

**REPORT TO: COMMUNITY PLANNING BOARD ON 16 SEPTEMBER 2010**

**SUBJECT: GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS**

**BY: CORPORATE POLICY UNIT MANAGER**

**1. REASON FOR REPORT**

**1.1 The Community Planning Board is asked to consider governance issues in relation to decision making and the authority of groups within the partnership.**

**2. RECOMMENDATION**

**2.1 The Community Planning Board is asked to agree the governance arrangements and the decision making structure within the partnership.**

**3. BACKGROUND**

**3.1** As the Partnership develops, there are a number of groups, partners and individual representatives with a stake in the decisions made by the partnership. The partnership has developed its Partnership Agreement which outlines the operation of the partnership and partners within it. However it does not explicitly state the decision making role each partnership group has and the delegated authority given to the main groups.

**3.2** As submitted at the Community Planning Board meeting in November 2009, the current accountability arrangements within the community planning partnership are:

- The Community Planning Board oversees the work of the 5 strategic theme groups and the Community Engagement Group. It has overall responsibility for delivery of the Single Outcome Agreement through collective monitoring and challenge.
- Individual members of the Community Planning Board are able to release resources within their organisations to assist with the delivery of SOA outcomes and other Community Planning initiatives.
- The Board can delegate responsibility for the delivery of actions to theme groups. While this workload is delegated, ultimate responsibility for delivery of the outcomes remains with the Board.
- Partners within the Community Planning Partnership retain autonomy for their organisation i.e. the Community Planning Partnership works on the basis of co-operation between partners.
- The current partnership also takes account of the respective roles of Members and officers within their respective agencies.
- Theme groups can delegate responsibility to operational groups to carry out work on their behalf. However, the responsibility for the overall

delivery of the initiative still rests with the theme group and ultimately the Board.

- 3.3 Also at that meeting the partners were asked to confirm their commitment to informing the Community Planning Partnership of their strategic plans and budgets. Statutory partners have now confirmed their commitment to provide this information to the Partnership as it becomes available and within appropriate timescales for the respective organisations.
- 3.4 To clarify the decision making structure between relevant groups and partners are:
- The Community Planning Board has the overriding decision making remit within the Community Planning structure.
  - Full Council and partners' Boards have the remit to agree decisions affecting the relevant organisation.
  - The Council has the overall responsibility for facilitating the community planning process.
  - Strategic groups carry out the key actions delegated to them by the Community Planning Board and report back to the Board on progress.
  - Operational or working groups undertake the detail of particular projects within the key actions.
- 3.5 Community Planning Statutory partners provide officer support to the Community Planning Board and also work in partnership at an operational level.
- 3.6 Decisions taken by the Board are usually implemented within the following cycle. It is assumed that the representatives on the Board have the authority to make those decisions with the agreement of any affected parties. The Board can agree to remit the development of the detail to others such as theme groups, partners or statutory partners. Once an issue has been delegated from the Board to another, then it is not normally reported back to the Board unless specifically stated at the meeting when the decision is made.
- 3.7 In relation to consultation on issues, it is assumed that the representatives have the authority to make decisions, considered the issues and spoken to any relevant parties prior to making the decisions. The author of the report makes reference to any "formal" consultations which have taken in to place within the report.
- 3.8 Given the number of stakeholders involved in community planning as much information as possible is held on the website and reference to new information is made through the fortnightly e-bulletins. Communicating formal decisions by the Board or theme groups is captured in the minute and action sheets from the meetings. Though minutes are not published until the next meetings (quarterly) they are available on request and follow-up information from the meetings are mentioned in the e-bulletins. Decisions from

Community Planning statutory partners, Council committees and partners' Boards are fed into the consultation section within the reports.

- 3.9 The supply of information to community planning groups is a shared responsibility of all partners, though the council administers the process of issuing papers for the meetings.
- 3.10 Performance management information against the key actions is collected by the council to inform the report to be presented by the theme group lead officers. This supports the changes within the publication of performance management information to committees and community planning groups.
- 3.11 To strengthen the remit of the theme groups, pre-planned agenda items are suggested (see alignment of the community planning and committee structures report on the agenda for this meeting). Officers from the partner organisations will be asked to submit reports to the theme groups on projects which support the delivery of key actions as highlighted in the milestones. Once the agenda items are agreed by the theme group it will be the responsibility for the relevant officer to produce the report. A list of expected items can be circulated to the theme group chairs and lead officers to enable them to track the business at meetings.

#### **4. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS**

**(a) Single Outcome Agreement/ Service Improvement Plan**

Clarity around the operation of the community planning partnership is an important aspect of good governance. Clear structures and accountability supports the partnership to monitor the delivery of the SOA.

**(b) Policy and Legal**

These proposals comply with the requirements placed on the Council in respect of governance, accountability, scrutiny and the criteria for best value 2. The statutory partners are the partners defined in legislation.

**(c) Financial implications**

Though no direct financial implications arise from this report, there are implications for staff if decisions are not clearly communicated across the community planning structure causing confusion and delays.

**(d) Risk Implications**

There is a risk that community planning stakeholders' understanding of the decision making structure may stifle community planning developments when they are not aware of who is making and where the decisions are being made. There is also a risk that representatives across the groups are not being made aware of decisions which impact on them, the direction which their organisation is taking in relation to a

particular area or compromising developments because of their lack of knowledge of the decisions.

**(e) Staffing Implications**

Partners will need to ensure that their representatives are fully briefed on decisions from meetings to ensure the flow of information between groups. Staff within all partners will need to support the flow of information to the theme groups by providing specific reports and performance monitoring information.

**(f) Property**

None.

**(g) Equalities**

None.

**(h) Consultations**

The support of the statutory partners was sought in support of governance arrangements impinging on their staff time to provide reports and performance monitoring information as most of the reports would be coming from these organisations.

## **5.0 CONCLUSION**

**5.1 The Community Planning Board is asked to consider a number of governance issues to improve the understanding of the remit and decision making process within the structure and to support the flow of information between representatives across the groups.**

Author of Report:

Background Papers:

Ref: