

PARTNERSHIP GOVERNANCE REVIEW

Contact Officer: Tina Butterwick, Corporate Partnerships Officer– MK 252693

1. Purpose

- 1.1 To present a progress report on a review of governance of the partnerships in which the Council is involved. The review is scheduled to be completed by March 2010.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That, the Project Plan for the review of Partnership Governance be noted.
- 2.2 That a further report on progress against the Project Plan be submitted to the Committee early in 2010.

3. Issues and Choices

Background

- 3.1 At the meeting of the Audit Committee on 18 June 2008 (Minute AC08), the Committee noted the concerns expressed in the Corporate Governance Review about the governance arrangements in the Council's key strategic partnerships. The Corporate Governance Review stated that partnership working should be explored across the authority as a whole, and a decision made on the definition of partnerships and the application of governance arrangements, with regard to partnerships across the organisation.
- 3.2 A comprehensive governance review of the thematic partnerships associated with the Local Strategic Partnership, and a number of key strategic partnerships, was conducted during 2008/09. The review was conducted with the close co-operation of the Council's lead officers on each partnership and with other partners.
- 3.3 The outcomes of that review were reported to the Committee on 9 April 2009 (Minute AC57), together with an Action Plan to address the review's findings.

- 3.4 The Action Plan recommended:
- a closer business case for all partnerships involving the Council.
 - a clear specification of the level of the Council's involvement.
 - a risk assessment of the Council's involvement.
 - a risk assessment of each partnership.
 - a partnership register.
 - the development of an online partnership 'toolkit'.
 - training for officers and Members involved in partnerships.

Improvement Project Plan

- 3.6 The Action Plan was passed to the new Strategy and Partnership Directorate for implementation. Partnership Governance is now one of the activities in the Council Improvement Plan and a Project Plan has been compiled setting out what it is intended to achieve during 2009/10 (attached as **Annex A**). This plan incorporates all the activities and deadlines referred to in the reviews recommendations.
- 3.7 It has been decided to undertake the review of partnerships in two phases. The first phase is to register and undertake a risk assessment of the 13 partnerships that are members of the LSP. A great deal of the information required for this phase is readily available and, as can be seen from the Project Plan (Section C), will be completed within fairly short timescales. Having completed this phase we can then review the arrangements/process to ensure that they are achieving their purpose, before conducting the second phase of reviewing the larger number of partnerships.
- 3.8 Section D of the Project Plan deals with the registering and risk assessment of the wider range of partnerships. Whilst the registration and risk assessments of these partnerships won't be completed until November, for the reasons stated above, work has already commenced on requesting Directorates to provide brief details of all the 'partnerships' in which it is involved (Action D4). In compiling these details they have been asked to use the broad definition referred to in the partnership toolkit which is:

'A 'partnership' is a joint working arrangement where partners:

- *are otherwise independent bodies or groups;*
- *agree to co-operate to achieve common goals;*
- *create a new organisational structure or process, separate from their own organisations to achieve these goals;*
- *jointly plan and implement an agreed programme;*
- *share relevant information;*
- *pool risks and rewards; and*

- *have dual accountability to both the partnership and their own organisation.'*

- 3.9 It is recognised that once the initial information is received, certain categories of 'partnership' may require further definition.
- 3.10 The overall deadline for achieving these activities has not changed from that recommended in the Action Plan previously reported to the Committee.
- 3.11 The other sections of the Project Plan are:
- a. *Implementation of the Partnership Toolkit* – The actions identified within this part of the review have all been completed. The toolkit is available on the web (<http://www.milton-keynes.gov.uk/partnership%2Dworking/DisplayArticle.asp?ID=64074>) and staff have been briefed on its content which will assist them when registering/undertaking a risk assessment of their partnership.
 - b. *Revise Terms of Reference for the Council's Strategic Partnerships Lead Officer Group (SPLOG)* – This is an additional activity identified as part of the Improvement Plan. The aim is to have effective mechanisms in place to ensure that the Council's partnership activity is co-ordinated to ensure achievement of its priorities.
- 3.12 It will be noted that the Project Plan is in its early stages of implementation. The final column of the plan indicates where actions are underway/have been completed. The review is scheduled to be completed by March 2010.
- 3.13 The Committee is asked to note this progress report.

4. **Implications**

4.1 Policy

The review addresses issues identified in the Corporate Governance Review.

4.2 Resources and Risk

Implementation of the Action Plan will be achieved within existing staff and financial resources. The Action Plan requires that the Council should assess its risks in relation to existing partnerships and as it embarks on new partnerships.

4.3 Legal

The risk assessments conducted in relation to the Council's involvement with partnerships will need to ensure that the legal basis of the Council's membership is clarified.

4.4 Other Implications

The partnerships toolkit will ensure that issues relating to equality, diversity, sustainability, human rights, e-government and crime and disorder are addressed for existing partnerships and before the Council enters into any new partnership.

Background Papers: None.

PROJECT PLAN

Create Effective Key Partnership Governance				
	Task Name	Start	Finish	Comments
A	Partnership Toolkit	08/04/09	28/07/09	
1	Approved by Audit Committee	08/04/09	08/04/09	Completed
2	Installed on web	05/05/09	05/05/09	Completed
3	Strategic Partnerships Lead Officer Group (SPLOG) consulted on implementation	19/05/09	19/05/09	Completed
4	Directorates informed	05/05/09	29/05/09	Completed
5	Partners informed of toolkits availability on web	27/07/09	28/07/09	Completed
B	Strategic Partnerships Lead Officer Group (SPLOG) - Terms of Reference Revised	21/07/09	20/10/09	
1	SPLOG to undertake initial discussion on future role and membership	21/07/09	21/07/09	Completed
2	Meeting of key partners – feed in initial thoughts of SPLOG (from B1)	05/08/09	05/08/09	Completed
3	Draft revised SPLOG Terms of Reference and membership	22/07/09	04/09/09	
4	CLT consider draft proposals	03/09/09	03/09/09	
5	SPLOG consider CLT comments	15/09/09	15/09/09	
6	LSP Executive consider proposals & confirm meets its requirements	16/09/09	16/09/09	
7	Implement new arrangements at SPLOG meeting	20/10/09	20/10/09	
C	LSP Register and Risk Assessments Complete	19/05/09	09/10/09	
1	SPLOG members receive presentation on documentation	19/05/09	19/05/09	Completed
2	Register forms to be completed by SPLOG members re their partnership	19/05/09	08/08/09	Completed
3	Prepare guidance and framework for undertaking risk assessment	22/07/09	15/08/09	Completed
4	Support Team review register forms to ensure complete	22/07/09	15/08/09	Completed
5	Training sessions for those undertaking risk assessments	22/07/09	28/08/09	

Create Effective Key Partnership Governance					
		Task Name	Start	Finish	Comments
6		SPLOG members complete risk assessment	22/07/09	22/09/09	
7		Support Team agree key issues to be reported arising from assessment	28/08/09	30/09/09	
8		Report to CLT?	15/10/09	15/10/09	
9		Review arrangements/process to ensure effective for remainder of partnerships review	22/07/09	09/10/09	
10		Place risk assessments on intranet			
D		Register and Risk Assessments of Other Partnerships	19/05/09	16/04/10	
1		Confirm criteria for partnerships to be included in register	19/05/09	31/07/09	Completed
2		Brief Directorate Management Teams on requirements	22/07/08	21/08/09	Completed
3		Progress report to Audit Committee on 16 September	28/07/09	12/08/09	Completed
4		Directorate Management Teams to provide list of partnerships & contact details	17/08/09	12/09/09	
5		SPLOG review lists to ensure comprehensive	18/09/09	18/09/09	
6		All 'contacts' provided with registration and risk assessment forms for completion and details of training dates	19/09/09	28/09/09	
7		Training (at least three alternative days) for contacts	28/09/09	30/10/09	
8		Democratic Services to develop programme as to how Councillors can have input into review and receive training on partnership working	28/07/09	30/09/09	
9		Registration forms completed by contacts & returned	28/09/09	06/11/09	
10		Support Team ensure registration details for all partnerships complete	09/11/09	30/11/09	
11		SPLOG review draft register	17/11/09	17/11/09	
12		Partnership Register complete	30/11/09	30/11/09	
13		Register available on intranet	30/11/09	04/12/09	
14		Contacts complete risk assessments	02/11/09	27/11/09	
15		Support Team review risk assessments to ensure complete	13/11/09	11/12/09	
16		Confirm monitoring of partnerships arrangements for 2010/11	01/12/09	22/01/09	
17		Draft report on assessments completed	11/12/09	22/01/10	

Create Effective Key Partnership Governance					
		Task Name	Start	Finish	Comments
18		Consult contact officers, .DMTs and SPLOG on recommendations	25/01/12	26/02/10	
19		Finalise report	01/03/10	09/03/10	
20		CLT receive consider report on risk assessments	18/03/10	18/03/10	
21		Audit Committee consider report on risk assessments	08/04/10	08/04/10	
22		Risk Assessment Report available on intranet	09/04/10	16/04/10	