

West Cheshire Together

General meeting report.

AGENDA ITEM 8.

Report title	Local Strategic Partnership Framework Agreement and Protocols – Further Development
Description	To update on the proposed ongoing evolution of the Partnership's Agreement and Protocols document.
Document purpose	The Partnership's Agreement and Protocols is one of the two core documents underpinning the operation of the wider LSP Framework – the other being the Constitution of the Partnership. The Agreement and Protocols act as the operational 'handbook' of the Partnership, ensuring good partnership practice, where appropriate, throughout.
Circulation list	West Cheshire Together
Decision/Action required	Partners are asked to consider and agree a number of partnership issues for ongoing development and subsequent inclusion in the Partnership's Agreement and Protocols.
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Target audience	West Cheshire Together
Cross reference	Local Strategic Partnership Framework Agreement and Protocols

Introduction

1 The purpose of this report is to outline a number of additional topics requiring a wider partnership approach for suggested inclusion in the Partnership's Agreement and Protocols document as the operational 'handbook' for the Partnership.

Background

2 On 30th April, the Partnership considered draft Local Strategic Partnership Framework Agreement and Protocols and Constitution documents designed to support the operation and management of the new LSP. Both documents had been circulated to partners in advance of the meeting and initial amendments made. Since then, both documents have been subject to a wider consultation, though no further comments on content have been received. As such, the documents will be endorsed in their current form on 30th July.

3 That said, as the Partnership itself continues to evolve, it is likely that further areas requiring a collective approach or steer will emerge. As such, it is suggested that the Agreement and Protocols be viewed as a 'living' document to be regularly updated or expanded as and when required to reflect the ongoing development of partnership working across the Borough.

4 Since the draft document was produced, a number of potential additional areas requiring a more collaborative approach have been identified. These include:

- Single Equality Framework
- Information Sharing Protocol
- Community Engagement & Empowerment Strategy
- Partnership Commissioning Framework
- Third Sector Compact

Progress to Date

a) Single Equality Framework

5 In recognition of the importance of collectively understanding and responding to the diverse needs of our communities through our Sustainable Community Strategy and Local Area Agreement, a group of Equality and Diversity lead officers from across the sub-region have developed a multi-functional statement on equality and diversity to form part of the Partnership's Agreement and Protocols. The group has involved representatives from the Constabulary, Police Authority, Fire and Rescue Service, Probation, Courts Services, the two Primary Care Trusts and the two new local authorities and they will continue to develop as a sub-regional Single Equality Group. The statement was circulated to partners on 3rd July for consideration and comment.

b) Information Sharing Protocol

6 One of the early findings from the CAA self-assessment and other recent activity to examine effective implementation of partnership plans and strategies is the increasing need to share information across a wide range of partners. In some circumstances this can be difficult, particularly where the information to be shared is of a sensitive nature or where data protection could be an issue. The need for an

information sharing protocol was discussed at a recent meeting of the Children and Young People's Partnership (i.e. Children's Trust) though it was felt that the issue needed wider partnership consideration due to its relevance to all aspects of thematic and geographic partnership working.

7 In 2008, the Government produced a pocket guide on Information Sharing as part of its information sharing guidance package. This aims to support good practice in information sharing by offering clarity on when and how information can be shared legally and professionally in order to achieve improved outcomes. The guide was produced jointly by the Departments for Children, Schools and Families and Communities and Local Government. Again, the guide was circulated to partners on 3rd July for consideration and comment.

c) *Community Engagement & Empowerment Strategy*

8 Another of the early findings of the CAA self assessment was the need for the partnership to better understand how each partner organisation currently engages with and empowers individuals and communities and to explore how this might be improved upon through a more co-ordinated approach.

9 As a consequence, work is now underway on the development of a draft Community Engagement and Empowerment Strategy for the partnership. The Strategy is being progressed through a small sub-group of partners comprising representatives from Cheshire Constabulary, Cheshire Police Authority, Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service, NHS Western Cheshire, Cheshire West and Chester Council and the Third Sector Assembly.

It is intended that the draft Strategy will incorporate the following elements and will need to reflect both communities of geography and interest:

1. A clear shared definition or set of definitions articulating what community engagement and empowerment is
2. Key principles to inform and underpin approaches to engagement and empowerment
3. Tools, methods and mechanisms (both current and proposed) for co-ordinated and consistent approaches to engagement and empowerment.

d) *Partnership Commissioning Framework*

10 In order to more effectively deliver the outcomes articulated in the Sustainable Community Strategy and Local Area Agreement and improve local quality of life, the partnership needs a clearly defined and jointly owned approach to the planning, commissioning and delivery of services. If done effectively, commissioning should:

- Enhance local quality of life;
- Better connect service delivery with the needs and aspirations of individuals and communities;
- Make best use of available resources;
- Join up financial and service planning; and
- Anticipate future needs and expectations enabling partners to be proactive rather than reactive.

11 Partners will have a varied understanding and experience of commissioning, be this as commissioners or providers of services. As such, it is important that the partnership agrees a common definition, set of principles and framework to underpin our approach. However, in order to ensure that this is developed and subsequently embedded in a meaningful way across the partnerships framework, it is suggested that the development and delivery of an Alcohol Strategy for West Cheshire be used as a 'test bed' for taking strategic partnership commissioning forward. This is the subject of a separate agenda item.

e) *Third Sector Compact*

12 Over the past twelve months, a new Compact has been produced and consulted upon for Cheshire West and Chester. The Compact is an agreement between the Voluntary, Community and Faith Sector (VCFS) and the Public Sector in Cheshire West and Chester to improve the ways in which the public and third sectors work together. It sets out a framework for better working relationships through shared principles, undertakings and actions.

13 The Compact contains five Codes which set out good practice for improved relationships and compact compliance around specific topics. These are:

- Funding, Commissioning and Procurement
- Consultation and Policy Appraisal
- Volunteering
- Community Groups
- Black and Minority Ethnic Voluntary and Community Sector Groups

Each code of good practice contains both shared commitments and sector specific requirements that the organisations involved and committed to the Compact, should embed within their procedures and ways of working.

14 The Compact has been developed through a partnership which included representatives from the VCFS and all public sector stakeholders though it can only be successful if it has the commitment and buy in from all stakeholders and delivered through a partnership approach. The next stage in the process is formal endorsement of the final Compact by all required partners and the development of an action plan.

Recommendations

That:

- (i) partners consider and agree the Equality and Diversity statement and the Information Sharing Protocol for inclusion in the Partnership's Agreement and Protocols;
- (ii) partners receive further updates on the development of the Community Engagement and Empowerment Strategy, Partnership Commissioning Framework and Third Sector Compact action plan with a view to incorporating these in the Partnership's Agreement and Protocols when agreed; and
- (iii) partners consider and agree other potential issues for development and subsequent inclusion in the Partnership's Agreement and Protocols.