

## **Stratford on Avon District Council**

### **Policy - Partnership Working**

#### **1 Introduction**

Stratford-on-Avon District Council (SDC) has a genuine commitment to partnership working and is involved in a number of partnerships (locally, county-wide and regional) based on the belief that effective partnerships will improve the quality of life of the residents of the District as well as assisting in providing high quality, value for money services.

In addition, effective partnership working is detailed as a key Government priority – providing genuine partnerships with the people we serve - (White Paper – Strong and Prosperous Communities) and is a crucial element of the revised CPA methodology.

#### **2 Purpose**

This policy provides the Council's vision and scope for partnership working together with an approved definition of an approved partnership as opposed to joint or contractual working arrangement. It also outlines the criteria for the Council entering into or establishing a partnership. For clarity a partnership checklist has been developed which must be completed by the SDC lead officer and/or Elected Member (if applicable) and all external key partners. The checklist provides the key elements that all partnerships need to work to or have in place to enable the Council to determine if the partnership is one the Council wishes to enter into or continue with.

This policy does not apply to the Council's relationship with services, third-party service providers or the wide range of organisations with which the Council has informal working relations as part of its operational activities. See paragraph 5.2.

#### **3 Vision**

'To ensure we manage relationships with our partners in an efficient and effective way and that any partnerships we are involved in are action and outcome focused, encourage innovative solutions for change and where progress is reported regularly and measured effectively'.

#### **4 Aims**

The Council will establish formal partnerships, working at both strategic and operational level, where there are clear opportunities to achieve some or all of its corporate priorities.

## 5 Definitions

### 5.1 Partnership Working

The Council defines a partnership as a formal working arrangement involving one or more independent bodies, from any sector, who share responsibility for agreeing and/or then delivering a set of planned actions and outcomes. A formal agreement is made by all partners to work together for specific outcomes.

In summary all partnerships will agree:-

- A shared strategic vision/objectives
- Resource availability/requirements
- Clear measurable outcomes
- Added value
- Risks
- Timescales for review or life of partnership

Partners should:

- Be independent bodies working willingly in collaboration with each other.
- Agree to co-operate and commit resources to achieve a common goal/s.
- Create a process by which to work together, to develop and implement and monitor a joint programme of work.
- Be prepared to share relevant information, risks and rewards.
- Recognise the statutory obligations of the Council and its discretionary functions
- Be prepared to accept decisions made by the partnership within the agreed parameters

### 5.2 Contractual Arrangements

An arrangement made by the Council with a third party to deliver a service on its behalf where the Council and the service provider do not have a shared objective, for example, a simple contractual arrangement. The Council is the sole procurer of the service and the third party is the contracted provider. The objective of the Council is to secure delivery of the service and the objective of the service provider is to secure a profit. For example, the Council has entered into a contract with BIFFA to provide street cleansing services. Whilst BIFFA state they are working in partnership with the Council to deliver services it is a formal contractual arrangement and not regarded as a partnership for purposes of this policy.

### 5.3 Joint Working Arrangements/Collaborative Working

Forums or groups that the Elected Members and/or Officers belong to who come together to discuss policy, strategy or forthcoming

issues. Whilst these involve collaborative working and are similar to partnerships, the key difference is there is no formal agreement or in some cases agreed outcomes. The Council may participate in an advisory capacity or to gain a wider view to inform developments within the Council. For example, the Warwickshire Waste Partnership.

- 5.4 Another area of joint working is where the Council provides funding over a fixed period in return for an agreed set of actions. For example, community funding agreements (grants) with the voluntary sector.

## 6 **Entering into a new or existing partnership**

The Council will determine the suitability for entering into a formal partnership against the following criteria:

- How the work of the partnership contributes to the Council's Corporate Strategy and Priorities.
- How the work of the partnership benefits residents, businesses and visitors to the district.
- Is the partnership able to carry out functions SDC needs efficiently, or enable better performance than we could do on our own, or is able to act as a delivery agent for our corporate strategy?
- Will the partnership commit itself to the Council's aims and objectives
- Are there arrangements in place to regularly monitor and report on the effectiveness of the partnership?
- Is there clarity on roles of appointed members, reasons why they are on that partnership and what their remit is?

Officers and/or Members are required in the first instance to complete the Partnership Checklist when proposing that the Council enters into a new partnership or joins an existing partnership.

The Council will go through a clear decision making process before committing itself to a partnership. Depending on the type of partnership proposed and commitment in respect of resources and time there are a number of routes that approval for entering into a partnership can take.

To reinforce the commitment all new and existing partnership will have a 'Statement of Commitment' signed by the Lead Officer from each organisation involved in the Partnership.

In respect of Stratford on Avon District Council, the statement will be counter-signed by a Member of Management Team and/or the Leader of the Council (if applicable).

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