



Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority

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| MEETING | Executive Committee |
| DATE OF MEETING | 14 May 2014 |
| OFFICER | David Skinner, Director of Finance and Assets |
| LEAD MEMBER | Councillor Adrian Busby |
| SUBJECT OF THE REPORT | Partnership Governance Framework |
| EXECUTIVE SUMMARY | <p>As part of the continuous audit process a number of audit recommendations were made, including a review of the Partnership Governance Framework.</p> <p>An internal and external review of all parts of the partnership framework has been carried out.</p> <p>This process included internal scrutiny of the existing partners and examination of the relevance of the current partners to the service delivery of Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Fire Authority.</p> <p>As a result of the internal review the number of formally agreed partnerships was reduced from seventeen to five.</p> <p>An independent external reviewer using set criteria recommended by CIPFA in their Evaluating Partnership Guide reviewed the five remaining partnerships. All partnerships have now been reviewed and a number of recommendations have been made.</p> |
| ACTION | Decision and Information. |
| RECOMMENDATIONS | <p>It is recommended that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Members approve the partnership strategy; 2. The principles set out in Paragraph 9 of the Partnership Strategy be adopted as the Partnership Policy. |
| RISK MANAGEMENT | <p>As set out in Section 20 of the Financial Instructions:</p> <p>Each partnership should have a defined responsible manager within the Authority. This person is responsible for ensuring that:</p> <p>The partnership is appraised for financial viability in both the current and future years;</p> <p>The financial risk to the Authority is assessed;</p> |

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| | <p>Appropriate resources are assigned to the governance of the partnership;</p> <p>The partnership is supported by an appropriate documented agreement which outlines the financial liabilities and accountabilities of the partners, together with procedures for financial transactions and monitoring, and which has been agreed in writing by all partners; and</p> <p>The accounting arrangements are satisfactory.</p> <p>The Treasurer must be consulted and their agreement obtained to the acceptability of the details in respect of the above prior to commencement of the Partnership.</p> |
| FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS | There are no direct financial implications arising from this report. |
| LEGAL IMPLICATIONS | The Authority's Financial Regulations (E.2) provide that "The Executive is responsible for approving partnership arrangements/joint working initiatives with other local public, private, voluntary and community sector organisations to address local needs." |
| HEALTH AND SAFETY | There are no health and safety implications arising from this report. |
| EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY | There are no equality and diversity implications arising from this report. |
| USE OF RESOURCES | Any existing partnerships have been reviewed for use resource utilisation and any new partnerships will be considered against the criteria set out in the strategy. |
| PROVENANCE SECTION & BACKGROUND PAPERS | <p>Background</p> <p>O&A 9/12/10 Update - Significant Governance Issues 2009/10 Internal Audit Report: Review of progress on internal audit recommendations from previous audits</p> <p>O&A 12/5/11 Internal Audit Report: Review of progress on internal audit recommendations from previous audits</p> <p>O&A 22/6/11 Review of Progress on Internal Audit Recommendations Annex</p> <p>O&A 25/9/13 Annual Governance Statement 2012/13. Internal Audit Report: Update of progress of Audit Recommendations</p> |

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| | <p>Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority Financial Regulations</p> <p>http://www.bucksfire.gov.uk/NR/rdonlyres/F5A74AFB-37F7-42D0-9B07-B29E98DF789D/0/08FINANCIALREGULATIONS.pdf</p> <p><i>Evaluating Partnerships, An Overview and Compendium of Approaches</i> CIPFA May 2009 (Copyrighted material)</p> <p>http://www.cipfa.org/policy-and-guidance/publications/e/evaluating-partnerships-an-overview-and-compendium-of-approaches</p> |
| <p>APPENDICES</p> | <p>Appendix 1: Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority Partnership Strategy 2014/15</p> <p>Appendix 2: Partnership register</p> <p>Appendix 3: List of district partnerships attended by BFRS</p> |
| <p>TIME REQUIRED</p> | <p>10 minutes.</p> |
| <p>REPORT ORIGINATOR AND CONTACT</p> | <p>David Skinner</p> <p>dskinner@bucksfire.gov.uk</p> <p>01296 744671</p> |

Appendix 1

Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority Partnership Strategy 2014/15

1. Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority Partnership Strategy.

In order to deliver the vision for the Fire Authority there are a number of underpinning values pertinent to working in partnership. In particular, *working to reduce risk and working in a cooperative and inclusive manner with all groups within the Authorities' area.*

2. Introduction

Partnership working is something that Fire Authorities have excelled in over the last twenty years. The type of partnership has been many and varied, from loose meetings of minds with common or uncommon goals to full blown integrated partnerships involving considerable amounts of finance and resources. In some cases the desire to work with certain groups has overridden the achievement of actual outcomes to the Fire Authority, despite the input of income and resources. A number of partnerships involved commercial contracts with other local authority fire and rescue services or local government departments therefore were not true partnerships.

The purpose of this review was to ensure that the Fire Authority is receiving good value for the finance and resources it expends on partnership working and that the Fire Authority is not at risk. The review has been restricted to formal partnerships and where there is a financial or substantial resources input. The review was carried out in two distinct parts; the first was internal and focussed on the definition of partnerships as seen by the Fire Authority. The internal review also considered what partnerships the Authority was already involved in and whether they were true partnerships based on the definition. This enabled the existing register to be reduced considerably. The second part of the review was independent and external using set criteria to review each partnership on the reduced register.

3. Partnership Definition

The Fire Authority's definition of partnership is: *"A real working relationship where two or more parties commit some of their available capacity and/or resources in pursuit of a common goal that aligns back to the organisation's corporate vision and values. There should be evidence of real inputs that deliver real outputs and ultimately outcomes."*

4. Internal Review

An internal review was carried out on the existing Partnership Register. It was clear that a number of the partnerships were no more than informal meetings between likeminded groups with common objectives. While the joint working was positive in many cases the goal was not common. Similarly a number of the partnerships were statutory and the Authority had to be represented whether there was a common goal or not. Lastly there were a number of partnerships where the input from the Authority was far greater than that of the partner organisation. In the latter case this could be by the provision of equipment or other resources, however the outcome was not necessarily to the benefit of the Authority.

5. External Review

An independent external review was carried out of the five remaining partnerships.

The criteria used for the review was based on that recommended by CIPFA in their Evaluating Partnerships Guide.

The Criteria used is detailed below:

- a) Is the partnership legally defined and agreed by both partners?
- b) Does it fit within the Fire Authority Plan?
- c) Are there clear aims and outcomes for the partnership?
- d) Are the outcomes measurable and agreed by both partners?
- e) Is the risk shared as well as the resources?
- f) Has the partnership been reviewed by both partners?
- g) Could the outcomes be achieved in any other manner?
- h) Is there an exit strategy should the authority require one?
- i) Is there an agreed protocol for dispute resolution between the partners?
- j) Is there a clear financial protocol for shared funding?

6. Review Criteria Results

a) Is the partnership legally defined and agreed by both partners?

Four of the five partnerships are legally defined, the remaining partnership with the British Red Cross should be considered by the Legal & Governance Directorate and a joint agreement arranged with both partners.

b) Where does it fit within the Fire Authority Plan?

All partnerships fit within at least one criteria of the Fire Authority Plan.

c) Are there clear aims and outcomes for the partnership?

All partnerships have clear aims and outcomes.

d) Are the outcomes measurable and agreed by both partners?

All partnerships have some measurable outcomes but are not necessarily agreed by both partners. Efforts should be made to agree measurable outcomes between both partners.

e) Is the risk shared as well as the resources?

In four of the partnerships the risk is fully shared, in the agreement with the MK Safety Centre the risk is shared but not fully. It is recommended that this should be reviewed to ensure full risk sharing takes place.

f) Date of last review by both partners?

Four out of the five partnerships have been reviewed annually; it is recommended that the partnership with the British Red Cross be reviewed to bring it into line with the other partnerships.

g) Could the outcomes be achieved in any other manner?

In two cases the outcome could not be achieved in any other manner, with the other three the outcome could be achieved by other means at a greater cost to the authority.

h) Is there an exit strategy should the authority require one?

Neither Safer MK nor Safer & Stronger Bucks have an exit strategy, which would allow the Authority to withdraw if they had to. It is recommended that an agreed exit strategy be put in place for both these partnerships at the next review.

i) Is there an agreed protocol for dispute resolution between the partners?

It is recommended that an agreed protocol for dispute resolution between the partners in all five partnerships be agreed during the next review.

j) Is there a clear financial protocol for shared funding?

During the next review period the Finance Directorate should review the financial protocols for all five partnerships.

7. Overall Review Results

The internal and external reviews highlighted that there are many examples of good practice across all of the Authorities partnerships. Both reviews highlighted that the Authority is involved in many differing types of partnership, informal, formal, legislative, strategic and service delivery. In order to ensure that the Fire Authority receives the best value from its partnership working together with protecting the Authority from any foreseeable risks the forgoing recommendations should be implemented during the next review period. In addition the following recommendations should be implemented when considering any new partnership working.

8. Existing and Future Partnership Working

Following the review of the existing Partnerships a new register has now been created containing the five current partnerships. Sponsoring Directorates should review all partnerships annually. Following the annual review if partnerships no longer meet the criteria then the future of the partnership should be discussed with the partner organisation. If the partnership has achieved its objectives it should be disbanded and removed from the Partnership Register.

9. New partnerships

Before instigating a new partnership a number of questions should be asked?

- i. Is there a common vision and objective for both partners
- ii. Is there a clear statement of the partnership principles and objectives?
- iii. Is this agreed in the partnership protocol?
- iv. What is the legal status of the partnership?
- v. What is the extent of the partner's authority to bind the other to decisions?
- vi. Is there clear accountability for proper financial administration?
- vii. Has the partnership got a protocol for dispute resolution?
- viii. Are there agreed performance measurement structures in place?
- ix. Has a value for money assessment been carried out?

Before entering into any legal or financial partnership agreement all documentation must be agreed by the sponsoring Directorate and the Legal and Finance Directorates.

Only when all criteria have been met should a new partnership be added to the Partnership Register.

Appendix 2 - Partnership Register

| Partnership Name | Original Signing Date | Is The Partnership Legally Defined And Agreed By Both Partners? | Where Does It Fit Within The Fire Authority Plan? | Are There Clear Aims And Outcomes For The Partnership? | Are The Outcomes Measureable And Agreed By Both Partners? | Is The Risk Shared As Well As The Resources? | Date Of Last Review By Both Partners? | Could The Outcomes Be Achieved In Any Other Manner? | Is There An Exit Strategy Should The Authority Require one? |
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| Safer MK | N/K | Crime & Disorder Act 1998 | Vision & Strategic Objectives | Yes | In Part | Yes | Annual | No | No |
| Safer & Stronger Bucks | N/K | Crime & Disorder Act 1998 | Vision & Strategic Objectives | Yes | In Part | Yes | Annual | No | No |
| MK Safety Centre | 2010 | Yes | Strategic Objectives & Local Plan | Yes | Yes, Activity Outcomes, No | Yes (Limited) | Annual | Potentially | Yes |
| Oxon FRS/RBFPS | 2013 | Yes | Protection | Yes | Not Agreed but Measureable | Yes | Annual | Yes, but at greater cost | Yes |
| USAR Canine Hampshire FRS | Feb 2009 | Yes | Response/ National Resilience | Yes | Yes | Yes | Feb 14 (new agreement drafted) | Yes – own canine provision but at greater cost | Yes |
| Fire Co-Responder | 1/03/14 | Yes | Vision & Strategic Objectives | Yes | Yes | Yes | 1/06/14 | Not by using fire crews as co-responders | Yes |
| British Red Cross | 2012 | No | Prevention | Yes | Not agreed In Advance | Yes | N/K | Yes, but at greater cost | Yes |

Appendix 3 - List of district partnerships attended by BFRS

| District | Group |
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| AVD | AV CSP Strategy Group |
| AVD | Aylesbury Vale Local Strategic Partnership |
| BFRS | Building Control Liaison |
| BFRS | Fire and Emergency Support Services |
| BFRS | Safety Advisory Groups |
| Bucks | Bucks CC Road Safety Team |
| Bucks | BSP Policy Officers Group |
| CD | Chiltern CSP Strategy Group |
| CD | Chiltern Community Partnership (LSP) Full |
| CD | Chiltern Community Partnership (LSP) Steering Group |
| MK | Milton Keynes Council Road Safety Team |
| MK | Safe at Home Scheme |
| MK | SaferMK Performance Group |
| MK | SaferMK Public Safety |
| SBD | South Bucks CSP Strategy Group |
| SBD | South Bucks Partnership (LSP) |
| WD | Wycombe CSP Strategy Group |
| WD | Wycombe Partnership (LSP) Executive |
| WD | Wycombe Partnership (LSP) Full |
| AVD | AV CSP (Implementation) |
| AVD | AV Community Cohesion Delivery Group |
| AVD | AVDC ASB Tactical Action Group (TAG) |
| AVD | AVDC Joint Action Group (JAG) |
| Bucks | Bucks ASB Strategy Group |
| Bucks | Bucks Equalities Network |
| Bucks | Chinese Business Community Partnership |
| Bucks | Community Cohesion & Equalities Forum |
| Bucks | MARAC |
| Bucks | Youth Inclusion and Support Panels |
| CD | CDC Joint Action Group (JAG) |
| CD | Chiltern CSP (Implementation) |
| MK | Joint Area Tasking and Coordination |
| MK | Joint Emergency Services Group |
| SBD | SBDC Joint Action Group (JAG) |
| SBD | SBDC CSP (Strategy Group) |
| SBD | South Bucks CSP (Implementation) |
| SBD | South Bucks Partnership Implementation Group |
| WD | Wycombe CSP (Strategy Group) |
| WD | Wycombe CSP (Implementation) |
| WD | Wycombe Community Cohesion Delivery Group |
| WD | Wycombe Community Cohesion Strategy Group |
| WD | Wycombe Joint Action Group |

Partnership Governance Framework

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| Bucks | Bucks Community Safety partnership |
| Bucks | Bucks Resilience Group |
| AVD | Aylesbury LSP |

| FRS Area | Group |
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| SE Region | CFOA SE Protection Strategic Group |
| SE Region | Environment Agency South East (EASE) and FRSs |
| TV | Local Resilience Forum Regional Contingency Group |
| SE Region | South East Operational Response & Resilience Group |
| TV | Local Resilience Forum Communications Group |
| TV | Thames Valley Cross border Group |
| TV | Thames Valley NVQ Centre |
| SE Region | South East Operational Policy & Procedure (SEOPAP) |
| FRS | Silverstone Major event group |

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