

ARUN DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO AND DECISION OF AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE ON 14 FEBRUARY 2019

PART A : REPORT

SUBJECT: Update on Progress against the Recommendations from the Partnerships Audit

REPORT AUTHOR: Jackie Follis, Group Head of Policy

DATE: 4 February 2019

EXTN: 37580

PORTFOLIO AREA: Policy

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

In late 2015, an audit was carried out to review Arun's partnerships. Subsequently some work was done on this and a list of key partnerships identified. This list now needs to be revisited and updated. This paper proposes the broad approach to be used and the questions to be asked against each of these partnerships.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

To note the background and proposed approach to developing an up-to-date partnership register

1. BACKGROUND:

- 1.1. Partnership working has been identified as increasingly important for the future, particularly given the predicted future financial situation for local government. This has been brought into sharp focus by the recent decision of West Sussex County Council to remove funding from voluntary/commissioning organisations involved in homelessness.
- 1.2. Recent Audit Commission guidance emphasises the importance of local authorities understanding who their partners are, the nature of the collaboration, accountabilities and governance arrangements. A link to this is provided under Background Papers
- 1.3. Some work was done on this in 2017 at the request of the Audit and Governance Committee when CMT agreed a working definition of 'partnerships' to facilitate the development of a Partnerships Register and ongoing process for reviewing this.

"A voluntary or statutory arrangement between the authority and one or more free and independent parties which is designed to secure some shared objective. The authority is required to make either a significant financial contribution or a significant contribution in terms of other assets or it will take the role of lead or accountable body within the arrangement"

A partnership is not about a traditional customer/supplier relationship, outsourcing or other purely contractual relationship”

- 1.4. The Constitution lists a number of partnerships which were in operation at December 2017 which are included in Part 3, section 12.0 of the Constitution, attached as appendix 1. Work needs to be done to determine whether or not this list is complete according to the agreed definition. Obvious omissions are the Joint Arun Area Committees, there may be others. Work also needs to be done to determine if the definition agreed in 2017 is still valid and to clarify the term ‘significant’ as set out in this definition. Consideration should also be given as to where this list should be held and if the Constitution is the most appropriate place, given the operational (and potentially changing) nature of our relationships with partners.
- 1.5. We refer to partnership working on our website, <https://www.arun.gov.uk/partnership-working> but this list is not identical to that included in the Constitution. We also have separate references to partnership on our Wellbeing pages and the Arun Business Partnership pages, demonstrating some of the lack of clarity around the definition. We need to review all references to partnership on the website with Group Heads.

2. PROPOSAL(S):

- 2.1. The Group Head of Policy will clarify the definition with CMT and produce an up-to-date Register of partners who meet this definition. Due to Election commitments this will not be possible until later in the year.
- 2.2. It has previously been agreed that following clarity on the definition a number of key actions should be carried out. The Group Head of Policy has reviewed these and is proposing that the following questions need to be asked by the relevant Directors/Group Heads, once the agreed list of partners has been identified.
- Does a partnership have formal governance arrangements covering all participants?
 - Does membership of the partnership contribute to the Council’s objectives?
 - Are partnership costs/inputs from ADC understood and controlled (financial support, time etc) and is the participation cost-effective?
 - Is the partnership operating effectively – is it monitored to ensure active participation from all, does the partnership deliver synergy, has it continued beyond its usefulness etc?
 - Is performance of the partnership monitored to ensure it continues to deliver?
 - Are risks (to the Council, other members of the community etc.), identified, assessed and managed?
 - Is the work of the partnership appropriately publicised?

- Are formal reports on the partnership provided to Officers, Members and the public as appropriate, where this is considered to be necessary?
- 2.3. It is proposed that this work is undertaken to a timescale determined in discussion with CMT, but potentially by the end of this financial year.
- 2.4. It is further proposed that regular reviews/updates of the partnership register are undertaken at intervals to be agreed once the work set out above is completed.
- 2.5. The views of and suggestions from members are welcomed.

3. OPTIONS:

To note the proposed approach to up-dating the partnerships register

4. CONSULTATION:

See note in implications

Has consultation been undertaken with:	YES	NO
Relevant Town/Parish Council		✓
Relevant District Ward Councillors		✓
Other groups/persons (please specify)		✓
5. ARE THERE ANY IMPLICATIONS IN RELATION TO THE FOLLOWING COUNCIL POLICIES: (Explain in more detail at 6 below)	YES	NO
Financial		✓
Legal		✓
Human Rights/Equality Impact Assessment		✓
Community Safety including Section 17 of Crime & Disorder Act		✓
Sustainability		✓
Asset Management/Property/Land		✓
Technology		✓
Other (please explain)		✓

6. IMPLICATIONS:

There are no implications for the actual review, the review may however lead to considering the nature of our future relationship with some partners which could well have implications for a number of Council policies.

7. REASON FOR THE DECISION:

To produce an up to date register of partners

8. BACKGROUND PAPERS:

Arun website partnership page:-

<https://www.arun.gov.uk/partnership-working>

CIPFA Guidance to Audit Committees on Partnerships (see extract attached)



Appendix - CIPFA
Guidance Extract.pdf