

LEICESTERSHIRE STRATEGIC SENIOR OFFICERS' GROUP**1st AUGUST 2007****PARTNERSHIP MANAGEMENT PROJECT****Purpose**

1. To inform SSOG about work being undertaken to review current partnership management arrangements.
2. To provide an opportunity to comment on an early draft of the Leicestershire Together Partnership Agreement.

Background

3. Partnerships are central to the delivery of public services and the review and management of these partnerships is therefore essential in ensuring high standards of performance.
4. There are a number of risks associated with partnership working, in particular regarding governance, financial controls and performance management. There have been two notable reviews of partnership arrangements (these being an Audit Commission report and Scrutiny Commission report- both 2004) with a key recommendation of producing a rolling programme of partnership performance assessment. As a result, a self assessment toolkit was created and placed on the Leicestershire Together website. Guidance on partnership working was also produced and this was placed on the Intranet.
5. As we move towards a new LAA framework and the new Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA), it seems an appropriate time to review current partnership management arrangements to ensure they are fit for purpose.
6. A project team was established to undertake this work, in particular:
 - (i) To review any outstanding actions from previous reports
 - (ii) To review and analyse the partnership assessments submitted using the Leicestershire Together self assessment toolkit.
 - (iii) To review the effectiveness of the self assessment toolkit and to consider IT solutions to support the analysis and judgement of submitted assessments.
 - (iv) To consider the requirements of the CPA and probable requirements of CAA.

- (v) To consider the impact of the development of the LAA as an implementation framework and implications of this for performance management.
- (vi) To review current guidance and the need for external development support.
- (vii) To review how and where we communicate our guidance.
- (viii) To review the terms of reference of SSOG as to their role in partnership management.

Initial Progress

7. While the project team is only recently established, there are some key initial tasks completed which include:
 - (i) Bringing together various pieces of partnership guidance into one document.
 - (ii) Placing the guidance on to the Leicestershire Together website along with some useful web links to other partnership development sites.
 - (iii) Improved navigation and appearance of the Leicestershire Together website with regard to the partnership section.
 - (iv) Updating contact information on Key Strategic Partnerships
 - (v) Considering the future e-communications strategy for partnership information.

8. Once a full internal review of the partnership guidance and self assessment toolkit is complete, consideration will be given as to whether or not to seek external support to undertake further development. In particular, to seek expertise in how best to actively engage partnerships with the guidance and self assessment toolkit (for example, some authorities provide an interactive DVD support package). Consideration could also be given into whether an IT solution could be provided to automatically review and analyse partnership self assessments submitted on Leicestershire Together.

SSOG Terms of Reference

9. As noted in 3.4.7 (above) a key function of the project team is to consider the role of SSOG in partnership management and to ensure this role is clear within the terms of reference. The current "Terms of Reference and Membership of Group" was established in June 2006 (see appendix 1). In considering these, the project team felt that the role of reviewing partnership performance was not explicitly expressed and therefore that any partnership support and management function was potentially compromised.

10. Attached as Appendix 1 is an early draft "Leicestershire Together Partnership Agreement" which covers the Leicestershire Together Board and SSOG. This draft includes an expression that SSOG will receive an annual report on partnership performance. This would cover areas such

as financial and delivery performance, risk assessments, highlight strong partnership techniques and areas for development.

11. In order to obtain sufficient information to provide this report, it is recommended that each of the key strategic partnerships (all theme partnerships and all cross-cutting partnerships) be required to submit a self assessment, using the self assessment toolkit on the Leicestershire Together website, at least once every two years.

Recommendations

12. It is RECOMMENDED that:-

- (ii) SSOG note the content of the report**
- (iii) SSOG approve the submission of self assessments every two years by all key strategic partnerships.**
- (iv) SSOG review the draft terms of reference (attached as Appendix 2)**

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Appendix 1.

Leicestershire Strategic Senior Officer Group - Draft Terms of Reference

1. To take operational decisions on behalf of the Leicestershire Together Board.
2. To advise the Leicestershire Together Board regarding service priorities taking into account local opinion and regional and national initiatives and direction.
3. To co-ordinate the work of the theme strategic partnerships and promote cross cutting activities so that theme based 'silo's' are avoided.
4. To oversee the management of the totality of public expenditure in Leicestershire and manage relevant budgets through joint planning and resource allocation, to better achieve the joint priorities and more efficient procurement and delivery of services.
5. To promote transformational change to achieve effective and efficient public service delivery across the various agencies involved in that delivery including the potential for shared services.
6. To bring together the key decision makers in an area in a way that provides visible co-ordination of public service delivery
7. To be responsible for drawing up, negotiating with Government and delivering localised targets based on national and local priorities (e.g. Local Area Agreement)
8. To oversee the performance management of the Local Area Agreement and other relevant programmes including where required the reallocation of resources between outcomes.
9. To oversee the annual refresh of the LAA.

Appendix 2

LEICESTERSHIRE TOGETHER PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT

1. Mission

"Together we will do things differently to deliver improved public services so that we make Leicestershire the best possible place to live and work for everyone"

2. Purpose

Leicestershire Together is the "partnership of partnerships" for Leicestershire and provides an over-arching governance framework within which other thematic and area-based partnerships can operate. Leicestershire Together also provides a forum for debate and decision making at a strategic level.

Leicestershire Together seeks to improve the quality and co-ordination of public services and bring realism and value to a complex and overlapping pattern of service delivery. Leicestershire Together will:

- develop and agree widely a vision for the future of Leicestershire
- take a strategic and long term view of the activities required to improve the quality of life in Leicestershire;
- co-ordinate activities that cut across the work of existing agencies and partnerships and add a new dimension to that work;
- concentrate on activity that complements and adds value to the work of existing agencies and partnerships;
- share best practice in the delivery of services to the public between partnerships and agencies;
- develop an equal and mutually supportive relationship with district-based LSP's including the referral, as appropriate, of issues to be dealt with by each other and by seeking to ensure that community strategies are mutually consistent;
- develop, implement and monitor the Leicestershire Sustainable Community Strategy and Local Area Agreement to identify agreed strategic priorities for activities that meet the identified needs of Leicestershire people.
- Seek the participation and engagement of service users, stakeholders and citizens

3. Vision

The members of Leicestershire Together are committed to developing:

- *A vibrant and thriving County in which to live, work and play*
- *A County where all have access to quality services*
- *A County which looks to the future by maximising opportunities for its young people*

4. Organising Principles/Values

The Partnership aims to promote the economic, social and environmental well-being of the County and its people through a number of guiding principles:

Partnership - by being pro-active in identifying new opportunities for joint working and encouraging partners to share skills and knowledge. We will utilise the strengths of existing partners and partnerships to deliver projects that meet the needs of communities across the County and improve quality of life for all who live in, work in and visit Leicestershire.

Equality - by promoting social inclusion and ensuring that all sections of the community have the chance to contribute to, and benefit from, our work as effective members of a truly democratic society. We will work to reduce disadvantages and inequalities of opportunity and promote diversity in terms of the people we serve, the staff we employ, the partners we work with and the services we deliver. This approach to equality will be integrated within all Partnership activities. When activities are reviewed or new activities agreed, they will be checked to ensure that the implications for the promotion of equality are being properly considered and appropriately addressed.

Quality of Life – by ensuring that people can live safely in a high quality environment, that is protected and enhanced.

Community Involvement and Participation - by encouraging community involvement in planning and delivering services by using innovative and creative approaches that engage all groups in society.

Sustainability - by basing its actions upon identifiable community needs, and ensuring that they enhance the quality of life of the residents of Leicestershire now, whilst taking account of the needs of future generations.

Quality - by providing high quality and value for money services, by striving to be efficient, economical and effective.

Accountability - by consistently evaluating its activities and projects, and seeking ways in which it can operate most effectively and improve upon the lives of the greatest number of people. It will provide regular progress reports to the communities and individuals of Leicestershire.

5. Structure

There are five main levels to the Leicestershire Together structure: the **Board**, the **Strategic Senior Officer Group**, **Local Area Agreement Leads Groups** the seven key **theme partnerships** and the **Forum**. In addition to these, an **annual conference** is held which involves people across all levels of the structure and a wide range of stakeholders.

The structure of Leicestershire Together reflects its role as the “partnership of partnerships” for the county and the fact that the partnership is made up of geographical (e.g. District LSP’s/LRP), thematic (e.g. Stronger Communities Board, Community Safety Programme Board) and sectoral partnerships and organisations.

A brief explanation of each of these levels of the structure is as follows:

Leicestershire Together Board

The Board is the highest level of the partnership of partnerships and provides a framework within which other partnerships operate. The Board is ‘member based’ i.e. made up of directly elected (Councillors) and indirectly elected (Chairs of Partnerships and authorities) people. The revised membership of the Board is as follows:

Geographical Communities representatives:

- District Local Strategic Partnerships - the 7 Chairmen/District Council Leaders
- Leicestershire and Rutland Association of Parish and Local Councils
- Leicestershire Rural Partnership

Seven Key Theme Partnerships:

- Leicester Shire Economic Partnership
- Children and Young Persons’ Strategic Partnership for Leicestershire (Lead Member, Children and Young People)
- Stronger Communities Board
- Community Safety Programme Board (Chair, Police Authority)
- Healthier Communities Partnership (Chair, Primary Care Trust)
- Older Persons Board (Lead Member, Adult Social Care)
- Cleaner and Greener Block (Vice-Chair, ENABLE)

Business Community representatives:

- Leicestershire Chamber of Commerce/Business Link
- East Midlands Airport

Third Sector/Communities of Interest representatives:

- Voluntary and Community Sector – General place
- Leicestershire Ethnic Minority Partnership
- Leicestershire Council of Faiths
- Physical and Sensory Disability Programme Board

- Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Combined Fire Authority
- Leicestershire County Council

Terms of Reference

Specific responsibilities of the Board include the following:

1. To identify and agree strategic priorities, around which partners can align their approaches wherever this adds value
2. To own the vision for Leicestershire and shape the Sustainable Community Strategy and Local Area Agreement - setting the agenda for the county
3. To take a broad overview of the implementation and performance management of the Sustainable Community Strategy and Local Area Agreement
4. To act as a "voice" for Leicestershire at a local, regional, national and international level
5. To debate issues of mutual interest and concern, including service priorities and key cross-cutting issues, taking and implementing key decisions as necessary
6. To oversee the wider partnership structure, including SSOG, theme and cross-cutting partnerships, Leicestershire Together Conference and Forum meetings
7. To oversee the co-ordination of service delivery, public expenditure and transformational change in the County
8. To ensure that Leicestershire Together adds value to the work of the individual agencies and partnerships in the County

Meeting Frequency = Quarterly

Strategic Senior Officer Group (SSOG)

SSOG is the 'Public Service Board' of Leicestershire Together, made up of senior officers (e.g. Chief Executives) of the main agencies delivering services in the county, plus the most senior officer from each of the theme partnerships:

LCC Chief Executive
 District Council Chief Executive
 Job Centre Plus
 Learning and Skills Council
 University Hospitals
 Probation Service
 Fire Service
 Leicestershire and Rutland Association of Parish and Local Councils
 Connexions
 7 x Senior Officers from the key theme partnerships

Terms of Reference

1. To take operational decisions on behalf of the Leicestershire Together Board.

2. To advise the Leicestershire Together Board regarding service priorities taking into account local opinion and regional and national initiatives and direction.
3. To co-ordinate the work of the theme strategic partnerships and promote cross cutting activities so that theme based 'silo's' are avoided.
4. To oversee the management of the totality of public expenditure in Leicestershire and manage relevant budgets through joint planning and resource allocation, to better achieve the joint priorities and more efficient procurement and delivery of services.
5. To promote transformational change to achieve effective and efficient public service delivery across the various agencies involved in that delivery including the potential for shared services.
6. To bring together the key decision makers in an area in a way that provides visible co-ordination of public service delivery
7. To be responsible for drawing up, negotiating with Government and delivering localised targets based on national and local priorities (e.g. Local Area Agreement)
8. To oversee the performance management of the Local Area Agreement and other relevant programmes including where required the reallocation of resources between outcomes.
9. To act as the Project Board for the development of the new Leicestershire Sustainable Community Strategy
10. To oversee planning of the Leicestershire Together Conference and Forum meetings
11. To receive an annual report on the effectiveness of partnerships in Leicestershire

Meeting Frequency = at least Quarterly

Seven key Theme Partnerships

These are the partnerships that are responsible for delivering the seven Local Area Agreement blocks (they are also listed under the Board heading) – the “engine room” of the Leicestershire Together partnership family.

- Leicester Shire Economic Partnership
- Children and Young Persons' Strategic Partnership for Leicestershire
- Stronger Communities Board
- Community Safety Programme Board
- Healthier Communities Partnership

- Older Persons Board
- Cleaner and Greener Block/Environmental Action for a Better Leicestershire (ENABLE)

Terms of Reference

In addition to the specific terms of reference for their individual partnership, the responsibilities of these Partnerships, in relation to Leicestershire Together, are as follows:

1. Contribute fully to the process of identifying and consulting on priorities for inclusion in the Sustainable Community Strategy and Local Area Agreement
2. Co-ordinate and deliver actions that fulfil the outcomes of Leicestershire Together, in particular those outcomes in the Sustainable Community Strategy and Local Area Agreement
3. Set targets and indicators for both the delivery of actions and achieving outcomes and collect and analyse data against these targets
4. Report progress to Leicestershire Together, including on the LAA, through the agreed performance management system
5. Provide an update on key activities for inclusion in the LT Annual Report
6. Input into the Leicestershire Together Forum and Conference each year
7. Meet at least 4 times per year
8. Have an update from Leicestershire Together as an agenda item at their meetings
9. Provide articles for the Leicestershire Together e-newsletter and regular e-alerts
10. Provide information for the Leicestershire Together website
11. Provide a link to minutes or a suitable report of partnership meetings to the Leicestershire Together Communications Officer so that this can be made available via the Leicestershire Together website
12. Nominate the chair or representative from the group to sit on the Leicestershire Together Board and a Senior Officer to sit on the Strategic Senior Officer Group
13. Set up task and finish sub-groups where appropriate with a clear remit and work programme.
14. To undertake a partnership self-assessment every two years and provide the outcomes of this to the SSOG
15. Facilitate consultation and engagement with relevant agencies, organisations and individuals.
16. Link with other Leicestershire Together theme and cross-cutting partnerships where appropriate to join up working and foster good lines of communication.

Meeting Frequency – Various

Local Area Agreement Leads Group

The LAA Leads Group meets monthly to oversee the development, delivery and review of the Local Area Agreement. This group also acts as Project Team for the development (and ultimately the delivery and review) of the Sustainable Community Strategy.

The group meets on the second Friday of each month and consists of at least one officer representative from each of the theme partnerships (for some of the LAA themes there are several lead officers from different sectors).

Every third meeting of the Leads (i.e. quarterly) is extended to include representatives from the cross-cutting partnerships identified in the structure:

- Leicestershire Rural Partnership
- Local Learning Partnership
- Strategic Housing Group
- Cultural Strategy Partnership
- Housing Market Area Planning Group
- Waste Strategy Partnership
- Information Management Advisory Group
- Community Information Steering Group

Meeting Frequency = Monthly

Leicestershire Together Forum

The Leicestershire Together Forum is an inclusive forum that consists of representatives of some of the key communities of interest in Leicestershire – young people, older people, black and minority ethnic communities, people with disabilities, faith communities, business communities, travellers, refugees and asylum seekers etc.

These are key stakeholders representing groups across the county who have a direct interest in the way in which services are delivered. The purpose of the Forum is to inform and challenge the development and delivery of the Sustainable Community Strategy and Local Area Agreement. The Forum met for the first time in June 2007.

Meeting Frequency = Twice a Year

6. Membership

The current membership of each level of the structure is outlined above. Membership will be reviewed annually.

7. Job Description

Job Title: Member of Leicestershire Together Partnership “family”

Job Purpose:

- (a) To help the Leicestershire Together partnership achieve its purpose as set out in section 2 above.
- (b) To help the organisation/partnership you are representing to achieve the goals in your Strategy/Business Plan/Corporate Plan by working in partnership through Leicestershire Together

Representatives at each level of the structure have a responsibility to:

- Act in the public interest
- Promote equality by treating people with respect, regardless of race, age, religion, gender, sexual orientation or disability
- Respect the views of other members of the partnership
- Constructively challenge the opinions or actions of other members where this would be in the public interest
- Learn from others and from good practice elsewhere and develop their own knowledge of Leicestershire and the people living with it

Responsibilities:

- (a) To **find out** how:
 - Leicestershire Together can help your organisation(s)/partnership;
 - How your organisation(s) can help Leicestershire Together; and
 - What your own role should be e.g. representing an organisation or sector, bringing specific knowledge/expertise to the table, chairing Sub Groups, acting as a Board Member Champion for a particular issue and so on.
- (b) To **attend** the meetings of the Leicestershire Together Board, Strategic Senior Officer Group, theme partnership, LAA Leads, Sub Groups and other relevant partnership meetings or arrange alternative, appropriate representation where this is not possible.
- (c) To play an **active and constructive** part in meetings to help ensure their success by:
 - clearly and openly communicating your own organisation(s)' aspirations, concerns, capabilities and limitations;
 - listening to/understanding other members' input;

- looking for solutions;
 - contributing ideas and knowledge; and
 - working within any agreed rules for conduct in meetings.
- (d) To **report back** to colleagues within your organisation/partnership, disseminating key information as widely as possible, and seek decisions/guidance from them where necessary to progress Leicestershire Together business e.g. should feedback from Leicestershire Together be a standing item on other meeting agenda's
- (e) To **communicate** with other Leicestershire Together members and support staff between meetings as necessary to progress business, including by responding to requests for information or input into specific pieces of work
- (f) To **take action** yourself, or arrange action by colleagues, to progress partnership business.
- (g) To help to **set meeting agendas** which reflect the key business of Leicestershire Together and your own organisation(s)/partnerships needs and contribute items to these agenda's through the agreed processes.
- (h) To assist in **regular reviews/evaluation** of the success of the partnership – including reporting of performance and outcome indicators.
- (i) To periodically **refresh your mandate** to represent your organisation or sector on Leicestershire Together.

Person Specification

- (a) Knowledge – of the goals/priorities, capabilities and limitations of the organisation(s)/partnership(s) you represent and of the mission, purpose, vision, priorities and values of Leicestershire Together
- (b) Listening skills – ability to contribute to a culture of open and honest discussion, by listening to what others say and responding appropriately
- (c) Clear, assertive communicator – able to input to discussions at the right time and to ensure that your input is relevant, focussed and understood by the rest of the partnership i.e. use clear, simple language and avoid jargon
- (d) Accountability – mandated by those you are representing and in a position to report back, secure decisions and initiate action by colleagues as necessary. Be clear about what you bring to the table.
- (e) Organisational ability – able to report back to colleagues, undertake or co-ordinate actions and obtain decisions/guidance within limited timescales between meetings.

- (f) Partnership working – able to make linkages with other organisations and partnerships in a constructive and positive way, recognising different ways of working and levels of capacity.
- (g) Learning – be open to learning from the things that we do individually and collectively as a partnership – failures as well as successes

8. Decision Making

Reporting

The partnership will develop and deliver the LAA, Sustainable Community Strategy and its own action plans. In support of this it will receive reports as appropriate from:

- The Strategic Senior Officer Group
- The seven Theme Partnerships
- Cross-cutting and Support Partnerships
- The Partnership support team, based in the Policy Team of Leicestershire County Council
- Any existing or new Sub Groups established to fulfil a specific role within the structure
- Individual partner organisations
- LAA Leads and Leads Plus Group

Confidentiality

In general, partners should feel able to speak openly without being quoted directly. When an agenda item is confidential, this should be made clear so that all present are aware that this is the case.

Respect and Tolerance

Leicestershire Together partners come from different organisational and personal backgrounds and agree to respect and be tolerant of each others views and ways of working.

Mutual respect means playing a full and positive part in meetings, being open and inclusive in relationships and remarks and seeking consensus.

Accountability and Conduct

All members of Leicestershire Together should regularly report back to their own organisation/partnership about the work of Leicestershire Together and the impact on that organisation/partnership.

Council representatives have an obligation to formally report back to the Council. The Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee may call Leicestershire Together and its partners to account.

Partners are also accountable to each other in the delivery of the LAA and Sustainable Community Strategy and for the commitments they make to the partnership on behalf of their organisation.

Financial accountability – Leicestershire County Council is the accountable body for the Leicestershire Local Area Agreement.

The meetings of the Board and Strategic Senior Officer Group are open to the public and minutes of these meetings are made available on the website.

As outlined above, the LSP is not a statutory public body, however the code of conduct introduced by the Committee for Standards in Public Life (Nolan) sets standards to which partners should conform. The seven principles of public life are:

Selflessness – partners should take decisions solely in terms of the public interest. They should not do so in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family or friends

Integrity – partners should not place themselves under any financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organisations that might influence them in the performance of their LSP role

Objectivity – in carrying out LSP business, partners should always make choices on merit

Accountability – partners are accountable for their decision and actions to the public and must submit themselves to whatever scrutiny is appropriate to their role within the LSP

Openness – partners should be as open as possible about all the decisions and actions that they take. They should give reasons for their decisions and restrict information only when the wider public interest clearly demands

Honesty – partners have a duty to declare any private interests relating to their role within the LSP and to take steps to resolve any conflicts arising in a way that protects the public interest

Leadership – partners should promote and support these principles by leadership and example.

9. Communication

Communication is the responsibility of all partners. Communication is both internal with all members of the partnership and external by members to the organisations and partnerships they represent and by the partnership as a whole to the Leicestershire public.

Principles and key areas for communication are set out in the Leicestershire Together Communication Plan (Appendix 2)

Partners should aim to use communication that is clear, simple and free of jargon and abbreviations.

Partners should facilitate a two way flow of information by consulting with their organisation/partnership on the work of Leicestershire Together, communicating decisions and achievements to them and seeking wider input into key decisions.

10. Operating and Support arrangements

Leicestershire Together is non-statutory, non-executive and has no independent legal status. It does not have a separate legal entity and does not directly control resources, employ staff or enter into contracting arrangements. Its boundary of operation is that of Leicestershire County Council.

Secretarial Support

In the short term, secretarial support for the Board and SSOG will be provided by the Committee Support section of Leicestershire County Council, including the preparation and despatch of agendas, reports, minutes and general correspondence in connections with the work of the partnership. We will aim to send meeting agendas and papers out at least five working days prior to the meeting and papers will also be posted on the website.

General support for Leicestershire Together is provided by a small team of people within the Policy team of Leicestershire County Council. Financial resources to support the team and the LSP are provided by Leicestershire County Council.