



Protecting local
communities

Policy No.31 Partnership Policy Document

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Reviewed by	Assistant Director of Partnerships
Ratified by	SMT
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1. POLICY

1.1 Introduction

Partnerships' are playing an increasingly important role in the future of Brigade service delivery arrangements to meet the needs of our community. Government expectations require the Brigade to comply with new statutory duties under

- The Local Government and Public involvement in Health Act 2007, to ensure the Brigade cooperates with partners to develop a Local Area Agreement LAA and have regard designated and local improvements targets.
- The Crime and Disorder Act 1998 as amended by Police and Justice act 2006 and subsequent regulations which came into force on 1st August 2007 to deliver services to ensure local communities are safer and stronger.

1.2 Policy objectives

The aim of this policy is to provide an agreed corporate definition for a partnership and illustrate the Brigade's partnership governance arrangements to be used to build capacity and increase productivity. This will be achieved by entering into partnerships with other public, private and voluntary sector agencies that have a shared ambition for our community. The Brigade's partnership governance arrangements will ensure:

- The focus of partnership activity is aligned to our corporate objectives and also meets the specific needs of communities across Cleveland.
- Brigade procedures are in place to manage strategic risks, demonstrate value for money in respect of Brigade resources used within partnership work.
- Information is collected shared and analysed regularly to measure the performance and impact of partnership working
- Brigade staff and elected members engaged in partnership working have the appropriate knowledge and skills and understanding to perform their role.

1.3 Scope

The Brigade definition of a partnership is:

"A collaborative agreement between two or more independent bodies working collectively to achieve a shared ambition, with robust governance arrangements in place to manage risk, pool resources, share information and monitor performance."

Given the different sizes, risks and significance of the partnerships Cleveland Fire Brigade has the potential to work within these can be divided into three main categories:

- **Statutory Partnerships** - High level formal relationships pertaining to legislation e.g. Crime and Disorder Act 1998, where shared objectives demonstrate a clear alignment to the strategic aims of the Fire and Rescue Service.

- **Voluntary Formal Partnerships** - Where partnerships are entered into voluntarily, but have a formal **Service Level Agreement (SLA)** which stipulates what each partner contribution, role and responsibilities and expected future performance targets.
- **Voluntary Informal Partnerships** - Where relationships are established at an "operational level" and are "unsigned". They are mutually beneficial and therefore considered useful to maintain for differing periods.

1.4 **Benefits**

The Brigade recognises the potential benefits partnership working can bring in building additional capacity and achieving significant improvements to service delivery, Indeed, many new funding sources can only be accessed by the demonstration of multi agency agreement to cooperate to deal with a wide range of community problems. If planned and developed properly, partnerships can bring many benefits to the delivery of services, as illustrated below.

- Provides economies of scale, reduction in duplication and better management of risk
- Promotes different perspectives and approaches to problem solving
- Improve data sharing between services & understanding of the issues facing each of the partners
- Improved public perception, i.e. seamless approach to service delivery arrangements

2. **ORGANISATION**

2.1 **Cleveland Fire Authority CFA is accountable for**

Complying with its duty to have regard to LAA targets. The Governance and Audit Committee will monitor by exemption LAA performance results for the designated and local improvement targets in all four districts and take action as appropriate.

Helping to identify and share effective practice across the district and organisational boundaries. CFA Partnership Committee meets on a quarterly basis with Brigade Managers to discuss problems and associated projects and initiatives being delivered in their areas.

2.2 **The Brigade Strategic Management Team is accountable for**

Acting as a forum in which matters pertaining to partnership strategy, policy and planning can be considered and agreed.

Overseeing and monitor partnership performance and recommend appropriate action as required

Ensure the Brigade fully complies with its statutory duties in respect of partnership working

2.3 The Brigade Partnership Assurance Team is responsible for

Challenge and continuously improving the Brigade Partnership Policy, Strategy and Plans for working in partnership

Ensuring appropriate action is taken to respond to poor partnership performance results

Challenging value for money claims being made for partnership actions, projects and initiatives

Approve Business case bids for Brigade funding to deliver partnership projects/initiatives

2.4 The Brigade corporate services directorate is responsible for

Development and continuous improvement of the Brigade partnership Policy, Strategy and Management framework

Development of partnership relationships to improve service delivery and build capacity

Provision of internal consultancy for project creation, appraisal and review

Development and maintenance of Service Level Agreements with other partnership agencies

Implementing a Brigade partnership framework document that provides guidance to Managers regarding their roles and responsibility when establishing and working in partnerships

Providing ongoing advice support and guidance to Brigade Managers in respect of the Brigade's partnership governance arrangements.

Maintain the Brigade's Partnership map to track key information relating to Brigade's partnership relations activity and achievements.

Assist in the coordination of the Brigade community engagement strategy and to undertake consultation exercises as necessary

3. PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTING

This policy will be used to develop further guidance documents for Brigade Managers to assist with decision making in respect of; entering into new partnerships, maintaining existing partnership relations and how to exit partnerships. This will require the development of the following arrangements

3.1 **Brigade Partnership Strategy** to ensure the Brigade has a clear vision for developing new partnerships agreements that contribute to Brigade corporate objectives, ensure existing partnerships have a clear purpose, are based on the needs of the local community and service users.

3.2 **Brigade Partnership Map** will capture key information in order to track active partnerships relations and activity including:

- Partnership name;
- Partners organizations;
- When created and the life expectancy of the partnership;
- Key contact names in each organization;
- Representatives of the Brigade on the Partnership;
- Partnership documentation (Contracts, SLA, protocol, Memorandum of Understanding);
- Aim(s) of the Partnership;
- Outputs of the Partnership (Actions, achievements and policies);
- Financial arrangements.

The Brigade keeps the Partnership Map on an Excel database, which will be kept up to date by the Brigade's Partnership Manager.

3.3 **Brigade Partnership Management Framework** will provide further guidance to Brigade Managers and staff to ensure all current and future Brigade partnerships incorporate:

- **Strategy / Purpose** based on need identified in consultation with community and service users.
- **Performance Management** system in place to enable monitoring and reporting of progress against its specified improvement targets and any project or initiative is evaluated to assess its impact in terms of expected outcomes.
- **Financial Management** arrangements comply with Brigade financial standing orders and suitable systems and controls are in place to ensure financial resources can be accounted for and value for money demonstrated.
- **Risk Management** is systematically undertaken to ensure that key risks to the achievement of corporate partnership objectives are identified and managed effectively.
- **Appropriate Knowledge and Skills** Staff representing the Brigade have received the appropriate training and development to carry out their responsibilities

- **Community Awards** The Brigade recognises the significant contributions that partners have made to delivery of corporate and community priorities. The contribution made from a range of agencies will be formally recognised on annual basis. Individuals and organisations will receive a nomination for an award in recognition of their achievement or significant contribution to partnership work.

4. PERFORMANCE REVIEW AND AUDIT

- 4.1 The Assistant Director for Policy and Performance will ensure partnership performance and risk is managed in line with the corporate performance management and review framework.
- 4.2 The Audit Commission will undertake assessment of the effectiveness of partnerships as part of the Fire and Rescue Performance assessment in 2008. Comprehensive Area Assessments will commence in 2009, this new approach will provide independent assessment of the partnership achievements in local areas and the impact on the quality of life for people living there, the methodology for CAA is being developed by the Commission and other inspectorates working together, the CAA will comprise:
- A Use of Resources (UoR) judgement for all local public sector bodies including Fire and Rescue Authorities
 - A Direction of Travel (DoT) Assessment for each local authority and Fire and Rescue Authority which will deliver a judgement on the rate at which performance is improving
 - An Assessment against national and local performance indicators and publication of performance against the national indicator set
 - A joint risk assessment for the area, drawing on these judgements and other evidence (including local self-assessment) which will identify the key risks to outcomes or delivery for each area, and how well they are being managed
- 4.3 **Equality & Diversity Issues-** In accordance with the requirements of the Brigades Equality schemes and other relevant legislation this policy has been Equality Impact Assessed (EIA). No issues were identified.