

Agenda Item No: 6 **Report No:** 107/12
Report Title: Strategic Partnership Governance
Report To: Audit Committee **Date:** 25 June 2012
Ward(s) Affected: All
Report By: Director of Finance
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Purpose of Report:

To report the results of the annual review of strategic partnerships for 20011/12.

Officers Recommendation(s):

- 1 To receive and consider the report.

Reasons for Recommendations

- 1 To show that the annual review of strategic partnerships is working effectively as part of the arrangements for governance of partnerships at the Council.

Information

2 Background

2.1 In 2005 the Audit Commission's report "Governing Partnerships: Bridging the Accountability Gap" recognised that partnerships are essential for the delivery of public services. They identified that partnerships:

- (a) Bring risks as well as opportunities
- (b) Need sound governance arrangements
- (c) Need to deliver good value for money so local public bodies should ask searching questions about what partnerships they engage with, and
- (d) Need clear accountability between partners to produce better accountability for the, including redress when things go wrong.

2.2 In 2007 the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) and Society of Local Authority Chief Executives (SOLACE)

published, “Delivering Good Governance in Local Government”. This set out a framework so that councils could develop their local code of corporate governance. The framework recommends that the local code reflect the requirement to have effective governance arrangements in place for partnerships.

- 2.3** At its April 2008 meeting Cabinet approved the Guidance for Partnership Working. This guidance is in place to ensure that significant Council partnerships are well managed, have sound governance arrangements and deliver planned outcomes to local communities to improve people’s quality of life.

3 Annual Review of Strategic Partnerships

- 3.1** Section 5 of the Council’s Guidance for Partnership Working requires that strategic partnerships are reviewed annually for continuing relevance to the Council. In particular, Lead Officers are required to answer the following questions:

- Are the statutory requirements or other reasons for establishing the partnerships still in place? If there remains a statutory requirement then you cannot exit the partnership
- Has the partnership achieved all that it set out to do?
- Is the partnership still relevant to the Council’s aims, objectives and priorities?
- Has external funding sources/resources ceased?
- Are there adverse risks with the partnership continuing?
- Is the partnership still providing added value?
- Is the partnership still meeting its targets, and delivering the outputs and outcomes originally set?
- Is the partnership communicating effectively with the public?

- 3.2** The current strategic partnerships for the Council are as follows:

- (a) Lewes and Seaford Citizens Advice Bureaux
- (b) 3VA Council for Voluntary Services
- (c) Wave Leisure Trust
- (d) Community Safety Partnership
- (e) The Supporting People Partnership
- (f) Lewes Joint Parking Board
- (g) South Downs National Park Agency Agreement

- 3.3** The results of the annual review for each strategic partnership are shown in Appendix A. The key results of this exercise are as follows:

- All Lead Officers have completed their annual reviews.

- The Council will continue to participate in all seven partnerships for 2012/13.

4 Financial Appraisal

4.1 There are no additional financial implications from this report.

5 Risk Management Implications

5.1 Failure to review the Council's strategic partnerships on an annual basis will reduce the likelihood that there is effective governance of each partnership and could attract criticism from the Council's external auditor and the local community. These risks are mitigated by Lead Officers undertaking the annual review and the results being reported to the Audit Committee.

6 Sustainability Implications

6.1 I have not completed the Sustainability Implications Questionnaire as this report is exempt from the requirement because it is a progress report.

7 Equality Screening

7.1 I have given due regard to equalities issues and, as this is an internal monitoring report with no key decision, screening for equalities issues is not required.

8 Background Papers

8.1 Lewes District Council Guidance for Partnership Working.

9 Appendices

9.1 Appendix A: Lead Officers responses to annual review questions.

APPENDIX A: LEAD OFFICER RESPONSES TO ANNUAL REVIEW QUESTIONS (Questions 1 to 4)

Partnership (lead officer)	Q1. Are the statutory requirements or other reasons for establishing the partnership being met?	Q2. Has the partnership achieved all that it set out to do?	Q3. Is the partnership still relevant to the Council's aims and objectives?	Q 4. Have external funding sources/resources ceased?
Lewes and Seaford Citizens Advice Bureaux (Corporate Head - Communities and Enterprise)	The Citizens Advice Bureaux (CAB) provides independent advice to residents of the District on a range of services. The demand for advice has risen significantly with the national slowdown in economic activity. One of the CABs great strengths is its independence as a registered charity. The Council respects this independence even though it is the major funding provider. Without the CAB many enquiries would fall to be dealt with by the Council and this would require additional resources.	The CAB continues to provide advice within agreed core hours. It operates a system of pre booked appointments at the customer's convenience. There has been a steady demand for these sessions and they are well received.	Yes. The higher demand for assistance has been in areas related to housing, benefits, employment and debt advice. All of these areas complement the Council's 5 key aims and objectives as set out in the Council Plan, particularly the 4 below: -Creating prosperous and vibrant communities. -Promoting new homes, health and well being. -Delivering high quality low cost services -Working in partnership.	The main Town Councils continue to provide core funding and support in recognition of the need for this service. The main purpose of the CAB is to provide front line advice and to minimise back office processes, consistent with national standards of good practice. As this leaves little time for fundraising activity one of the Trustees of the CAB has responsibility to pursue external funding opportunities. Funding opportunities also arise through the East Sussex Consortium of CABs, a separately constituted body. The Lewes and Seaford CAB is a member of the consortium. The Consortium seeks to secure external funds on behalf of East Sussex CABs, and it is a vehicle to share best practice.
3VA Council for Voluntary Services (Corporate Head – Communities and Enterprise)	3VA allows the Council to meet its objective in supporting local communities. 3VA provides 5 key services to fulfil this goal which are key reasons that the partnership is still in place: 1. Support Services: These help VCOs (Voluntary and Community Organisations) to operate	3VA have provided evidence of how it has met the 5 objectives above. These are listed in the Service Level Agreement developed between 3VA, Lewes District Council and other statutory sector funders (East Sussex County Council, Eastbourne Borough Council, Wealden District Council and East Sussex Downs Weald Primary Care Trust). 3VA presented this annual	Following district elections in May 2011, the political administration has changed and against a changing backdrop, i.e. a new central Government. This has inevitably brought a set of new priorities which fall under 5 core objectives (listed in the Council Plan 2011/12). The most relevant objectives and flowing priorities to 3VA's	LDC has committed to another year of funding for the period 2012/13.

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	<p>effectively.</p> <p>2. Development Work: Identifies local needs and works with communities etc to develop appropriate action.</p> <p>3. Liaison: Facilitates networking between VCOs and develop links with public and private sector agencies.</p> <p>4. Representation: Enables VCS (voluntary and community sector) views to be represented on key policy and planning issues in an effective and accountable way.</p> <p>5. Strategic Planning & Partnerships: To ensure that the VCS can engage in strategic partnership with other sectors.</p>	<p>statement of performance subject to review by all funding partners at the annual meeting (11/04/12). This meeting was attended by LDC.</p>	<p>operations are as follows:</p> <p>Objective 1: Creating prosperous and vibrant communities. Priority: Promote growth and create jobs Priority: Promote the area as a visitor destination Priority: Promote the Olympic experience The support that 3VA provide to VCOs to operate effectively can create paid employment opportunities or unpaid posts that aid people looking to step up into paid work.</p> <p>Objective 2: Working in partnership Priority: Open and receptive services and information. Priority: Strong local partnerships The work that 3VA does supports VCOs in being stronger more effective stand alone organisations, but also supports partnerships across sectors.</p>	
Wave Leisure Trust (WLT)	The Council has a lease agreement with WLT which	The Council set a number of key objectives for the partnership for	The Council produces an Annual Statement to the Trust	WLT receives an Annual Service Fee which for 2012-2013 is £680,937. This represents a reduction from the previous

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(Contracts Manager – Leisure and Facilities)	was originally agreed up to 2016. Cabinet approved a five year extension to the lease in February 2011 up to 31/3/2021.	<p>its 2011-2012 Service Plan which included:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Provision of activities to meet the needs of the ageing population of the District, including outreach work to increase participation and wellbeing. 2. Seeking to identify and promote physical activity opportunities with partners for the 13-19 age group. 3. Embedding the provisions of the Equalities Act into service delivery and project planning, ensuring activities are accessible by the whole community, taking into account the needs of the 9 protected groups as specified within the Equalities Act and ensuring that low incomes are not a barrier to participation. 4. Providing activities that respond to customer needs and concerns, providing continuous service improvement as a result of customer feedback. 5. Identify opportunities reduce energy usage when replacing plant equipment for cleaner, greener and energy efficient 	outlining the key areas that the Council wishes the Trust to focus on to help meet the overall priorities of the Council. The Trust in response submits a Delivery Plan on how it is to achieve this which is agreed by Cabinet.	year of 12.75%

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		<p>technology.</p> <p>The annual report to Cabinet in January 2012 reported the results of the review of the 2010-2011 Service Plan performance outcomes. It concluded that the Trust continues to operate on a sound financial footing and has implemented all of the agreed objectives set by the Council and within the WLT Business Plan. Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) are monitored at quarterly meetings between the Council and WLT. Cabinet receives an Annual Service Plan Review of Performance Outcomes and a report on KPIs for the last year.</p>		
Community Safety Partnership (Director of Finance)	Yes. The Crime and Disorder Act 1998 requires Lewes District Council (LDC) to establish and support a local Community Safety Partnership (CSP) with prescribed statutory membership and objectives.	Yes. The CSP has delivered successive annual crime reduction strategies with agreed reduction targets for specific crime categories, Anti Social Behaviour (ASB) as well as reducing the public's negative perception of crime. This is achieved through the application of time limited funding from the Council and the Police. There is an ongoing CSP action plan that is monitored at each meeting.	Yes. The Partnership provides direct and tangible support to the local community by pursuing its key priorities which are mainly related to Anti Social Behaviour, including enviro-crime enforcement.	New working arrangements from April 2012 are delivering greater productivity at a lower cost. Funding beyond 2012/13 is uncertain.

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The Supporting People Partnership (Head of Housing Strategy and Needs)	<p>Supporting People was launched by Government on 1 April 2003. It is a grant programme administered through top-tier authorities in partnership with Housing, Health, Social Services and Probation. It provides housing related support to vulnerable people to enable them to live more independently. East Sussex County Council (ESCC) is the administering authority. The East Sussex Health Housing Social Care and Probation Strategic Forum has the responsibility for the strategic direction of the Supporting People (SP) programme including decisions regarding the SP budget and commissioning. The remit also covers the development of extra care housing, reviewing support services for 16 plus year olds and specialist support services. The Supporting People (England) Directions 2006 set out the</p>	<p>The Partnership is ongoing and much has been achieved with the completion of an extra care housing scheme opened in Peacehaven and others commissioned throughout East Sussex. The partnership agreed to a complete review of East Sussex housing support services to be carried out over three phases. Phase 1 (housing support for 16 – 64 year olds). Phase 2 (older persons housing support) and Phase 3 (specialist support such as support services for drug and alcohol users and victims of domestic violence). The review has been completed for 16-64 year olds, and housing support services have been re commissioned. The review for older persons 65 plus has been completed with the introduction of STEPS, a floating support service across all tenures, and a Handyperson Grant Scheme. Reviewing specialist support services is ongoing and some services for example; accommodation based DV services will be reviewed within the current financial year, and commissioned through a tendering</p>	<p>The partnership ensures that effective links are in place to other key strategic plans, enabling a county wide approach and strategic direction to housing related support initiatives in line with housing and homelessness strategies and the aims and objectives of their action plans, also the development of extra care housing and future supported housing schemes throughout the County.</p>	<p>SP funding is no longer a ring fenced grant and is now included within Area Based funds administered by Adult Social Care which have been subject to cuts.</p>

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	membership of such forums. In East Sussex representatives are from ESCC, East Sussex Districts and Boroughs the probation service and the Primary Care Trust.	process. Reviewing and re commissioning these services will ensure that housing support is delivered across tenure to clients demonstrating a housing support need whilst also ensuring value for money.		
Lewes Joint Parking Board (Director of Finance)	Yes. The Board underpins the governance arrangements between the Council and East Sussex County Council.	The partnership exists to oversee public sector parking management across the whole of Lewes district. Parking operates in a dynamic environment and as a consequence the work of the Joint Parking Board continually evolves.	Yes. The purpose is to co-ordinate traffic management and on-street and off-street parking arrangements across the district.	Not applicable as this is a contracted service paid for by the two councils.
South Downs National Park Agency Agreement (Director of Planning and Environmental Services)	The partnership is supported by an agreement under Section 101 of the Local Government Act 1972 and provides for Lewes District Council to provide development management, planning enforcement, tree protection and conservation services to the South Downs National Park Authority from 1 April 2011 to 31 March 2014. The Section 101 agreement is supplemented by a financial protocol covering the payments SDNPA will	The partnership has achieved what it set out to do by continuing to provide a high quality planning service to residents and businesses in Lewes District. The SDNPA are satisfied with the service provided by LDC, which benchmarking has shown to be comparative low cost and high performing set against other South Downs local authorities.	The Partnership is relevant to the Council's objectives, particularly protection of the environment and the promotion of social and economic development.	The financial agreement with SDNPA runs until April 2014. In 2011/12, we received an income of £514,000. Income for future years depends on the number of planning applications received in our part of the SDNPA area.

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	make to LDC for the services provided.			

LEAD OFFICER RESPONSES TO ANNUAL REVIEW QUESTIONS (Questions 5 to 8)

Partnership (Lead Officer)	Q5. Are there adverse risks with the partnership continuing?	Q6. Is the partnership still providing added value?	Q7. Is the partnership still meeting its targets and delivering the outputs and outcomes originally set?	Q8. Is the partnership communicating effectively with the public?
Lewes and Seaford Citizens Advice Bureaux (Corporate Head - Communities and Enterprise)	The adverse risks arise if the partnership was to cease. There would be an enormous gap to fill in helping those members of the community who would otherwise turn to the CAB for advice. Much of cost of filling this gap would probably fall to the District Council.	The welfare benefits advice service continues to secure significant help for individuals in terms of getting them ongoing entitlement to benefit as well as back dated awards in many instances. This has a knock on effect into more spending power going back into the local economy. There is significant added value to the community from the team of 70 trained volunteers who help to improve the individual circumstances of local residents who call upon their expertise.	Yes. One of the significant benefits of this partnership is the strength that derives from continuity in its management and Trustee arrangements, enhanced by the dedication and commitment of its paid staff and volunteers. The specified service hours have been provided across the district and the organisation has responded well to the huge growth in requests for assistance. In order to channel the Council's grant into benefits for the residents of Lewes District, the agreement for 2011-13 requires the Council's funding to be directed at Lewes District residents only. Many CABs are likely to suffer funding cuts and this move is to ensure that the Council's funds are not used to fund a service for residents outside the district.	The CAB communicates with the public in the following ways: -Face to face appointments in the Lewes office. -Outreach services to Newhaven Peacehaven and Telscombe. -Via a weekly court help desk at Lewes County Court. -Monthly advice sessions at Children's centres in Newhaven and Peacehaven. -A weekly money and generalist advice at Lewes Prison. -Via leaflets sent out via LDC services e.g. LDC encloses a CAB flyer when sending out arrears notices for council tax and/or rent. -Via cards and posters detailing CAB services in prominent places such as GP surgeries, supermarkets, nursery schools and community centres.
3VA Council for Voluntary Services (Corporate Head –	There are no adverse risks arising from partnership continuing as presently established. If the partnership was to cease, a number of	3VA has a large membership of more than 280 local organisations and provides numerous training courses and provides bespoke advice and support including funding advice. LDC has ceased to	The 3VA produces a statement of performance detailing all agreed activities that are set out in the SLA agreement and the performance against those targets.	3VA communicates in the following ways: -4 newsletters p/a to 1000 addresses -Through good practice guides

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Communities and Enterprise)	VCOs would undoubtedly lose out on services such as fundraising, financial management and legal advice which would have adverse effects.	provide community development and funding advice directly and relies on 3VA to “fill the gap” in meeting local needs. Creating prosperous and vibrant communities is a key Council objective and this partnership provides tangible and direct support. 3VA is also able to obtain additional external funding by levering in investment from government and matching contributions received from the statutory funders.	This statement shows that 3VA has delivered a range of activities across the district including 4 newsletters p/a distributed to 1000 addresses, good practice guides updated and circulated, 20 training events organised etc.	-Through CASPER (Virtual CVS) website -Via telephone -Via drop ins to the Lewes, Uckfield and Eastbourne offices -Via social media including Facebook and Twitter -Via events and networking fora
Wave Leisure Trust (WLT) (Contracts Manager – Leisure and Facilities)	There are no adverse risks for this partnership whilst the Council continues to provide funding under the current agreement.	The partnership enables WLT to provide services on the Council’s behalf in the community, targeting hard to reach target groups that the Council is unable to replicate without significant additional resource. WLT are able to contribute to a number of our priorities and have established themselves firmly within local partnerships helping to deliver on shared priorities.	The service provided is measured by a number of KPIs.	WLT undertake user surveys and have a customer comments system in place. In addition, they advertise in the press and within leisure centres for new classes and activities as well as using their website for promotion. WLT have also embraced social media and use Twitter and Facebook to update users and non-users. Capturing information from non-users is more challenging.
Community Safety Partnership (CSP) (Director of Finance)	No.	Yes. The partnership recognises that a joint approach is more effective than one agency working alone. Many of the issues that arise relate to social and environmental causes that are outside of the direct remit of enforcement agencies such as the Police. The CSP adds value to this work by	Performance for the previous financial year has been very good.	The Partnership has a regular newsletter. The CSP, through a series of various level meetings, takes into account public perceptions and concerns. The “Quality Streets” initiative takes the partners into various areas of

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		focussing attention on problem areas and enabling joint solutions to be developed and implemented. It has also resulted in much closer working relationships between the Council and other partners.		the District to action targeted actions to raise awareness of the partnership by physical presence and tangible results.
The Supporting People Partnership (Head of Housing Strategy and Needs)	The adverse risk to LDC would be if the partnership discontinued and the links and negotiating/ decision making process was lost.	The partnership is a wide ranging consultation arena with a transparent vision and plan. Strategic priorities are agreed with all partners ensuring implementation of a longer term financial plan to address any reduction in available resources.	This is a partnership whose main purpose is to plan and commission housing and support related services for East Sussex. It also acts as the SP commissioning body. The partnership has approved SP policies, in particular the review and re commissioning of services for 16-64yr olds, approval of phase 2 for 65yr plus, and phase 3 of SP reviews specialist support services.	SP communicates well with the public, most recently during Phase 2 SP commissioned varying consultation exercises to involve older people in the development of STEPS, and the consulting group of older people directly designed the marketing logo and named the scheme.
Lewes Joint Parking Board (Director of Finance)	The operational risks would be greater in the absence of this arrangement. Successful traffic management requires coordination of both on street and off street parking arrangements.	New initiatives are continually pursued including parking on verges and crossovers. The partnership oversees the tendering of parking management services which East Sussex County Council Leads on. Lewes District Council has an agreement with the County Council that regulate the arrangements for the District Council's off-street car parks.	Yes. The last major target for retendering the management contract was successfully achieved.	East Sussex County Council has lead on a number of reviews and public consultations for parking arrangements across the district. Changes arising from the recent Town of Lewes review will be implemented in the summer/autumn of 2012.
South Downs National Park Agency Agreement (Director of Planning and Environmental Services)	(a) If it continues, risks are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Convergence of planning procedures across the SDNPA puts additional administrative burdens on LDC. Financial agreement fails to reflect costs of providing the service. 	The Partnership adds value by continuing to provide an integration planning service across the whole area of Lewes District and integrates planning with other functions such as housing, environmental health, economic development and recreation.	The Partnership arrangement handled 676 planning applications, 140 enforcement cases and 126 tree cases during 2011 – 12.	The Partnership communicates with the public by jointly log'd letters, e-mails, public notices etc. (SDNPA and LDC "Working in Partnership") and by co-ordinated information on web sales of the two authorities.

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	(b) If it doesn't continue, risks are: LDC would need to radically reorganise its planning service which would then only apply to the coastal towns and rural areas work of the Downs. Planning services across Lewes District are no longer integrated.			