

South Lakeland District Council

Draft Partnerships Guidance 2021

1. Introduction

- 1.1. Partnership working is fundamental to a modern public sector. Now more than ever as funding is squeezed and more and more is asked of us, we need to work with others to get the best from our diminishing resources.
- 1.2. Embarking on a partnership needs careful planning – it should support our strategic objectives, make sound business sense and have the appropriate ‘checks and balances’ in place to ensure the interests and assets of the Council are safeguarded.
- 1.3. This guidance is designed to help managers think through the necessary steps and issues associated with creating a successful partnership and put in place the necessary frameworks to ensure our objectives are met and our efforts are not duplicated.
- 1.4. Partnership working is not an easy fix – it is important that sufficient resource is put into building the case for a partnership and establishing its operation.
- 1.5. There are a number of benefits to partnership working including:
 - Improving communication between staff and managers
 - Better information sharing
 - Easier access to services for users
 - More integrated approach to the delivery of services for users
 - Bringing together different knowledge and skills to address complex problems
 - Greater efficiency or value for money in the use of resources
 - Improving recruitment, retention and morale
 - Additional capacity to plan and develop services
 - Pooling expertise and resources to shape better services
 - Achieving improved outcomes through developing new service models not achievable by a single agency
 - Benchmarking may highlight partnership working as the preferred course of action for a service, and form part of the business case for creating a new partnership. It may also highlight examples of best practice and / or provide valuable information into obstacles which other local authorities have encountered, along with preventative or conciliatory measures.
- 1.6. Although partnership working has its advantages, it is not always a successful form of working. Problems that can arise include a lack of understanding between partners, or a lack of focus on the objectives or results of the partnership.
- 1.7. Unsuccessful partnerships are typically characterised by:
 - A history of conflict among key interests
 - One partner manipulates or dominates
 - Lack of clear purpose
 - Unrealistic goals
 - Differences of philosophy and ways of working
 - Lack of communication
 - Unequal and unacceptable balance of power and control
 - Key interests missing from the partnership
 - Hidden agendas
 - Financial and time commitments outweigh the potential benefits

- 1.8. Before establishing or joining a partnership, due consideration should be given to whether this form of working is right for the prospective members and whether or not the time, resources and efforts required to overcome barriers, such as those listed above, are available. The Commissioning Framework should be used to inform this review and include consideration of:
- 1.8.1. Are there other methods of working which may serve the public better and thus negate the need for a partnership?
 - 1.8.2. Could another delivery approach provide a more successful service or reduce cost and resource input?
 - 1.8.3. What are the methods of other local and near neighbour authorities;
- Findings may determine a more suitable course of action, or highlight cases where partnership working is unsuitable for a particular service.
- 1.9. Does the work involved in maintaining a partnership justifies the added benefits, if any, that are received? In short, consider whether the partnership will add value.
- 1.10. If there is not enough support for the business case, whether there is insufficient supporting evidence or buy in from senior officers / members, do not proceed. Look into alternative approaches – for example joining an existing partnership.

2. Establishing and reviewing partnerships

2.1. Establishing Partnerships

- 2.1.1. There are three main phases to the establishment of a partnership:-
- Feasibility – making the case for the arrangement and convincing partners to join.
 - Entering into the partnerships – creating the formalities of partnership working.
 - Ensuring the partnership works once created – making governance, administrative, financial and operational arrangements work in practice.
- 2.1.2. You should complete the attached template either during or after the initial feasibility phase and table it for consideration at Corporate Management Team (CMT). A copy should also be forwarded to the Finance Lead Specialist to enter onto the system for future retention.
- 2.1.3. The setting up of a new partnership is a project in itself and should be planned, following the corporate project management documentation which will cover many of the issues in the template.

2.2. Reviewing existing partnerships

- 2.2.1. The template should be used to undertake a full three-yearly review (by 31st March each year) and an annual check, by the relevant Operational Lead or Lead Specialist, of all “significant partnerships” and at appropriate & relevant points for other partnerships. Following a review of the partnership, an improvement plan should be developed, if appropriate and approved/monitored by the relevant Board. A significant partnership is defined as those which;
- We estimate the total contribution of resources from the Council, over three years, will be over £150,000; and/or
 - We estimate the combined “turnover” of the partnership over three years will be greater than £500,000; and/or

- The aims/objectives of the partnership are central to the delivery of any aspect of the Council and its Plans;
- The aims/objectives of the partnership are considered to be of political significance by the responsible Director.

2.2.2. Where a partnership is a sub-group of another partnership, this will not be deemed to be a significant partnership in its own right.

3. What is a Partnership?

- 3.1. For the purposes of this exercise, a partnership can be any arrangement between two or more bodies (public or private) which come together for their mutual benefit and that of the community.
- 3.2. It could be a traditional way of joint working between Local Authorities such as a Joint Committee or it could be a new entity such as a company with partner involvement. It could have a charitable element. It could also be simply an informal arrangement such as an officer working group. What the Template is not intended to cover is a traditional client/contactor relationship for the provision of works, goods or services, in effect a contract.

4. How to use the Template:

- 4.1. The Template is intended as a check-list for those running partnership projects. It does not provide all of the answers to the questions. Some of these, such as the purpose or the proposed outcomes of the partnership may be driven by internal or external factors such as Government policy, Council Plan or other targets. Some answers may be gleaned from other existing policies and procedures (e.g. procurement or HR rules) and some may be available from officers or other bodies with specific expertise (operational, financial, legal etc).
- 4.2. The completion of the Template is not an end in itself. The partnership has to be operated in accordance with the proposals identified by the answers to the questions. This is the responsibility of the Lead Officer of both the partnership and the District Council.

5. Relationship with Partners' Existing Structures:

- 5.1. Those setting up partnerships need to recognise how the new arrangements will relate to existing arrangements. If a new legal entity (e.g. a company, an association) is being created, what will its relationship be to the partners – contractual? Grant giving/receiving? Entirely independent?
- 5.2. If the partnership is not a new legal entity, then it will still be part of the original partner organisations in some way (e.g.: a Joint Committee). This relationship needs to be clearly understood and managed to maintain accountability and transparency.

6. Purpose of the guidance

- 6.1. The guidance outlines the approach to be applied when considering joining or introducing new partnerships, it should also be used for reviewing existing arrangements. It provides a basis for examining the key issues that require consideration, to ensure that the Council participates in successful partnerships that have robust governance arrangements. The Council's eight partnership standards are:
 - 6.1.1. Partnerships should have clear objectives that are realistic and measurable and link to the achievement of the Council's corporate objectives.
 - 6.1.2. There should be clear organisational and staffing arrangements in place, with clear accountabilities for those involved in the partnership and clarity with regard to the resources committed to it.

- 6.1.3. Partnerships should have robust management and appropriate decision making mechanisms in place. They should have a constitution and/or terms of reference and defined standards as to the way individuals within partnerships should behave.
 - 6.1.4. Partnerships should have robust performance management arrangements for monitoring and reviewing how successfully targets are being met and sharing review findings amongst partners.
 - 6.1.5. Partnerships should have robust financial arrangements in place, with clear budget setting and monitoring procedures and clear financial regulations and schemes of delegation.
 - 6.1.6. Partnerships should have a clear process for identifying, prioritising and managing risks. Business continuity arrangements should also be in place.
 - 6.1.7. Partnerships should have a transparent process for information sharing within the partnership and public engagement arrangements where there is communication with service users and the wider public.
 - 6.1.8. Partnerships should have clear exit arrangements that allow for minimal disruption and the reallocation of resources.
- 6.2. All officers of the Council are expected to use the guidance for both new and existing significant partnerships; this includes completing the checklist at Appendix A.

7. Clear objectives

- 7.1. One of the main reasons that partnerships fail is the lack of clear objectives and plans. The Council believes that all partnerships it is involved with should have:
- A business plan or strategy in place.
 - Realistic and measurable objectives.
 - Targeted outputs and outcomes.
 - A clear link to the achievement of the Council's corporate objectives.
- 7.2. There should be clear aims and realistic and measurable objectives before a partnership is set up and these should be agreed by the partnership at the first meeting. The aims and objectives should answer the question 'what is it intended to achieve?' and should have a clear link to the achievement of the Council's strategic themes and corporate priorities.
- 7.3. The aims and objectives should be set out in the partnership's terms of reference or constitution and the short/medium/long-term outcomes and performance measures in a business plan or strategy.
- 7.4. Objectives are specific statements that can be measured. For this to take place they should be SMART, which means they are:
- | | | |
|------------|---|--|
| Specific | - | all objectives should have specific outcomes. |
| Measurable | - | the outcome of an objective should be able to be measured. |
| Achievable | - | the objective should describe something that can be achieved within the timescale and resources set for the project. |
| Realistic | - | objectives should describe something that can actually be done |
| Time bound | - | a timescale should be set for when the objective is to be achieved. |

8. Outputs, inputs and outcomes

- 8.1. Once the aims and objectives have been set, partners should turn the objectives into specific outcomes. The outcomes should answer the question 'how will I know when these objectives have been achieved, in terms of benefits experienced by the community?'

- 8.2. Each of the partnership's outcomes should be able to be measured or monitored. This can be achieved by setting specific performance measures or milestones. Performance measures can be quantitative or qualitative. Quantitative measures use statistical information whereas qualitative measures provide an understanding of people's experiences, perspectives and histories in the context of their personal circumstances or settings and answer 'what is', 'how' and 'why' questions.
- 8.3. Outputs should relate to the outcome and are the activities that will need to take place for the objectives to be met. They are usually things that need to be done in order to produce the desired result e.g. carry out an awareness campaign or increase the number of neighbourhood watch schemes in an area.
- 8.4. Inputs are the resources that are available to carry out the work needed in order to achieve the objectives. The inputs or resources used to produce the outputs can be financial, material or human.

9. Clear organisational and staffing arrangements

- 9.1. The Council believes that all partnerships it is involved with should have:
 - 9.1.1. Clear accountabilities e.g. role of lead officer, Corporate Management Team, Managers, elected members, Scrutiny etc.
 - 9.1.2. Clarity around resources committed to the partnership.

10. Your Role

- 10.1. Firstly, it is very important that you are clear about your role on the partnership/s that you are involved with. Where you are the Council's lead officer for a partnership, you are expected to:
 - 10.1.1. Be a point of contact between the Council and the partnership.
 - 10.1.2. Assist the partnership work with the Council.
 - 10.1.3. Facilitate the Council's input into the partnership.
 - 10.1.4. Review performance against agreed outcome targets and highlight any issues with your Manager.
 - 10.1.5. Alert relevant Council officers to any issues.
 - 10.1.6. Facilitate a regular self-assessment of the partnership's activity and make recommendations about any action required.
 - 10.1.7. Be clear as to the level of decision-making authority that the partnership has and whether or not you have such authority from the Council.
- 10.2. You also need to be clear about the amount of time you are expected to commit to the partnership and ensure that your manager is agreeable to this level of commitment. Staffing commitments should not exceed the amount of added value that the partnership can deliver.

11. Corporate Management Team

- 11.1. The Council's Corporate Management Team is responsible for:
 - 11.1.1. Determining if a partnership is to be considered as a significant partnership
 - 11.1.2. Risk assessing the Council's partnerships at a frequency proportionate to the partnerships importance.
 - 11.1.3. Reviewing the benefits and alignment with the corporate plan of individual partnerships.
 - 11.1.4. Ensuring a register of the Council's significant partnerships is maintained.
 - 11.1.5. Monitoring the overall impact of partnerships and identifying any action required.

11.1.6. Commenting on the viability and strategic fit of any new partnership, and relevance of existing partnerships.

11.1.7. Championing the use of this guidance.

12. Robust management and appropriate decision making

12.1. All partnerships should have a governing document such as a constitution, memorandum of understanding or terms of reference and operating conventions. The process of agreeing a document is in itself an important element of partnership governance; it will help clarify roles and relationships and build goodwill and trust.

12.2. The Council believes that all partnerships it is involved with should have:

- A constitutional or legal framework, which can include terms of reference.
- Clear codes of conduct.
- A clear decision making process.

12.3. Whilst there is no single form of document that will suit the size and scope of all partnerships, the main elements that should be considered are:

12.3.1. Name of the partnership;

12.3.2. Aims and objectives;

12.3.3. Timescales (date of establishment, review and end (see exit arrangements));

12.3.4. Membership, including status of different members and termination of membership, schemes of delegation;

12.3.5. Powers (statutory responsibilities and decision-making authority);

12.3.6. Accountability (reporting structures, dealing with complaints and public transparency);

12.3.7. Roles and responsibilities of the Chair and other members, including codes of conduct and equalities;

12.3.8. Income and other resource contributions, including ownership of assets;

12.3.9. Meetings (frequency, quorum rules, chairing and voting);

12.3.10. Decision-making processes (scope and timescales);

12.3.11. Performance management arrangements;

12.3.12. Amendments to the partnership's rules;

12.3.13. A proportionate mechanism for periodic review and change management

12.3.14. Minutes; and

12.3.15. Exit strategy.

12.4. Governing documents should be reviewed at least every three years and amended where necessary.

13. Robust performance management

13.1. The Council believes that all partnerships it is involved with should have:

13.1.1. Clear milestones, outcomes, performance indicators and delivery dates.

13.1.2. Arrangements for monitoring and reviewing how successfully targets are being met.

13.1.3. Arrangements for ensuring that monitoring and review findings are shared and disseminated amongst the partners.

13.1.4. A clear process for addressing poor performance within the partnership.

13.2. For information on milestones and outcomes please look at section one 'Clear Objectives'. The aims and objectives should be set out in the partnership's terms of reference or constitution and the short/medium/long-term outcomes and performance measures in a business plan or strategy.

- 13.3. All partnerships should have robust performance management arrangements in place. Partnerships with a more formal workload, more onerous responsibilities and larger resources should have more sophisticated arrangements in place. Where possible, management arrangements should be aligned with the Council's own performance management arrangements.
- 13.4. Partnerships should regularly monitor and evaluate their performance and provide updates at partnership meetings. If a partnership is not meeting its targets, or is likely to fail in the future, this will need to be flagged via the partnership's agreed reporting structures and should also be discussed with your Director.
- 13.5. Performance and progress against milestones should be reported to the council on a regular basis. The frequency of reporting will be determined by the scale of the partnership, e.g. where significant funding has been contributed, quarterly reporting would be expected.
- 13.6. Partnerships should also consider carrying out regular self-assessments to maximise their potential and deliver better outcomes.

14. Robust financial arrangements

- 14.1. There is a range of financial issues to consider when setting up a partnership and a number of them are covered below. This section sets out a number of important points, but if in doubt please seek advice.
 - 14.1.1. The Council believes that all partnerships it is involved with should have:
 - 14.1.2. Clarity on resource committed to the partnership.
 - 14.1.3. Clear budget setting and monitoring procedures in place.
 - 14.1.4. A budget and performance reporting framework in place.
 - 14.1.5. Clear financial administration procedures in the form of financial regulations and scheme of delegation.

15. Resources

- 15.1. Every partnership needs to be clear about the resources it has available. Resources can be in the form of people, other in kind contributions and/or money. If partners are committing funds to the partnership, clear agreements need to be in place setting out how much funding will be provided and how under and over spends will be dealt with.

16. Budgeting

- 16.1. Budgeting is a fundamental part of the planning process for any organisation or partnership. It links what resources are at your disposal with how you are going to use them to achieve your objectives and each year a budget plan should be approved. Where a partnership has monetary resources at its disposal it should agree monitoring procedures that are appropriate to the level of funding it receives.

17. Reporting framework

- 17.1. Where a partnership is in receipt of monetary resources, the accountable body for the funding should provide the partners with regular budget control reports, to enable the partners to understand what the financial position is. A named person should be given this responsibility. The reporting framework needs to link to the agreement on how under and over spends within the partnership would be dealt with if they happened.
- 17.2. The accountable body may change depending on where the funding originates. The partnership must abide by the accountable body's financial regulations and must ensure that it has obtained the appropriate level of authorisation before payments are made.

- 17.3. The budget reporting framework should be linked to the partnership's performance management framework to ensure that spend is linked to outcomes.

18. Audit requirements

- 18.1. From the outset, the partnership agreement must provide both internal and external auditors with rights of access to documentation. All partners must ensure there is a clear audit trail for any payments made, contracts tendered and funding received, which follows the appropriate financial / contract regulations and schemes of delegation.

19. Document retention

- 19.1. It will need to be established who is going to be responsible for holding documents and for that party to be aware of the legal requirements of retaining documents for various statutory and grant body requirement periods.

20. Grants

- 20.1. Grants may form the main funding for partnership arrangements and the terms and conditions of those grants must be clear, including who the accountable body is and document retention.
- 20.2. Grant funded services or projects should have clear exit strategies for when the funding ends.

21. Management of risks

- 21.1. Risk management is a key element of corporate governance. It allows you to identify things that may go wrong and plan ways to either prevent them happening or minimise their impact. Each partnership needs to consider the risks that, if they occurred, would prevent it from achieving its objectives.
- 21.2. As partnerships carry out work to meet the Council's objectives, the Council itself faces a risk of partnership failure. The Council's lead officer for a partnership should therefore assess the risk of their partnership failing and - where this is a possibility - take action to put mitigating controls in place.
- 21.3. The Council believes that all partnerships with which it is involved should have:
 - 21.3.1. A clear process for identifying and recording risks, assessing the potential impact and likelihood of risks occurring, prioritising and managing risks.
 - 21.3.2. A common understanding of the identified risks among all partners in the partnership.
 - 21.3.3. A clear allocation of risks to nominated members of the partnership, including responsibility for overseeing the implementation of action plans to mitigate risks.
 - 21.3.4. Regular review of risks and action plans.
 - 21.3.5. Appropriate business continuity arrangements in place.
- 21.4. The Council's scoring mechanism for assessing the likelihood of a partnership failing, considers whether the following elements of risk management are in place: risk register, process for managing risk, mitigation plans, clear risk allocation and exit strategy.
- 21.5. The Council's own risk management processes are set out in its Risk Management Strategy, available on the Council's intranet, together with:
 - 21.5.1. areas to consider regarding the scope of risk;
 - 21.5.2. guidelines for assessing the impact and likelihood of risk; and
 - 21.5.3. templates for risk registers and action plans.

- 21.6. Lead officers can use the Council's processes as a guide to ensuring that appropriate risk management arrangements are established in a partnership, proportionate to its significance and scope.
- 21.7. Significant risks should be reported to the Council on a regular basis. The frequency of reporting will be determined by the scale of the partnership, e.g. where significant funding has been contributed, quarterly reporting would be expected.

22. Information sharing and public engagement arrangements

- 22.1. The Council believes that all partnerships it is involved with should have:
 - 22.1.1. A clear and transparent process for sharing information within the partnership.
 - 22.1.2. A clear data quality trail.
 - 22.1.3. Communication with service users and the wider public to explain how the partnership works and where responsibility and accountability lie.
 - 22.1.4. A joint complaints procedure or process for ensuring redress can be obtained.

23. Information sharing

- 23.1. There are enormous benefits to sharing information; however, it should always be done within the law. The provisions in the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) should be used as a safeguard to protect privacy and confidentiality and not be used to justify unnecessary barriers to sharing information. Various information sharing protocols exist across partner organisations in Cumbria and it is important to abide by these where applicable.
- 23.2. Protocols seek to facilitate the professional and responsible exchange of information. They provide guidance on how officers can lawfully and fairly exchange personal, depersonalised and non-personal information and set out the principles that must be followed when exchanging information. If your partnership exchanges personal information to meet its aims you must ensure that a protocol is in place and that the guidance is followed.
- 23.3. A protocol should include:
 - 23.3.1. Parties to the arrangement/protocol signatures
 - 23.3.2. List of types of information to be shared
 - 23.3.3. Procedure or a description of how it is going to be shared
 - 23.3.4. Security
 - 23.3.5. References to relevant legislation
 - 23.3.6. Legal considerations and basis for information sharing
 - 23.3.7. Monitoring and review statement
- 23.4. The General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) require that personal information is obtained and processed fairly and lawfully; only disclosed in appropriate circumstances; is accurate; relevant and not held longer than necessary; and is kept securely. The Information Commissioner's Office has developed a Framework Code of Practice for Sharing Personal Information, which can be found at <https://ico.org.uk/>
- 23.5. Specific protocols may need to be developed for a multi-agency project or initiative which may include public and non-public organisations. But public organisations must have a signed, written agreement (e.g. SLA or contract) with any private, community, independent, voluntary or charitable organisations involved.

24. Public engagement

- 24.1. The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 introduced a new duty to involve. This duty came into force on 1 April 2009 and requires local authorities to take those steps they consider appropriate to involve representatives of local persons in the exercise of any of their functions, where they consider that it is appropriate to do so.
- 24.2. The phrase “representatives of local persons” refers to a mix of “local persons”, i.e. a selection of the individuals, groups or organisations the authority considers likely to be affected by, or have an interest in the authority function. In the context of the duty the “representative” does not refer to formally elected or nominated members of the community, such as councillors.
- 24.3. In considering how to fulfil the statutory duty, you should aim to involve representatives of local people as much as possible. This should be in relation to routine functions, as well as significant one-off decisions.
- 24.4. The following three ways of involving should be considered. You will need to consider whether one, two, all three or none of the approaches should be used
 - providing information about the exercise of the particular function;
 - consulting about the exercise of the particular function; and/or
 - involving in another way.
- 24.5. In addition to complying with the duty to involve, all partnerships should have a joint complaints procedure or process for ensuring redress can be obtained. The procedure should be clear and accessible to both partners and the public. Partnerships need to recognise the feedback value of complaints; it should influence decisions about service delivery. Complaints also present an opportunity to engage with the wider public.
- 24.6. Partnerships need to take a collective approach to developing an effective complaints procedure; this means that they can deal with complaints collaboratively, or quickly and efficiently channel the complainant to the appropriate partner’s corporate system.

25. Exit arrangements

- 25.1. The Council believes that all partnerships it is involved with should have:
- 25.2. An exit strategy that allows for minimal disruption, smooth transition and no nasty surprises.
 - 25.2.1. Arrangements for the reallocation of resources.
 - 25.2.2. A process for managing residual liabilities.
 - 25.2.3. Assessed the impact of ending the partnership.
- 25.3. Recognising when a partnership is no longer necessary can be difficult, but is important. It is best to plan for the end of the partnership when the partnership is initially set up. Exit arrangements should be detailed within the partnership’s governing document.
- 25.4. The partnership should set out in its governing document the conditions under which a partner may leave the partnership and the conditions under which the partnership can be brought to a close. When preparing the exit or end conditions you should consider the following:
 - 25.4.1. What should happen to any employees working on behalf of the partnership?
 - 25.4.2. What will happen to any assets (including monetary contribution) owned by the partnership?
 - 25.4.3. What will happen to any documentation, or information held by the partnership?
 - 25.4.4. How will a final report (including accounts) of the partnership be presented and to whom?

- 25.4.5. Is there a need to consult with stakeholders before withdrawing from or ending the partnership?
- 25.5. Partnerships should carry out a regular review (preferably annually) of whether it should carry on or cease to function. Possible reasons for ceasing include:
- 25.5.1. Inability to meet objectives
 - 25.5.2. Lack of funding
 - 25.5.3. Lack of commitment from a key partner
 - 25.5.4. Objectives are met
 - 25.5.5. The partnership activity no longer supports the Council's objectives
 - 25.5.6. One or more partners wish to exit for any of the above reasons.
- 25.6. Winding up a partnership that is a company is a specialist task and you will need to take advice from Legal Services if this applies.
- 25.7. Exiting a partnership can be done at any time, barring any contractual commitments. If you are proposing to exit a partnership this should be discussed with partners and should follow any agreed exit arrangements that are in place. Withdrawal may have serious negative effects on partners and could undermine future relationships if not handled correctly.
- 25.8. The optimal time for a partnership to cease would be at the end of the financial year, as the partnership's plans and budgets likely will be synchronised to this. A withdrawal will need to be planned and it should be borne in mind that a period of notice is considered usual.

Good Practice Checklist for new partnerships and 3 yearly reviews

This good practice checklist will help you to assess the health of your partnership. All of the answers should be 'yes' and action should be taken where this is not the case. **Please only use N/A in exceptional cases where there is a special reason for doing so.**

1 Clear Objectives

	Y	N	N/A
1.1 Are there agreed aims and objectives?			
1.2 Do the aims and objectives relate to those of the council?			
1.3 Is there a clear published strategy for the partnership?			
1.4 Is there a shared action plan to deliver the strategy?			

2 Clear organisational and staffing arrangements

	Y	N	N/A
2.1 Was the correct approval sought to initiate the partnership?			
2.2 Is your role and responsibilities clearly defined?			
2.3 Is there clarity about the functions and decisions that can be delegated and to whom?			
2.4 Are there arrangements in place for the external scrutiny of partnership decisions?			
2.5 Do staff employed by the partnership have agreed aims and objectives?			
2.6 Is there a policy on recruitment to the partnership? Is it clear whose recruitment procedures should be used?			
2.7 Are staff supervision arrangements clear and appropriate for partnership staff?			
2.8 Have staff development procedures (appraisal, training) been clarified for partnership staff?			
2.9 Is it clear how staff conduct issues will be addressed between partners?			

3 Robust management and appropriate decision making

	Y	N	N/A
3.1 Does the partnership have terms of reference or a constitution?			
3.2 Is there a code of conduct?			
3.3 Are clear and accurate minutes recorded?			
3.4 Is there a declaration of interest procedure?			

4 Robust performance management

	Y	N	N/A
4.1 Is there an agreed performance management framework?			
4.2 Are challenging and SMART targets set year on year?			
4.3 Is performance against targets tracked and reported to the partnership?			
4.4 Are performance measures in place for the council to monitor its involvement in the partnership?			
4.5 Are there arrangements in place for the partnership's progress and performance to be reported back to the council on a regular basis?			

5 Robust financial arrangements

	Y	N	N/A
5.1 Is it clear where accountability lies for financial matters?			
5.2 Is the council's financial commitment clearly identified in service budgets?			
5.3 Is it clear whose standing orders/financial regulations/constitution are to be used?			
5.4 Is the process for approving spending clear, documented and agreed by the partnership?			
5.5 Are financial monitoring and reporting arrangements in place within the partnership and who manages them?			

5.6	Where necessary, are financial monitoring arrangements in place within the council in relation to the partnership?			
5.7	Is there a means to evidence that objectives are being met in a cost effective manner?			
5.8	Is the procedure for applying for grants and external funding clear?			
5.9	Where resources are jointly purchased or commissioned, is there clarity over ownership, responsibilities etc?			
6	Have the implications of VAT and other taxation requirements of, and differences between, different organisations been considered?			

6 Management of risks

		Y	N	N/A
6.1	Does the partnership maintain a risk register and actively manage its risks?			
6.2	Are there arrangements in place for the partnership's significant risks to be reported back to the council on a regular basis?			
6.3	Has the council undertaken a risk assessment of being in the partnership?			
6.4	Are business continuity arrangements in place within the partnership?			

7 Information sharing and public engagement arrangements

		Y	N	N/A
7.1	Is an information sharing protocol in place between partners?			
7.2	Have data protection issues been addressed?			
7.3	Is there clarity on confidentiality within meetings and on handling confidential information between partners?			
7.4	Does the partnership publicly report its progress?			
7.5	Are the partnerships papers available to the public?			
7.6	Can the public ask questions at meetings or raise agenda items?			
7.7	Is there a complaints and feedback process in place?			
7.8	Does the partnership have an action plan to address the GDPR requirements?			

8 Exit arrangements

		Y	N	N/A
8.1	Does the partnership have an exit strategy in place?			
8.2	Where appropriate, have staffing issues been considered in the partnerships exit planning?			
8.3	Does the exit strategy include a policy on dealing with ongoing income and expenditure?			
8.4	Is it clear who will own assets once the partnership comes to an end?			
8.5	Is it clear who has which liability once the partnership ends?			

SIGNIFICANT PARTNERSHIPS TEMPLATE FOR NEW PARTNERSHIPS AND THREE YEARLY REVIEWS

1.0	Name of Partnership	
2.0	Partners	
3.0	SLDC Lead officer	
4.0	Contact details	
5.0	Partnership lead officer if different to above	
6.0	Intended start date & duration	
7.0	Governance arrangements	
7.1	Rationale:	
	a) Why does/will this partnership exist?	
	b) What are its agreed aims?	
	c) What outcomes will it achieve in the next 3 years?	
	d) When & how will we assess whether the aims and outcomes have been achieved?	
	e) Where have/will the aims & outcomes be published?	
	f) Can you identify a better way of serving the public?	
7.2	Added value :	
	a) How does this partnership add value to the council?	
	b) How does this partnership add value to other partners?	
	c) How does this partnership add value to the Community?	
	d) How will this added value be demonstrated to the public?	
	e) How do you know whether council funds are being well spent?	
	f) How does the public know that partnership funds are being well spent?	
7.3	Governance arrangements:	
	a) What legal form will/does the partnership take?	
	Joint Committee of constituent Local Authorities under the Local Government Act 1972	
	Unincorporated Association	
	Company	
	Informal Working Arrangement? Give more details	

SIGNIFICANT PARTNERSHIPS TEMPLATE FOR NEW PARTNERSHIPS AND THREE YEARLY REVIEWS

1.0	Name of Partnership	
	Other? Give more details	
	b) Is there a charitable element?	
	c) What is/will the governing instrument(s) be?	
	d) How will/are policy and strategic decisions made?	
	e) How are they recorded?	
	f) Who makes sure that they are acted on?	
	g) Who scrutinises them?	
	h) To who are they reported?	
	i) How is/will the day to day management operate?	
	j) What representation will the partners have on the Partnership and how it operates?	
7.4	Setting up a new partnership	
	a) What approvals will be required from within the partnership to set it up?	
	Other partners:	
	b) What external approvals are required?	
	Government department:	
	Other:	
	c) What communication will there be about setting up the partnership?	
	With Members?	
	RDC Officers:	
	The partners:	
	The public :	
	Others:	
	d) What are the milestones and timescales for setting up the partnership?	
	e) Is there a budget for setting up the partnership? If so what are the partners contributing? Who will hold the budget?	
	f) Who is leading on setting up the partnership?	
	For RDC	
	For the partners:	

SIGNIFICANT PARTNERSHIPS TEMPLATE FOR NEW PARTNERSHIPS AND THREE YEARLY REVIEWS

1.0	Name of Partnership	
	g) Who is providing the following support to set up the partnership? (refer to internal and external support)	
	Legal?	
	Finance?	
	Case Management?	
	ICT?	
	Other? Give more details	
	h) How is this being financed?	
	i) Is there anything else the Council needs to have to protect its interests?	
8.0	Partnership Objectives	
8.1	What is the function and purpose of the partnership?	
8.2	What are the key objectives of the partnership?	
8.3	What arrangements are in place for developing the key objectives in conjunction with a risk assessment?	
8.4	What arrangements are in place for agreeing and regularly reviewing the key objectives?	
8.5	What arrangements are in place for assigning objectives to partners?	
9.0	Organisation & Staffing Arrangements	
9.1	What is the basis for membership of the partnership?	
9.2	Who is on the partnership and who do they represent.	
9.3	How will the partnership ensure that membership is sufficiently inclusive and meets equalities criteria?	
9.4	What rules are there for the status of different members? (e.g. those 'in attendance')	
9.5	How will decisions be taken within the partnership? (scope and timescales)	
9.6	List all the partners involved and their contact details	
9.7	What arrangements are in place for guiding the conduct of individual members of the partnership?	
9.8	What processes are in place for resolving disputes that may arise between partners?	

SIGNIFICANT PARTNERSHIPS TEMPLATE FOR NEW PARTNERSHIPS AND THREE YEARLY REVIEWS

1.0	Name of Partnership	
9.9	What processes are in place for resolving complaints effectively? (Clarity over responsibility for complaints concerning joint activity will be necessary)	
10.0	Management and Decision Making	
10.1	What is the structure of the partnership?	
10.2	Does it sit within a larger family of partnerships? Provide details.	
10.3	What principles or ground rules will govern the partnership?	
10.4	What arrangements will be put in place for agenda management and administrative support?	
10.5	What is the notice and frequency of meeting; quorum rules; chairing arrangements; voting arrangements; representation of other members?	
10.6	How will declarations of interest be managed?	
11.0	Performance Management	
11.1	What arrangements are in place for managing and monitoring the performance of the partnership?	
11.2	How will the partnership review its performance on a quarterly basis?	
11.3	What is the frequency of performance reporting to the board	
11.4	Are performance targets reviewed	
12.0	Financial Arrangements	
12.1	How will the partnership be resourced? (Is there a clear budget set (covering both income and expenditure) for revenue and capital purposes?)	
12.2	What arrangements are in place for monitoring the partnership's budget?	
12.3	How will action be taken where there are major variances in the budget?	
12.4	What arrangements are in place to limit the financial liabilities that the partnership can incur?	
12.5	What financial procedures / controls are in place?	
12.6	What mechanisms are in place to review the financial procedures / controls on a regular basis?	
12.7	Where the partnership must meet specific minimum guidelines in order to maintain funding, what arrangements are in place for monitoring how the guidelines are met?	

SIGNIFICANT PARTNERSHIPS TEMPLATE FOR NEW PARTNERSHIPS AND THREE YEARLY REVIEWS

1.0	Name of Partnership	
12.8	Where partnerships have staff and/or other assets and one organisation is acting as the host body, what arrangements are in place for clarifying any transfer of these?	
12.9	Have the VAT arrangements been agreed with Customs and Excise?	
	What arrangements are in place to investigate allegations of breaches of financial conduct, fraud and corruption?	
13.0	Risk Management	
13.1	What arrangements are in place for assessing and managing the risks associated with the partnership?	
13.2	Are significant risks routinely reported	
13.3	Are risk mitigation processes routinely reviewed	
13.4	How does the Council risk assess its membership?	
14.0	Information Sharing and Public Engagement	
14.1	What information will agencies need to share?	
14.2	How will this be done? (Including overcoming any technical or legal barriers)	
14.3	Are meetings open to the public	
14.4	Mechanisms for publishing minutes	
14.5	Protocols for ensuring data Protection / GDPR compliance	
15.0	Exit strategy	
15.1	What arrangements for dissolution are in place?	
15.2	Is there an exit strategy within the partnership agreement including assets, liabilities and staffing etc?	
15.3	How will legacy contracts (if any) be dealt with?	
16.0	Review Programme	
16.1	Fundamental review every 3 years	
16.2	Date:	
16.3	Six monthly reviews in quarter 1 and quarter 3 by Senior Management Team	
16.4	Date:	

PARTNERSHIP GOVERNANCE IMPROVEMENT PLAN

This template (or something similar) should be used to ensure action is taken to address any necessary improvements or missing elements of the governance arrangements.

NAME OF PARTNERSHIP:

DATE:

Governance area	Improvement needed / Intended outcome	Action taken	Timescale	Responsible person / group	Notes (including resource implications)