



# **SOUTHEND TOGETHER INTERNAL AUDIT WORKING GROUP SUMMARY REPORT**

## **Governance Arrangements of Key Strategic Partnerships**

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### **RESOURCED BY:**

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## GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS OF KEY STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

### OBJECTIVE

To establish whether the Health and Wellbeing Board, Children and Learning Partnership Board and Safer Communities Board (the Key Strategic Partnerships):

- have established robust governance processes; and
- are effectively and consistently applying its governance processes to support the delivery of the relevant outcomes contained within the Sustainable Community Strategy / Local Area Agreement.

### SCOPE OF THE WORK

The review considered the following:

#### STRUCTURAL ARRANGEMENTS:

- Is there a clear link between the Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS) outcomes and the objectives and targets contained in the Key Strategic Partnership (KSP) Delivery Plan?
- Does the Delivery Plan reflect cross cutting themes or issues that impact on more than one KSP and is there a robust process in place to identify them?
- Does the membership of the KSP include representatives of all relevant service areas to enable it to deliver the outcomes in its Delivery Plan?
- Are the sub groups / boards below the KSP structured and constituted appropriately to deliver agreed performance targets from the Delivery Plan?
- Are there established and appropriate reporting lines from individual significant partners through the various sub groups to the KSP and Southend Together Executive?

#### BUSINESS PROCESSES:

With regard to the KSP and sub groups:

- Are the arrangements for consulting stakeholders and establishing the needs of the public robust and effective using relevant intelligence from all partner organisations?
- Is there effective service planning with SMART<sup>1</sup> actions appropriately allocated to enable service delivery objectives to be achieved?

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<sup>1</sup> SMART stands for **S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**chieved or **A**greed, **R**ealistic or **R**esourced, **T**ime bound or **T**imely

## **GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS OF KEY STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS**

- Where pooled budgets exist, are the budget setting and monitoring processes effective?
- Are potential risks to achieving service objectives identified, reviewed regularly and appropriately mitigated?
- Are there robust performance management arrangements in place?
- Are there appropriate processes in place to ensure that data quality is good, and assurance is provided that this is the case?
- Are goods and services procured effectively across partners so that value for money is achieved?
- Is there an agreed project management methodology for use by KSPs, groups or boards and has it been used appropriately where relevant to deliver the project on time, to budget and the required quality standards?
- Is appropriate consideration given by KSPs, groups and boards as to whether services being provided via the partnership can demonstrate value for money?

This review considered the adequacy and application of controls in place over the Boards governance arrangements. It does not provide an opinion on the appropriateness of the objectives, priorities or targets.

### **SUMMARY FINDINGS**

The general findings arising from this work plus KPS specific comments have already been fed back to them. Attached at the end of this report are some questions that each KSP / Sub Group should ask themselves in order to assess whether their governance arrangements are fit for purpose.

#### **GENERAL COMMENTS REGARDING ALL KSPs AND THE EXECUTIVE**

Each SCS ambition and associated objectives are assigned to a lead KSP for delivery. However, there is limited evidence that KSPs are working effectively across the partnership where this would be appropriate to improve service delivery.

As part of the refresh of the SCS, it should be made clear that KSPs are accountable for delivering ambitions and objectives but that they need to identify who else they have to work with to achieve this.

To support this in practice, each KSP should develop a SMART delivery plan that clearly demonstrates how the work of it and other KSPs, sub groups and partner organisations will come together to deliver the SCS objectives and ambitions.

The delivery plans should be approved by the Southend Together Executive so it has appropriate assurance that the SCS can be delivered, by whom and how.

## **GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS OF KEY STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS**

The KSP delivery plans are the key tool at the KSP and Executive level to effectively monitor and manage progress toward the achievement of the outcomes set out in the SCS. Therefore, the Executive should, in addition to the work done by the Performance Management Group, receive regular updates from KSPs on the progress in implementing delivery plan actions.

These documents should then be reviewed to establish what policies and strategies are required at a partnership level to ensure there is a joined up approach to dealing with key cross cutting issues e.g. poverty.

### **FINDINGS SPECIFIC TO HEALTH AND WELL BEING KEY STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP**

The current composition of membership of the KSP is appropriate and is, in line with good practice, being kept under review. Key members regularly attend the meetings to ensure that the issues can be robustly discussed.

However, as outlined above, it is recommended that the KSP develops a delivery plan that sets out how the relevant SCS ambitions and objectives and therefore required outcomes will be achieved.

As the Terms of Reference for the KSP are also currently being refreshed, this represents a timely opportunity to ensure these two critical governance documents are developed, complement each other and support the delivery of the SCS outcomes.

The Terms of Reference should set the KSP's accountability for delivering the relevant SCS ambitions as a key objective and detail the reporting requirements to and from the sub groups and Executive.

Developing a work plan that then translates the KSP's Terms of Reference into tangible, deliverable actions should also be considered. A work plan would be an effective way to focus the KSPs actions upon the key tasks required to fulfil its Terms of Reference (e.g. what reports / information it needs to receive and when to inform decisions). Implementing the work plan would then provide the KSP and other interested bodies (e.g. the Executive) with assurance that it is meeting its responsibilities (including those relating to delivery of the SCS ambitions).

Once the KSP has done this, it should review the relevance and focus of the sub groups that report to it. There should be a clear delegation of work from the KSPs work plan to these groups. They should then also review their Terms of Reference, membership and work programmes. The supporting sub groups should regularly provide sufficient and appropriate updates against required actions and performance achieved.

Appropriate arrangements should then be established to enable the KSP and sub groups to demonstrate robust management of risk that data quality is sound and that value for money is being achieved.

## **GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS OF KEY STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS**

### **FINDINGS SPECIFIC TO THE CHILDREN & LEARNING KEY STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP**

The KSP has established robust governance arrangements to support the delivery of the SCS outcomes and continues to explore opportunities to strengthen this further especially in the area of delivering value for money.

The Children and Young People's Plan (CYPP) is the key delivery document of the Children's Partnership and its objectives and targets are clearly linked and identified with the outcomes contained within the SCS. The Partnership recognises delivering the CYPP requires cross working and collaboration with other KSPs and has identified this as an improvement priority within 2010-2011 CYPP Action Plan. The refresh of the SCS, which will require KSPs to identify who they need to work with to deliver cross cutting themes, will also support the Children & Learning Partnership in improving its cross working arrangements.

Membership of the Children & Learning KSP (the Board) is split between statutory and non-statutory members. The Board's recently revised constitution (May 2010) clearly sets out who its members are and the expectations of the membership. Representation of members on the Board adequately reflects the service areas needed to deliver the outcomes in the CYPP. In addition from April 2010 attendance at meetings is due to be tracked and monitored (during 2010 -11 not all statutory members attended Board meetings regularly).

The terms of reference for the Partnership's Executive and sub groups were improved and revised at the same time as the Boards constitution. In addition the remit of all the sub groups was examined to ensure all have a clear role in delivering the objectives and targets set out in the CYPP. From April 2010 the roles of the subgroups in delivering areas of the CYPP will be formally confirmed in performance agreements. The Board is also looking to align, to sub groups, the actions contained in the various strategies which also deliver the Partnership's business.

The priorities contained in the CYPP are based on robust stakeholder consultation and SMART actions are developed to deliver objectives. Performance against objectives is regularly reported to the Board and the Partnership Executive. Reporting periods for each of the subgroups is clearly laid out in the CYPP. Reporting progress on the delivery of objectives to the Southend Together Board has been highlighted as an area for development across all the KSP's (see above).

Risks to delivering objectives at a strategic level have been identified and considered by the Board. Going forward, it is intended that the risk register is reviewed at each of the Board's quarterly meetings. The process for managing risk at sub group level is evolving and has become part of a standard performance reporting template completed when subgroups report their progress in delivering objectives to the Board.

The monitoring of pooled budgets and ensuring value for money in these arrangements is assigned to a Commissioning sub group. This group has also been assigned the aim of exploring opportunities to make more effective use of partnership resources by extending pooled / aligned funding arrangements and driving forward arrangements for joint commissioning.

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### **FINDINGS SPECIFIC TO THE SAFER COMMUNITIES KEY STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP**

The current composition of membership of the KSP is appropriate and is kept under review. The KSP has recently approached the Crown Prosecution Service and the local business community for greater involvement and this has the potential to strengthen the group.

Key members regularly attend the meetings to ensure that the issues can be robustly discussed.

The KSP's Terms of Reference is appropriate in making it responsible to undertake work set by Southend Together to deliver the areas identified in the SCS relating to safer communities. It acts as the 'managing board' for the Youth Offending Service (YOS) and the Drug and Alcohol Action Team (DAAT) and the strategic lead on all matters relating to the work of the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership (CDRP).

However, the Terms of Reference refers to 2005-08 strategies and therefore should be reviewed for on-going relevance and refreshed where necessary.

Developing a work plan that then translates the KSP's Terms of Reference into tangible, deliverable actions should also be considered. A work plan would be an effective way to focus the KSP's work on what it needs to do to fulfil its Terms of Reference (e.g. what reports / information it needs to receive and when to inform decisions). Implementing the work plan would then provide the KSP and other interested bodies (e.g. the Southend Together Executive) with assurance that it is meeting its responsibilities (including those relating to delivery of the SCS ambitions).

Action plans setting out how the CDRP and DAAT (but not the YOS) are to achieve their defined performance measures have been submitted to the KSP for scrutiny / approval but updates against these action plans are not reported at each meeting. However, updates on performance indicators are submitted by all three subgroups to the KSP regularly. Wider strategic issues are also considered such as the borough wide approach to reducing domestic abuse and anti-social behaviour.

Whilst it is clear that the actions and performance measures of the subgroups are relevant to the wider SCS ambitions and objectives, the explicit link is not made in all cases. As detailed above, the KSP and Executive will receive greater assurance if the KSP's and subgroups' broad, strategic actions to achieve the SCS ambitions and objectives are captured / summarised in and managed through a single, high level delivery plan. This would then enable to KSP (and Executive) to assess whether it is achieving the required outcomes as set out in the SCS.

There are instances of cross-group and cross-KSP working. The CDRP key action plan allocates actions across the KSP and the DAAT is leading the development of a strategic, borough-wide approach to alcohol related hospital admissions (which reports to the Health and Well Being KSP).

The KSP's management of risk management can be further strengthened. The risks (the factors that could prevent or impede achievement of the KSP's objectives) need to be captured along side the delivery plan and regularly monitored and managed.

## **GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS OF KEY STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS**

Further support and example documentation can be provided by the Internal Audit Working Group where required to assist in addressing any of the issues raised above.

### **CONTRIBUTION TO SOUTHEND TOGETHER'S AMBITIONS**

This review contributes to Southend Together's Ambition of:

#### **Health and Social Well-Being**

To provide opportunities, support and information to people of all ages and abilities to enable them to take responsibility for their health and choose a healthy lifestyle.

#### **Children and Learning**

Continuing to improve the outcomes for children and young people".

#### **Community Safety**

To create a safer community for all.

**This report can be provided in alternative formats such as Braille, audio-tape or in large print. Translations of this document in alternative languages are also available.**

## GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS OF KEY STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

### KEY QUESTIONS FOR EACH KEY STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP OR SUB GROUP TO ASK

Following the establishment of a robust delivery plan at KSP level, each KSP and supporting sub group should ask itself the following questions to ensure its governance arrangements are still fit for purpose.

QUESTIONS	Y	N	P	ACTION REQUIRED
Do the Terms of Reference clearly set out what the KSP / Sub Group is charged with delivering?				
Is it clear in the KSP / Sub Group's Terms of Reference, how it is supporting the delivery of Sustainable Community Strategy?				
Is the membership of the KSP / Sub Group still appropriate so that the Terms of Reference can be delivered?				
Has a work programme been established for the KSP / Sub Group that clearly demonstrates how it is going to deliver its Terms of Reference?				
Has the KSP / Sub Group identified the policies / strategies it needs to implement the delivery plan?				
Are the relevant policies / strategies in place, up to date and reviewed at agreed intervals?				
Do the policies / strategies reflect whole borough issues rather than KSP / Sub Group specific elements only?				
Is the structure below the KSP / Sub Group still appropriate?				
Is it clear who else the KSP / Sub Group needs to work with to deliver its Terms of Reference and work programme?				



## GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS OF KEY STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

QUESTIONS	Y	N	P	ACTION REQUIRED
Has a reporting cycle been established between all relevant KSPs and Sub Groups so progress in implementing the delivery plan is monitored regularly?				
Have appropriate performance measures been established to judge whether all the Sustainable Community Strategy ambitions and objectives are being achieved?				
Have the risks to achieving the KSP / Sub Group its objectives been identified and assessed?				
Have mitigating controls and further actions been developed to manage unacceptable levels of risk?				
Do performance monitoring reports for each KSP / Sub Group include information on key performance indicators, risks and actions to be implemented?				
Are there robust arrangements in place to gain assurance over the quality of data used to monitor performance?				
Do KSPs and Sub Groups continually challenge whether opportunities to improve partnership working in terms of service delivery, are taken (demonstrating value for money)?				