

Warwickshire Police Authority and Warwickshire Police Force

Partnership Strategy

Introduction

Successful partnership working is an essential element of the Authority's and Force's processes providing a powerful mechanism for tackling strategic and operational issues and enhancing our ability to protect our communities from harm. Effective partnerships, whether formulated in response to central government requirements or as a result of local priorities, enable more efficient deployment of scarce resources and add value to the delivery of services through the co-ordination of effort.

New partnership arrangements can open up significant opportunities for implementing innovative and sustainable initiatives as well as securing information sharing between agencies. They can also provide the opportunity to enhance the collective understanding of problems within communities.

It is therefore very important that processes for the establishment and governance of partnerships are clear and consistent. This document underpins the good practice that already exists within the Authority and Force in this respect by overlaying a structured approach to our existing and emergent partnership work.

Scope of the Strategy

This strategy covers strategic and operational partnerships, partnerships which attract dedicated funding and those which do not, and partnerships at regional, force-wide or locality level. Public private partnerships and procurement partnerships are specifically excluded from the strategy as they are subject to their own governance arrangements.

Aims for Partnership Working

We aim to work in partnership with external organisations in the statutory, voluntary, non-profit and private sectors where it can be demonstrated that by doing so, service delivery to local communities will be enhanced.

We engage in partnerships where acting together achieves more and generates better value for money than acting in isolation.

We use partnerships to break down cultural barriers and deliver services in a way that is owned and understood by the wider community.

Strategic Context

All partnership activity engaged in by Warwickshire Police Authority and Warwickshire Police Force must contribute to improving the delivery of our priorities as set out in our three-year strategy and local policing plan. This test is applied to new partnership projects and is used to evaluate the effectiveness of existing partnerships.

Governance Principles

This document includes a framework for evaluating partnerships to ensure that they meet our governance standards and that they meet the tests of efficiency and effectiveness. The framework is explained and set out in more detail below.

In summary, our partnerships must:

- Have clear, agreed aims and objectives and performance measures
- Have clear financial arrangements
- Have properly structured governance arrangements
- Ensure that partners understand each other and build good relationships based on trust
- Have clear lines of accountability
- Have defined life cycles, or, for ongoing partnerships, have timetables for review.
- Conduct appropriate risk identification and management processes

External Guidance on the Governance of Partnerships

Two key documents have influenced the production and content of this strategy. Firstly, the Audit Commission's report "Governing Partnerships – Bridging the Accountability Gap" 2005, and secondly, the Home Office document, "Delivery Safer Communities: A Guide to Effective Partnership Working" 2007. The Audit Commission's summary and recommendations and the executive summary of the Home Office guide are reproduced at **Appendix 1**.

Processes

In order to bring this strategy to life, a series of sequential processes is set out below. The overall intention is that the Authority and Force should:-

- Have a clear, shared understanding of all partnerships to which our organisations are committed
- Agree which are the most significant partnerships and what action should be taken to monitor them
- Evaluate each partnership with the significant ones being evaluated first and in the most detail.

Defining our partnerships

A necessary first step is to arrive at an agreed list of our current partnerships. The Authority and the Force maintain lists of partnerships but these need to be updated and combined. At the same time, partnerships should be categorised and details of any associated sub groups, boards or implementation teams should be recorded. Once this exercise is complete, a review of the list of partnerships will be undertaken annually.

Assessing the Significance of Partnerships

A form for assessing the significance of these partnerships is at **Appendix 2**. This form is to be used for all new partnerships and for existing partnerships on an annual basis. The form will determine the levels of risk and the management arrangements required to monitor each partnership. According to the level of significance, recommended actions are in place to monitor each partnership.

Evaluation Framework

A partnership evaluation form has been produced along with associated guidance notes for completion. This form is to be used for all proposed new partnerships and will also be used to assess existing partnership arrangements. The form and guidance notes are at **Appendix 3**. A process for completing this exercise will follow. Our most significant partnerships should be evaluated first and in the most detail.

Risk Management

The assessment of risk is an integral part of the governance arrangements for the Authority and the Force. Both organisations have strategic risk registers. In relation to partnerships, risk management needs to be carried out at two levels. Firstly, it is essential to establish the arrangements each partnership has in place to assess and manage its own risks. Secondly, the Authority and the Force will need to consider what risks arise in relation to involvement in each partnership, and in partnerships in general and this should form part of the normal arrangements for managing strategic risk in the two organisations.

Early Actions

Initial actions to implement this strategy:

Authority and Force representatives to prepare a single, categorised list of current partnerships.

Authority and Force representatives apply the significance assessment sheet to each of the partnerships identified in Appendix 3 and arrive at a significance scores.

Using the most significant partnerships first, ensure that the evaluation framework at Appendix 2 is applied to each partnership. Identify any gaps in the governance arrangements that arise from this exercise and report on actions required.

Ensure that the evaluation framework and the significance score sheet are use for all new partnerships.

Devise and implement a process of regular review and reporting of existing partnerships.

Conclusion

This strategy is intended to improve the consistency of our approach to, and management of, partnerships and the main body of the document is focused on processes which are aimed at bringing about this outcome .Once the initial work set out above to codify and assess partnerships is complete, this strategy may need to be revised so that it reflects the need to maintain our levels of scrutiny on existing partnerships and to ensure that new and prospective partnerships are assessed.

March 2009