

Section 6 – The Partnership Framework

6.1 Scope of the partnership framework

6.1.1 The Council has links with many external organisations, dealt with in the Constitution as follows:

- (a) Partnerships (joint arrangements where the Council is one of various partners) - covered by this partnership framework;
- (b) Appointments to external organisations (Council representatives are appointed to organisations wholly external to the Council) - covered by the appointments to external organisations procedure at Section 6 of the Delegations Document within the Constitution;
- (c) Commercial partnerships (contractual relationships with a partner undertaking work for the Council) - governed by the procurement and contractual rules within Standing Orders for Contracts at Part 3 of the Constitution, and not by this partnership framework.

6.1.2 Partnerships may be statutory or discretionary. Much external funding availability is dependent upon partnership working. The council intends that any participation in partnerships is effective and beneficial to the community. This framework provides a means of rationalising and preventing the proliferation of partnerships, while providing good co-ordination between them. It enables the Council to continue to qualify for partnership-linked external funding, while retaining a manageable partnership framework which is not itself too resource hungry and time-consuming to support. A co-ordinated approach with partners benefits Peterborough, because resources and effort can be channelled into agreed directions in line with the Community Strategy.

6.1.3 The Council must prepare a 'Community Strategy' for promoting or improving the economic, social and environmental well-being of its area, working through a Local Strategic Partnership (LSP). The LSP in Peterborough is the Greater Peterborough Partnership (GPP). It is formed to work together to enhance service delivery and promote economic, social and environmental well-being.

6.1.4 The 'challenge' aspect of Best Value encourages the Council to be innovative in its partnership arrangements, to explore different and improved ways of working with others and provide more customer-focused services. However, this partnership framework does not apply to commercial partnerships or initiatives, because commercial transactions are governed by EU Procurement Rules and the Council's Contract Regulations. Furthermore, the Council cannot delegate its functions and executive decision making to any other body unless there is specific legislation enabling it to do so. When considering any partnership arrangement, legislation particular to the service area must be checked in this respect.

6.1.5 There are various general partnering models that could apply to non-commercial partnerships, advice about which is available in the Council's guides to its Constitution. The key forms are:

- (a) a Partnership with an Unincorporated Board
- (b) a Partnership with an Incorporated Board: a company limited by guarantee; a company limited by shares; or an industrial/provident society
- (c) a Joint Venture Company
- (d) a Trust.

It is important that legislation is checked to ensure that it does not prevent a particular model from being used in.

6.2 The proposed partnership structure

6.2.1 GPP is Peterborough's Local Strategic Partnership. It comprises the range of public, private and voluntary sector partners identified in national guidance about the composition of LSPs.

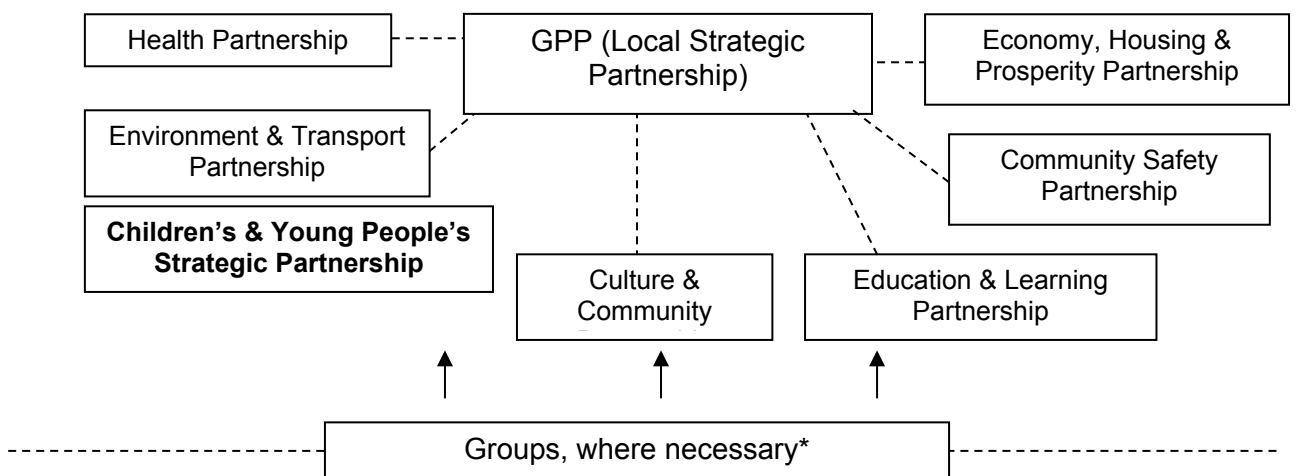
To ensure full effectiveness of the partnership framework, GPP must head a hierarchy that adds value to service delivery. The partnership framework must minimise the number of partnerships and ensure that all fit into a clear framework, which is consistently reviewed and monitored by the GPP and the City Council.

6.2.2 GPP is run by GPP Board, an unincorporated board comprising membership from public, private and voluntary/community sector representatives which will:

- (a) represent the seven key partnerships (usually via their chairmen);
- (b) avoid either duplication of representation or over-representation.

6.2.3 GPP Board's membership and operating protocols (such as frequency of meetings) are determined by GPP. Its representation follows national guidance, which says that three key sectors must have representation: the public, private and community/voluntary sectors. GPP is recognised by GO-East as a strong LSP for its private sector representation and has engagement from all key statutory agencies. The specific inclusion of chairmen of the six key partnerships, together with the membership recommended in national guidance, provides a clearly definable shape to GPP.

Diagram – The partnership structure



*Note: There may be groups leading off one or more key partnerships, although these are to be kept to a minimum

6.2.4 'Below' GPP there are seven key partnerships, covering the six priority areas recognised within the Community Strategy. These partnerships are, showing the strategic remit of each:

- (a) Community safety partnership - Community safety, youth justice, drugs strategy (including the YOT Plan, Community Safety Action Plan and Drug Action Team Plan)
- (b) Culture and community partnership - Cultural strategy
- (c) Economic, housing & prosperity partnership - Housing strategy, economic development strategy, prosperity/equality
- (d) Education and learning partnership - Education development plan/lifelong learning strategy
- (e) Environment and transport partnership - Waste, transport and environmental strategy
- (f) Health Partnership – Improving health and well-being; local and health authority and voluntary sector joint working (including the Health Delivery Plan);
- (g) Children's and Young People's Partnership – to provide a strategic lead for the development of Children's and Young People's Trust arrangements in Peterborough and to make real improvements in the lives of children and young people in Peterborough (Children's and Young People's Plan).

(Note – The references above to specific plans or strategies are intended as examples, not an exhaustive list.)

6.2.5 GPP Board determines the membership and operating protocols of the seven key partnerships. Each one:

- (a) wherever possible, carries out the full range of partnership work in 'their' area;
- (b) - has a representative (the chairman or his/her representative) that sits on the GPP Board;
- (c) - reports quarterly to GPP and also briefs the Council's Cabinet about partnership issues;
- (d) - includes representation from each partner involved in any (sub) groups;
- (e) - co-ordinates action undertaken within any groups, and reports their action to GPP.

6.2.6 The key partnerships may have groups that deliver specific activity, their pattern being determined by what is most relevant to their area of work. There is a presumption against their formation except where:

- (a) this is a statutory requirement, or
- (b) the Executive determines that it would be beneficial, or
- (c) GPP believes it would be beneficial and can identify resourcing to support it.

6.2.6.1 The membership and operating protocols of any groups may be determined by statutory guidance or by joint agreement between the key partners involved (particularly the accountable body, if any). The relevant key partnership may seek to change or terminate the group, where appropriate in line with this framework - the key partnerships have a valuable role in co-ordinating activity and assessing the value of groups (existing or proposed) within their sphere of activity.

6.2.6.2 To maintain coherence within the framework, all groups will be required to link into one of the seven key partnerships, and report activity to it regularly. Their chairman (or his/her representative) should be represented on the relevant key partnership.

- 6.2.7 Partnerships or groups may set up workshops or short term study groups to consider specific issues. These are expected to have a target lifespan and stated purpose (usually a set of terms of reference).
- 6.2.8 GPP and the seven key partnerships each appoint their own chairman.
- 6.2.9 GPP, the key partnerships and groups will each include representation from the three sectors: public, private and voluntary/community. The framework will attempt to achieve a balance between the sectors at each level.

6.3 Protocols governing operation of the partnership framework

- 6.3.1 GPP, with the City Council, co-ordinates the partnership framework and reviews the framework regularly to ensure that the structure continues to be efficient and effective.
- 6.3.2 GPP and the key partnerships each act as the main conduit for considering strategic issues within their remit. GPP focuses upon the Community Strategy and provides a high level, strategic forum for the partners to work towards common goals. The focus for other strategic documents within the partnership framework is shown in the list of key partnerships above. The framework allows effective debate, 'ownership' and contribution by partners relating to key areas of activity, while also facilitating cross-referencing.
- 6.3.3 Connection between GPP and the seven key partnerships is made through chairmen (or their nominee) representing the key partnerships sitting on the GPP Board. In turn, the chairman (or his/her nominee) of any group will be represented upon their relevant key partnership. GPP will monitor the operation of the key partnerships, which will in turn monitor any groups.
- 6.3.4 GPP will receive reports from each key partnership through its chairman (or nominee), usually on a rotational basis. In turn, chairmen will feedback GPP Board activity and views to their key partnership. A similar two-way briefing arrangement will operate between the key partnerships and their groups, if any. Cabinet members will provide two-way communications between the Council and the partnership framework by contributing reports within the City Council about partnership activity within their service area and, in turn briefing their relevant partnerships about the Council's activities and aspirations.
- 6.3.5 Partners make various contributions to joint working. The Council's support to the partnership framework includes:
 - (a) sharing performance management data;
 - (b) training relevant to the framework;
 - (c) a policy research network (Peterborough Needs Assessment) which will draw together
 - (d) existing work on behalf of all agencies;
 - (e) corporate secretariat and communications support to GPP, the key partnerships and their executive groups.
- 6.3.6 Every key partnership, and every (partnership) group which involves finance and major decisions, must involve the relevant cabinet member(s) and corresponding lead senior officer(s), so that Cabinet can contribute directly to partnership working and also assess the operation of the partnerships on a regular basis. (Any formal concerns

raised by the Cabinet will be reported to GPP Board or the relevant key partnership by the Leader of the Council.)

The number of cabinet members required should be specified in the partnership agreement. The cabinet member will become appointed by virtue of office - the relevant member(s) will be identifiable from the responsibilities identified in the Council's scheme of executive delegations. If the cabinet member(s) responsible is/are not readily apparent because of overlapping responsibilities, or where the scheme of delegations is silent upon the subject, the Leader of the Council will identify the relevant member(s).

- 6.3.7 There will be at least one non-executive city councillor representative on GPP and each of the seven key partnerships. The exact number of councillor representatives will be decided by GPP as part of its determination of the membership and protocols of GPP Board and the key partnerships. The total number of non-executive seats across the seven partnership bodies will be divided amongst the political groups upon the Council, via the Council's appointments to external organisations procedure, to reflect the Council's political proportionality. These non-executive seats will ensure that non-executive of the political Administration and opposition groups can remain involved and offer their perspective upon issues. They will also help to promote a consensual approach and provide continuity in the event of changing political control.
- 6.3.8 Non-executive councillor appointments at group level will not usually be expected although sometimes this is a requirement of law or statutory guidance. However, there will be some locality-based groups where ward councillor representation should be considered, even if only as observer members. Any non-executive councillor membership will be appointed through the Council's procedure for appointments to external organisations, unless the partnership agreement specifies a category of representation (such as largest opposition Group Leader or local ward councillors).
- 6.3.9 Non-executive councillors cannot legally commit the Council to any commitments or decisions, neither can they veto any actions which the Council or partnership/group proposes to take.
- 6.3.10 To increase community engagement, formal representation upon partnerships from community and voluntary groups should normally comprise individuals that are not affiliated to the City Council either through employment or public office. Where community representation spans a number of community and voluntary groups, formal participation will usually be via one representative selected by those organisations/voluntary groups.

6.3.11 Local authority scrutiny will take place at various levels. At any point that a decision relating to partnership activity is made by a cabinet member or Cabinet, this will be published for scrutiny in the usual way. (This area of activity is likely in practice to mainly focus upon service delivery and decisions at group level.) Scrutiny Committees or Commissions may review any partnership issue that they wish, whether related to internally or externally delivered services. Non-executive councillors, through membership of key partnerships, can contribute to the scrutiny function and also to consultation about partnership-related executive decision-making.

6.3.12 In order to assess whether or not the Council should participate in any partnership activity beyond the key partnerships, the Executive will consider whether participation would meet one of these criteria:

- (a) Is the involvement a statutory requirement?
- (b) Is the proposed involvement consistent with the corporate strategy?
- (c) Does the proposed involvement add value to the Council's activities?

The full financial, staffing in kind, property and any other costs and liabilities must be appraised. The Council must not take on liability for any period after the point at which partnership funding ends. Staff employed in connection with partnerships must be on fixed term contracts, where initiatives are time limited. There must be no continuing liabilities in respect of Council property holdings at the end of the funding period.

6.3.13 Every partnership (including groups) must have a written partnership agreement, for which a template will be provided, stating:

- (a) objectives,
- (b) how its membership is derived, including the level of city councillor involvement,
- (c) terms of reference, and any individual roles within the partnership,
- (d) constitutional/legal status, including any decision making powers (the possible partnering
- (e) models that may apply are listed in guidance notes to the Constitution),
- (f) operating protocols, including how it reports to its parent bodies and within the partnership
- (g) framework,
- (h) any exit strategies or other points required in this list of requirements.

If the proposed partnership appears to involve or could possibly lead to commercial partnership arrangements, the full legal implications must be assessed before commitments are made, as this framework does not override procurement and contracting rules.

6.3.14 Details about the partnership must be logged and maintained in the Council's partnership database, which lists constitutional, representational, cost-benefit and purpose information.