



South Hams District Council and West Devon Borough Council

Partnership Policy May 2016

Introduction

South Hams and West Devon Councils are committed to partnerships that deliver tangible benefits, offer value for money, have correct governance arrangements in place and where any risks and implications for the Councils are understood, monitored, reported and mitigated.

Effective partnerships will offer targeted high quality services that demonstrably support local communities, businesses or the environment. Working through partnerships the Councils are able to enhance the quality of life for local residents.

This policy will guide partnership working and is an updated version of the previous 2013 policy. It follows work undertaken by a Task and Finish Group consisting of Elected Members from South Hams District Council and West Devon Borough Council and a review at Overview and Scrutiny Committees in September 2015 at both Councils.

This policy establishes the basis and arrangements for Partnership working. Further *Partnership Guidance* and appendices follow the main body of the policy. A full list of partnerships is held in the *Partnership Register*.

Aim

To ensure that the Councils involvement in partnerships is outcome focussed, that partnerships are carefully assessed prior to being established and that progress, performance, risk and financial contribution is monitored and reported.

Definition and Scope

The Audit Commission defines a partnership as:

"...an agreement between two or more independent bodies to work collectively to achieve an objective."

South Hams and West Devon Councils will use this definition to underpin partnership arrangements, monitoring and review.

The Councils recognise that some partnerships carry greater commitment from the Councils than others. South Hams and West Devon Councils will identify those partnerships that carry greater risk and ensure that these “significant” partnerships are subject to enhanced assessment and monitoring.

“Significant” Partnerships are defined as those where there is:

- A resource threshold of £10,000 or more per Council per annum (including direct financial contributions and officer time) and /or
- More than 4 days staff time per month and/or
- Potential for significant reputational, political, legal or operational risk taking into account whether the partnership has a
 - high influence on Council or Partnership spending or provides an opportunity to access a significant level of funding;
 - high impact on service delivery;
 - high impact on strategic policy development;
 - significant role in meeting identified local needs and priorities;
 - potential to save considerable funds and provide a high level of “value for money” compared to partners acting independently;
 - high public profile and is involved in significant strategic work that affects the public
- Statutory requirement

Other Partnerships are described as “Desirable” and reflect the reduced financial, statutory or risk involved in the partnership.

Key Partnership Outcomes

Each Council has adopted a version of *Our Plan* as the strategic plan to guide the work of the Councils. The visions within *Our Plan*, and the objectives that underpin delivery, are set out below. Delivery against these themes provide the basis on which the Council will enter partnerships and the theme(s) relevant to each partnership is/are noted in the Partnership Register.

West Devon: Thriving Towns and Villages

South Hams: Vibrant Towns and villages whilst conserving the Natural Environment

The themes and objectives that underpin these, and which will form the basis for partnership arrangements and review, are.

- Economy - Creating places for enterprise to thrive and business to grow
- Homes - Enabling homes that meet the needs of all
- Infrastructure - Securing the services and facilities that meet the needs of our communities

- Communities -Empowering residents to create strong communities
- Wellbeing - Supporting positive, safe and healthy lifestyles
- Environment - Protecting, conserving and enhancing our built and natural environment
- Heritage - Celebrating our past and protecting our heritage for the future
- Resources - Promoting energy efficiency and more effective use of our natural resources

Establishing, Monitoring and Reviewing Partnerships

As identified by the Audit Commission the Councils recognise that local partnerships are essential to the delivery of improvements in public services and community quality of life.

Working in collaboration with partners who share common objectives can provide value for money and achieve greater economies of scale.

The Councils expect each partnership to have appropriate systems in place to manage performance, finance, risk, equalities and environmental sustainability in addition to protocols for sharing information and knowledge. It is the responsibility of the lead officer to request copies of the relevant documentation pertaining to this if required. Further details are set out in the Guidance that accompanies this policy.

The relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee will review significant partnerships annually. Officers and Members representing the Councils on external partnerships have a duty to represent the Councils wide interests and report back progress to the relevant committee as required.

Types of Partnership

It is recognised that Partnerships may support local communities in differing ways – in some examples the partnership may be at a strategic level attempting to secure regional funds – at the other extreme it may be by providing direct support to local community led meetings. In order to recognise the distinct nature of partnerships and the means of operating and monitoring them the following classifications are used.

Type	Purpose	Form	Examples	Monitoring
Strategic	Influencing policy, projects and financial programmes at county, regional or national level.	Usually a formal arrangement with "Terms of reference" or similar. Not always involving direct funding – rather a commitment of time and influence. Councils represented by Leader, Portfolio lead, SLT or ELT level representative.	LEP City Deal Growth Deal LAG LEAF	Informal by lead officers and/or members. Can be called to O&S. Annual feedback to O&S
Service Improvement	Working with public sector or business partners to improve general scope and delivery of services.	May be formal or informal arrangement. Not usually involving direct funding – rather a commitment of time and influence. Councils represented by appropriate Specialist.	Devon Planning Officers Group. Devon Landscape Policy Group.	Informal by lead officers. Can be called to O&S Annual feedback to O&S
Community Liaison	Supporting local organisations to work together to improve outcomes for communities and individuals Usually community led	Usually a formal arrangement with Terms of reference or similar. Usually covers a geographic area but could cover a theme (i.e. housing) Not usually involving direct funding – rather a commitment of time and support. Has an identified Specialist or Locality lead	WD Northern Cluster. Okehampton Matters. SH Town Mayors and Clerks. South Hams Tree Wardens.	Informal by lead officers Can be called to O&S Annual feedback to O&S
Community Delivery	Supporting a community organisation to deliver specific community outcomes	Usually a formal arrangement. Usually involves direct funding where Council contribution levers in additional social benefits on a not for profit basis. Has an identified Specialist lead.	CAB CVS Ring & Ride	Quarterly feedback to Lead Officer Can be called to O&S Annual feedback to O&S