

# CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

## REPORT TO: STANDARDS COMMITTEE

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<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	<b>24<sup>th</sup> May 2010</b>
<b>Report of:</b>	<b>Monitoring Officer</b>
<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Standards in Partnerships Protocol</b>

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### **1.0 Report Summary**

- 1.1 This report gives an update of the work being undertaken by the Partnerships Protocol Working Group which was established by the Standards Committee at its meeting held on 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2009.

### **2.0 Recommendations**

- 2.1 That the Committee consider the information contained in this report and endorse the progress made.

### **3.0 Reasons for Recommendations**

- 3.1 High standards are a cornerstone of good governance and should become embedded in the culture of organisations. It is as important to achieve good governance in partnership arrangements as it is in individual organisations.
- 3.3 The development of a "Standards in Partnerships Protocol" will help to achieve this.

### **4.0 Wards Affected**

- 4.1 Not applicable.

### **5.0 Local Ward Members**

- 5.1 Not applicable.

### **6.0 Policy Implications**

- 6.1 None. There is no policy on the development of such a partnership arrangement.

## **7.0 Financial Implications 2010/11 and beyond**

7.1 None identified.

## **8.0 Legal Implications**

8.1 None identified

## **9.0 Risk Management**

9.1 The development of a Standards In Partnership Protocol will strengthen the governance arrangements between the Council and its partners.

## **10.0 Background and Options**

10.1 As reported to the meeting held on 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2009, Standards for England has worked with Manchester City Council to develop a protocol for working in partnership. The key aim of the project was to develop a shared set of values and behaviours which will underpin partnership work. This will, in turn, encourage high standards and will enable partners to agree what behaviour can be expected from each other and provide a means by which to hold each other to account.

10.2 The Standards Committee set up a Member/Officer Working Group including the Monitoring Officer and appropriate Officers from the Partnership Team together with Councillors M A Hollins and L Smetham and Mr R Pomlett (Independent Member).

10.3 The Working Group has met on two occasions. At its first meeting in February 2010, it reviewed and revised the draft Protocol issued by Standards for England. The revised Protocol was agreed by the Working Group on 29<sup>th</sup> March 2010 and was submitted to the Cheshire East Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) Executive on 12<sup>th</sup> April 2010 (revised Protocol attached).

10.4 The Executive considered that it required additional time to consider its impact on statutory services such as Children and Adult Services as well as Safer Communities in terms of access to confidential material.

10.5 The next meeting of the Executive is 17<sup>th</sup> May 2010 and it is understood that this will be considered again at that time. Notwithstanding this delay, it is important to ensure that all partners can agree a protocol which is "fit for purpose".

10.6 It is intended to re-convene the Working Group when a response from the LSP has been received.

## **11.0 Overview of Year One and Term One Issues**

11.1 None identified.

## **12.0 Access to Information**

The background papers relating to this report can be inspected by contacting the report writer:

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**The Protocol**

**1 Achieve intended outcomes**

Our priorities are evidence-based and our decision-making is transparent.

We will:

1. Share resources to achieve joint outcomes
2. Ensure that decision-making is transparent
3. Be committed to continuous improvement
4. Ensure that claims of improved performance are based on clear evidence
5. Establish accountability both across the partnership (horizontally) and within each organisation (vertically)

**2 Public interest**

We act in the interest of the public and demonstrate value.

We will:

1. Focus on long-term as well as short-term issues
2. Act in the interests of the public good over individual interests  
Consider visibility, input from the public and informing the public of the Council's activities and the rationale behind decisions.
3. Demonstrate to the community how we are achieving publicly valued outcomes
4. Agree a protocol for the handling of complaints that relates to our joint work
5. Promote and ensure public engagement
6. Consider public access to partnerships (and documentation) when appropriate (Note: Most meetings were not held in public, and it was sometimes inappropriate for the public to attend meetings, but this would ensure the provision of documents when appropriate. )
7. Use appropriate, unambiguous and simple language

### **3 Building partners' capacity**

We act to build capacity in our partnership.

We will:

1. Be committed to developing individual partners' skills to achieve our aims.
2. Encourage partners to be confident working outside of their organisational culture
3. Be open to partners' suggestions and help.
4. Actively encourage ideas and innovation
5. Ensure that decision-making is transparent
6. Establish accountability both across the partnership (horizontally) and within each organisation (vertically)

### **4 Value and respect each other**

We respect and value everyone's contribution.

We will:

1. Actively promote a "no-blame" culture
1. Ensure that all partners contribute appropriately and openly
2. Acknowledge the capabilities of all members
3. Recognise and embrace the role of voluntary and community sector partners
4. Avoid dominance by individuals
5. Respect each other's roles and needs
6. Actively encourage the participation of all partnership members
7. Build effective working relationships with each other
8. Recognise the value of all partners' contributions

## **5 Act ethically**

We act ethically. We are open and objective and encourage constructive challenge.

We will:

1. Be honest and objective
2. Support partners both to understand and constructively challenge any poor behaviour
3. Agree how we will achieve democratic accountability
4. Ensure that our dialogue is open and transparent
5. Declare conflicts of interest and address them
6. Make sure that the purpose of all meetings is made clear
7. Agree a mechanism for “whistle-blowing” and dealing with complaints
8. Ensure that “whistle-blowers” are supported

## **6 Aligning strategies and networks**

We harness our collective efforts through joint planning, delivery and governance arrangements. This must be clear evidence-based.

We will:

1. Encourage all partners to actively shape the strategy and share information.
2. Ensure that partners can influence the decision-making of partner organisations
3. Allow sufficient time and capacity to be given to understand an issue and to reflect on its impact
4. Make sure that actions taken by the partnership are clear, time-limited and task-orientated
5. Ensure that agreed actions are carried out