

North Yorkshire Strategic Partnership - Executive**30 April 2009****Partnerships Governance – Update****1 Purpose of the Report**

- 1.1 To update on progress following the report to the meeting of the NYSP Executive in January 2009.

2 Background

- 2.1 At the meeting of the NYSP Executive in January, a report was presented on the approach being taken by the County Council to develop a framework to assist in self assessment and action planning around partnership governance.
- 2.2 Recognising that NYSP partners feature in a number of partnerships in which the County Council is involved, the report recognised the benefit of achieving some commonality in the approach being adopted across different organisations on this matter.
- 2.3 Whilst some concerns were noted around the need for sovereignty of partners, there was general support for the core principles of the County Council framework and it was agreed that following the meeting, NYSP Executive members would review the matter in more detail and feed back comments, as well as sharing information on similar work underway in their individual organisations.
- 2.4 Following the meeting the full text of the draft framework document was circulated to assist in gathering this feedback, and we also requested any comments or additions to the draft list of partnerships attached to the January report.

3 Update on Feedback Received and Further Developments

- 3.1 Feedback was received from the Yorkshire Dales National Park, the Police and three District Councils – Harrogate, Hambleton and Richmondshire.
- 3.2 A general theme emerging from this was a shared acceptance of the importance of the issue, general support for the core principles, but some concern about the practicality and appropriateness of the detailed County Council framework for general application in partners. This linked to a view that the NYCC framework document was a substantial document that might prove too complex for some, at least, of the partnership groupings. The view was that a commensurate approach needed to apply to this work.
- 3.3 The issue around the need for the sovereignty of individual partners was repeated.

- 3.4 The framework document circulated was, initially, developed for internal use by County Council officers in assessing issues for those partnerships involving NYCC. The feedback suggests that this approach should continue. However, no view emerged that it would be helpful to have one framework document that all partners might sign up to. The general acceptance that the core principles are similar to those being adopted elsewhere, echoing the discussion at the January meeting, means that this should not be an obstacle to progressing these matters across partnerships. The responses indicated that other frameworks were already in place that had been developed within organisations. The County Council framework drew heavily on the Audit Commission report "Governing Partnerships – Bridging the Accountability Gap". Harrogate had drawn on the partnership elements of CIPFA guidance on the Annual Governance Statement.
- 3.5 The January report indicated the link between the document as circulated (which is long, in part, because of the "help text" to identify next steps and the availability of corporate advice on relevant issues) and the online toolkit that was tested as part of the pilot and will be available shortly in its live version.
- 3.6 During the pilot, this toolkit proved easy to use and was seen as a useful way of completing the initial self-assessment which could then lead to the development of an action plan, in liaison with the relevant partners, to address any identified need to clarify and/or improve governance arrangements of the particular partnership.
- 3.7 Since the January report, further progress has been made on the risk assessment model across a balanced H/M/L matrix using the following five factors:-
- (i) the **probability** of a governance failure
 - (ii) the degree of the influence on achieving **service objectives**
 - (iii) the level of **financial contribution**
 - (iv) the impact on **service delivery**
 - (v) the impact on **reputation** of a failure in governance.
- 3.8 Within the County Council, Directorates are now starting to apply this to their identified partnerships to identify those partnerships considered to be High Risk; the application of the framework will commence with those identified in this category. In this way, concerns about commensurate application of a governance framework, relative to the risk, should be addressed. Thus, partnerships rated as Low Risk in this process will clearly not require the same degree of formality in the agreement of a governance framework, particularly where the partnership might be described as a consultative, rather than a service delivery partnership.
- 3.9 As part of the feedback, the Yorkshire Dales National Park described their approach to assessing and reviewing their involvement in partnerships. This is described in diagrammatic form in Appendix 1. The approach has been seen as helpful in their context and is included here as something partners may wish to consider in their own organisation, or as a basis of joint assessments.
- 3.10 Further feedback from partners, including identifying key contact names to take forward this work will be welcome.

4 Recommendations

That NYSP Executive Members:

- 4.1 Note progress on this work;
- 4.2 Where necessary, identify key contact names to take forward this work.

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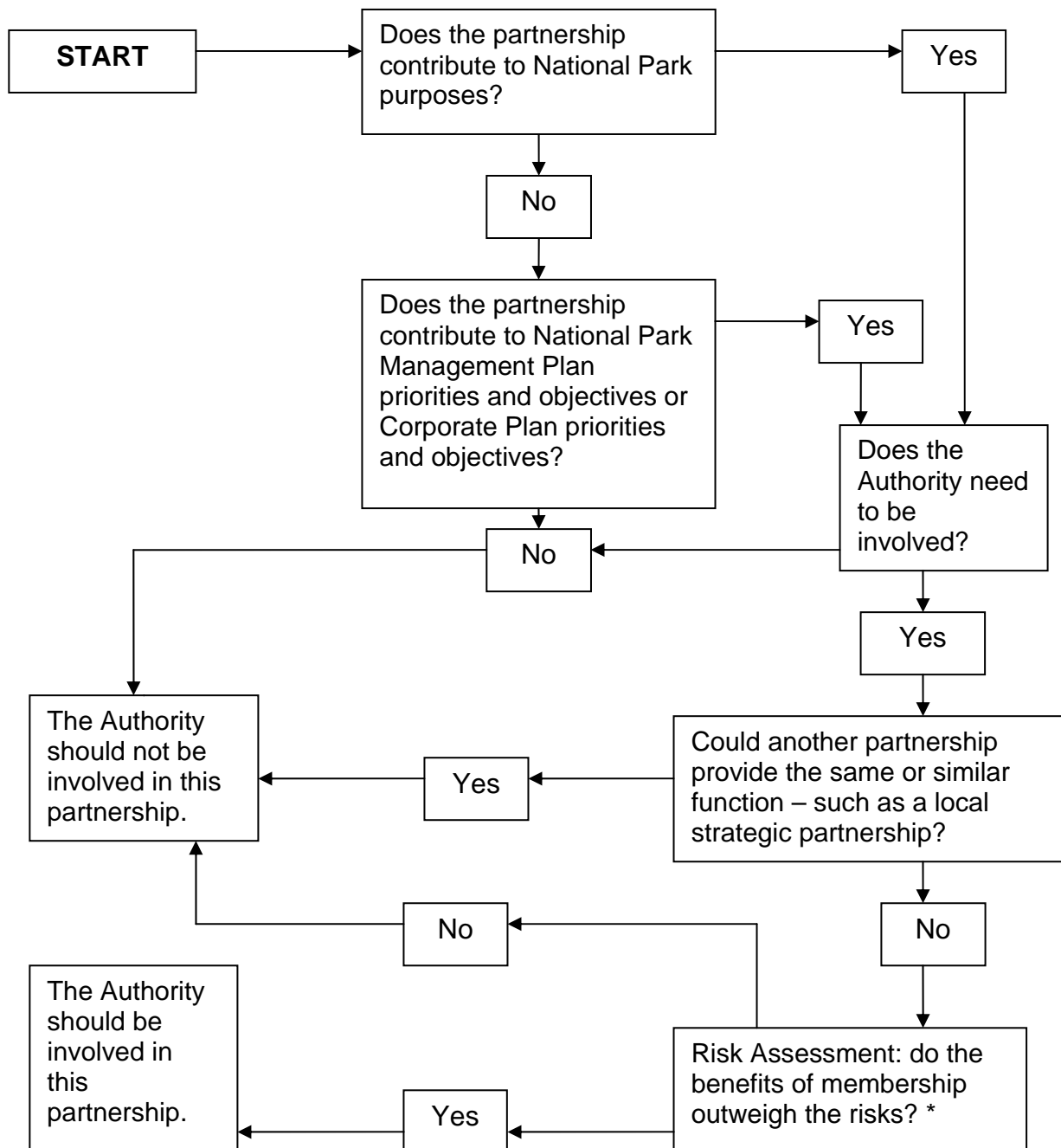
Assistant Director – Projects/Chair of NYCC Partnerships Pilot Steering Group.

3 April 2009

APPENDIX 1

CRITERIA FOR PARTNERSHIPS – FLOWCHART USED BY YORKSHIRE DALES NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

On 10th December 2008, SMT agreed the following criteria to be applied when deciding whether YDNPA should become involved in a partnership, and also in monitoring and reviewing existing partnerships:



NB: No Head of Department should commit the Authority to any new partnership, unless it has appropriate governance arrangements, which are properly documented.

- * This assessment should include consideration of:
1. Does the partnership have clear terms of reference?
 2. Is there an engagement and/or/exit strategy?
 3. Is it a task and finish group with a time limit?