG
Alcohol JCG
95 Alive
North Yorkshire Drug Action Team
Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA)

Stronger Communities

NYSP Stronger / Rural Partnership
NY Access to Services Steering Group
Rural Transport Partnership

Economic Development

York and North Yorkshire Development Board / Partnership Executive / Partnership Unit
North Yorkshire Market Town Forum (?)

York and North Yorkshire Inward Investment Board
NY Learning Partnership (plus 6 area partnerships)

Other Partnerships

Supporting People

North Yorkshire and York Strategic Housing Board

NY Local Resilience Forum

Highways North Yorkshire partnership

NY Local Sites Partnership

NY Cultural Partnership

York and North Yorkshire Waste Management Partnership

York and North Yorkshire Waste PFI partnership

Howardian Hills AONB

Nidderdale AONB

Forest of Bowland AONB