

Dorset Strategic Partnership Board

Revised Partnership Agreement

1. Introduction

This is a partnership agreement between:

Dorset County Council
Christchurch Borough Council
East Dorset District Council
North Dorset district Council
Purbeck District Council
West Dorset District Council
Weymouth & Portland Borough Council
Dorset Association of Parish and Town Councils
Dorset Fire and Rescue
Dorset Police
Dorset Primary Care Trust

The business community and third sector will each have a single representative on the Board and the individuals appointed will be signatories to the Partnership Agreement during their term of service.

2. Vision

The Dorset Strategic Partnership brings partners together from across the public, private and voluntary and community sector to deliver a shared vision of a 'living thriving Dorset where everyone has a part to play in creating a better quality of life'.

3. Objectives

- To ensure the delivery of the targets in the Sustainable Community Strategy for Dorset
- To ensure the delivery of the targets within the Dorset Local Area Agreement.
- To fulfil the requirements of community planning related Government legislation, including the delivery of additional targets that may be introduced.
- To improve the quality of life and well being in Dorset in a sustainable way.
- To provide the framework within which other partnerships operate.
- To improve services, particularly those addressing cross-cutting issues and needs
- To speak up for Dorset at sub regional, regional, national and European level.
- To optimise funding brought into Dorset.
- To improve relationships between key organisations and facilitate joint working across a range of initiatives.

4. Performance Management

Specific, achievable realistic, time specific measures (SMART) which determine whether the partnership has achieved its objectives are set out in the Dorset Community Strategy and Dorset Local Area Agreement. Monitoring will take place according to the Dorset Performance Management System.

The Community Strategy Delivery Group will receive six monthly monitoring reports on the Local Area Agreement targets and an annual monitoring report on the targets within the Community Strategy. Where specific issues require more detailed monitoring, additional reports will be submitted to the Community Strategy Delivery Group.

The Community Strategy Delivery group will also be responsible for risk management of Dorset's Local Area Agreement. This will be supported through the risk management capability of performance management software.

The Dorset Strategic Partnership Board will consider monitoring reports. Monitoring reports will also be considered by the County Council in its role as accountable body for the Partnership.

5. Role of the County Council

Dorset County Council has a duty to prepare a Sustainable Community Strategy in Dorset. The Local Government and Involvement in Public Health Act (2007) puts on a statutory footing Dorset County Council's role as the 'responsible local authority' for preparing Dorset's local area agreement. In fulfilling this duty the responsible authority should seek to achieve collective consensus through the LSP on the content of the LAA for the area. Sections 103-113 of the Act outline a number of expectations on the responsible local authority.

For these reasons the County Council, as the responsible local authority, must take the lead role in the operation of the Partnership and this is reflected in the arrangements for the running of the partnership, as set out in section 6, below.

The County Council in addition to being the responsible local authority is also the accountable body for the administration of funds associated with the agreement.

6. Running the Partnership

a) Information sharing

The Partnership operates under the Dorset Over Arching Information Sharing protocol (OAISP).

b) Partners' Roles/Duties/Responsibilities

Terms of reference agreed in March 2005 require the Board to:

- Consult and support local communities, through local community planning partnerships, to determine what Dorset's economic, social and environmental aspirations should be;

- Articulate the needs and aspirations of Dorset communities within the Dorset Community Strategy;
- Provide leadership and direction to public and community service providers;
- Through consultation and review ensure the ongoing effectiveness of the structure and activities of the Dorset Strategic Partnership within which local community planning partnerships and member organisations can operate successfully;
- Encourage organisations and partners to work together and use their resources to bring co-ordination and create capacity for the delivery of services and projects that realise this future (in a sustainable way);
- Create opportunities to tackle those big issues common to the majority of communities in Dorset including the promotion of Dorset and its needs at sub-regional, regional, national and European levels.
- Appoint, as necessary, and oversee the induction of the Chairperson of the DSP Board and provide them with appropriate support.

c) The Chair

The Dorset Strategic Partnership will be chaired by an independent person.

Their role is to chair the Dorset Strategic Partnership in order to improve the quality of life and well being of people in Dorset in a sustainable way.

The role involves the following responsibilities (taken from the job description used in summer 2005):

- Chairing meetings of the Dorset Strategic Partnership and the DSP Board in a way that is inclusive and promotes participation of all partners.
- Leading a partnership approach to delivery, monitoring, reviewing and revision of the Dorset Community Strategy.
- Championing the work of the Dorset Strategic Partnership by attending public events, liaising with the media and representing the DSP at a sub regional, regional and national level as necessary.
- Ensuring that the Dorset Strategic Partnership operates according to its agreed working practices set out in the Foundations document, and is inclusive, transparent and open.
- Working with the Bridging Group to ensure an integrated approach to community planning across the tiers of local government in Dorset.

The Chair is appointed by the DSP Board for an initial period of twelve months following which the position will be reviewed by the Board. It is anticipated that total tenure is limited to three years. The Board may extend the tenure of the Chair beyond three years on an annual basis.

The Leader of the County Council will deputise for the Chair as required, as Vice-Chairman.

The Partnership Manager will provide support for the Chair as required.

d) Resources The Dorset Strategic Partnership has an annual budget which is at present allocated from County Council funds to provide support for the Partnership, local community planning and specific projects. Other partners, including the District Councils and the Primary Care Trust, contribute both in cash and in kind towards the operational costs of the DSP Manager and the Partnership.

The County Council's Cabinet approves the use of the County Council allocation on an annual basis and the impact of the Dorset Strategic Partnership is assessed annually through the Annual Report, which is considered by the County Council's Audit and Scrutiny Committee.

The County Council in its role as the accountable body has delegated to its Chief Executive the release or expenditure of funds recommended to him by the DSP and its Groups. When the County Council's own contribution exceeds the threshold for a key decision then the spending decision becomes one for its Cabinet rather than the Chief Executive.

e) Ownership of assets

The Dorset Strategic Partnership has no capacity to own land or property. Any land or property acquired for the purposes of the Partnership will be held by the County Council (as accountable body for the Partnership) on behalf of the Partnership and will be managed according to the County Council's asset management and corporate property arrangements.

Assets arising from the Local Area Agreement will be managed according to the contemporary Dorset County Council Local Area Agreement Revenue Grant Determination. (*i.e. for 2007 No 31/692*)

As the accountable body the County Council owns the intellectual property rights arising from the work of the Partnership unless there is specific agreement to the contrary for individual initiatives where one partner takes a particular leading role.

f) Decision making procedures

Wherever possible the Dorset Strategic Partnership aims to reach agreement through consensus. However, when this is not possible, decisions will be made according to democratic principles. Members will have a mandate from their nominating body for decision making at Board meetings. Each appointing body will nominate a named substitute for Board meetings, including voting, for when the named Board member is unable to attend.

For decisions to be taken meetings must be quorate. A quorum will be one quarter of the Board.

Members of the public may attend all meetings of the Dorset Strategic Partnership including the Board, Community Strategy Delivery Group, Bridging Group, Forum and theme group meetings. Exclusion of access by the public to meetings will follow the Access to information procedure rules (section 10) within the Dorset County Council constitution.

Members who are representing local authorities are required under the 'Code of Conduct' to declare any personal or prejudicial interest. Those members of the Partnership not subject to the 'Code of Conduct' will be expected to declare any personal or prejudicial interest as if the Code applied to them and not to participate in the case of a prejudicial interest. At the start of each meeting, members of the Board will be invited to declare any personal or prejudicial interest.

f) Secretariat

The Chief Executive of Dorset County Council is the Secretary to the Board with support provided by the Dorset Strategic Partnership Manager.

g) Organisational structure and reporting mechanism

A DSP Structure chart as from 22 March 2007 is attached as Appendix 1 to this Agreement.

Dorset Strategic Partnership Board

The Dorset Strategic Partnership Board is responsible for the Governance of the Dorset Strategic Partnership. The full Dorset Strategic Partnership, Board and its sub groups will be governed by the terms of this, the formal partnership agreement for the Dorset Strategic Partnership Board.

Membership of the Board will comprise:

Independent Chair of the Dorset Strategic Partnership
Leader of Dorset County Council
Leader of Christchurch Borough Council
Leader of East Dorset District Council
Leader of North Dorset District Council
Leader of Purbeck District Council
Leader of West Dorset District Council
Member appointment, Weymouth & Portland Borough Council
Chair of Dorset Association of Parish & Town Councils
Representative of Dorset Fire and Rescue
Representative of Dorset Police
Chair of Dorset Primary Care Trust
One representative of the Dorset Strategic Partnership Bridging Group (Chairperson of a local community partnership)
One representative from the Business Sector
One representative from the 3rd sector elected from the Dorset 3rd Sector Executive Forum.

Each appointing body will nominate one named deputy to attend meetings and vote if the main Board member is unable to attend.

The Secretary and Dorset Strategic Partnership Manager will attend or be represented at and support Board meetings.

Where relevant, representatives from regional agencies may be invited to attend as observers.

The Board will normally meet quarterly.

The Board will support the local authorities and other statutory bodies in their decision making on the Dorset Community Strategy, Dorset Local Area Agreement and statutory plans.

Dorset Strategic Partnership Forum

The Forum reports to the Community Strategy Delivery Group. The Forum provides a vehicle through which DSP is able to take account of a wide and inclusive range of community interests. It has the following responsibilities delegated by CSDG:

- To disseminate information to its members from the DSP Board and CSDG

- To provide information from its membership to the Board and CSDG when requested.
- To respond to consultation requests from the DSP Board and CSDG.
- To make its views known and to seek to influence the DSP through feedback to CSDG on matters raised at Forum meetings.
- To participate in the sharing of best practice among Forum members at meetings and through the DSP communications action plan

Membership is open to all organisations who work within Dorset and support the vision and values of the Dorset Strategic Partnership. It will include a broad spectrum of private and third sector partners with particular emphasis on the inclusion of a diverse range of representatives from equalities groups.

Members of the Dorset Strategic Partnership Forum will be invited to attend at least three meetings a year, including the annual conference and themed events. Members receive a regular newsletter.

Community Strategy Delivery Group

The Community Strategy Delivery Group reports to the Dorset Strategic Partnership Board. It has the following responsibilities delegated by the Board:

- To deliver the Dorset Community Strategy including the Dorset Local Area Agreement.
- To lead cross-cutting projects.
- To secure investment and manage the use of resources for delivery through an agreed commissioning approach.
- To manage performance including Quality of Life Indicators and delivery through the Dorset Strategic Partnership's theme groups:
 - Affordable Housing
 - Economy
 - Accessibility
 - Environment
 - Dorset Age Partnership
 - Children and Young People
 - Culture
 - Safer Communities
 - Thriving Communities
 - Health and Well-being
- To make arrangements for periodic review of the Community Strategy and its supporting structures
- To ensure a broad spectrum of private and third sector partners participate in membership of the DSP Forum with particular emphasis on the inclusion of a diverse range of representatives from equalities groups.

Core membership of the Community Strategy Delivery Group::

Independent Chair of the Dorset Strategic Partnership
 Chief Executive Dorset County Council
 Chief Executive Christchurch Borough Council
 Chief Executive East Dorset District Council
 Chief Executive North Dorset District Council
 Chief Executive Purbeck District Council
 Chief Executive West Dorset District Council

Chief Executive Weymouth & Portland Borough Council
Chief Executive of Dorset Association of Parish & Town Councils
Chief Constable, Dorset Police
One representative of the Business sector
One representative of the 3rd Sector elected from the Dorset 3rd sector Executive Forum.
One representative elected from the Dorset Equality and Diversity forum.
One representative of each of the Dorset Strategic Partnership's Theme Groups

Each member of the Community Strategy Delivery Group may nominate a deputy to attend meetings and vote on their behalf if they are unable to attend

Also to attend:

Representative of Government Office for the South West.
Dorset Strategic Partnership Manager.
Additional representatives to be invited as relevant to agenda items.

The Community Strategy Delivery Group will meet bi monthly. Secretariat support will be provided by Dorset County Council.

Minutes of the meetings of the Community Strategy Delivery Group will be submitted to the Dorset Strategy Partnership Board for approval.

Dorset Strategic Partnership Bridging Group

The Dorset Strategic Partnership Bridging Group has the following responsibilities:

- To manage the interface between the local and district level of community planning and the county-wide strategic agenda.
- To act as a link between local community planning partnerships across Dorset and share best practice.
- To ensure that the outcomes of community engagement and community planning activity at district, sub district and parish level influence county-wide priorities and action.
- At a local level, to disseminate information and respond to issues raised by the Dorset Strategic Partnership Board and Strategy Delivery Group.
- To co-ordinate work on shared community planning tasks where these are not addressed elsewhere
- To oversee the allocation of Parish Plan Grants under powers delegated by the Dorset Strategic Partnership Board.

Membership of the Bridging Group:

Independent Chair of the Dorset Strategic Partnership
Dorset Strategic Partnership Manager
Senior Officer Dorset County Council
Chair and Officer Christchurch Community partnership
Senior Officer Christchurch Borough Council
Chair and Officer East Dorset Community Partnership
Senior Officer East Dorset District Council
Senior Officer North Dorset District Council
Chair Community Partnership Executive North Dorset (CPEND)
Chair and Officer Purbeck Community Partnership
Senior Officer Purbeck Community Partnership

Chair and Officer, West Dorset Partnership
Senior Officer, West Dorset District Council
Chair and Officer Weymouth and Portland Partnership
Senior officer Weymouth and Portland Borough Council
One representative from Dorset Association of Parish and Town Councils
One representative nominated by the Dorset 3rd Sector Executive Forum

The Bridging Group will meet quarterly.

Chairmanship of the Bridging Group will rotate on an annual basis with the secretariat function being provided by the partner chairing the Group.

Minutes of the Bridging Group and recommendations will be submitted to the Dorset Strategic Partnership Board.

Theme groups

The Dorset Strategic Partnership Delivery Group is supported by a number of theme groups which may vary from time to time according to the priorities within the Dorset Community Strategy and Local Area Agreement. The Theme Groups fall into two categories:

Supporting Partnerships

- Dorset Age Partnership
- Children and Young People
- Culture
- Safer Communities
- Thriving Communities
- Health and Well-being

Partnerships dealing with strategic challenges

- Affordable Housing
- Economy
- Accessibility
- Environment

Some of the theme groups are statutory partnerships in their own right and these operate according to specified terms of reference. All theme groups, including statutory ones are required to comply with the County Council's partnership governance arrangements. All theme groups are governed by terms of reference agreed by the Dorset Strategic Partnership Board.

Minutes and recommendations of all theme groups are submitted to the Dorset Strategic Partnership Delivery Group.

Theme Group members will be appointed according to operating principles agreed by the Board.

h) Complaints

The County Council, as the accountable body, will arrange for complaints to be dealt with according to its formal complaints procedure. Complaints should be directed to the Secretary. Complaints about services provided by a partner will be directed to the partner for resolution. The Secretary will report annually to the Board on any complaints received.

i) Equalities

The Dorset Strategic Partnership will work in a way that is inclusive and that provides equality of opportunity and involvement from all sectors of the community regardless of age, gender, ethnic origin, race, sexual orientation, religion, disability, social status or geographic location.

Areas for improvement identified through the equalities impact assessment will be taken forward through the Dorset Community Strategy.

7. Management and Timescales

Key milestones are set out in the Dorset Community Strategy and Dorset Local Area Agreement. The Community Strategy Delivery Group is responsible for managing delivery of the required outputs.

8. Financial Matters

a) Accountable body

The County Council is the accountable body for the Partnership. Partnership members have the duty to advise the accountable body on a regular basis of capital and revenue spending of Dorset Strategic Partnerships funds.

b) Banking and financial accounting arrangements

Banking and financial arrangements will be through the accountable body and will be managed according to the accountable body's Scheme of Financial Management under the supervision of the Chief Financial Officer. Financial information will be considered by the Dorset Strategic Partnership Board and approved by the accountable body.

b) Grants and funding

The accountable body will determine that grants and funds are dealt with according to any terms and conditions determined by Government and the accountable body's Scheme of Financial Management.

c) Tax and VAT

Provision for tax and VAT payments will be made by the accountable body and managed by the S151) Chief Financial Officer.

d) Value for money and audit.

The accountable body's Internal Auditor will have the right of access to all financial activities relating to the Partnership.

9. Risk Assessment

The accountable body will from time to time carry out a risk assessment of the Partnership and its supporting structures.

The Partnership will follow the policies and procedures of the accountable relating to data protection, freedom of Information measures, confidentiality issues, except where the Partnership and the County Council have signed up to a jointly agreed protocol such as the Dorset Over Arching Information Sharing protocol (OAISP).

Dealing with the media

All media enquiries will, in the first instance, be channelled through the DSP Manager or in his/her absence, the Secretary.

The circumstances necessary to expel a partner

The Dorset Strategic Partnership is the LSP for the Dorset County Council area. Its success depends upon the willingness of its member partners to work together to achieve common aims.

Organisational membership of the Dorset Strategic Partnership Board is a Board decision. Nomination of representatives is a matter for individual partner organisations.

Procedures for whistle blowing/fraud

The Secretary will facilitate any action required to deal with whistle blowing or fraud in accordance with the adopted procedures of the accountable body.

Breaches of protocol or standards

The Secretary will facilitate any action required to deal with breaches in protocol or standards in accordance with the adopted procedures of the accountable body.

Dissolution

The Dorset Strategic Partnership was established in the context of the requirement in the Local Government Act 2000 to prepare a community strategy which promotes and improves the economic social and environmental well-being of their area and contributes to the achievement of sustainable development in the United Kingdom. Dissolution of the Partnership would be as a result of a resolution supported by a majority of two thirds of the membership of the Board.

Final reporting would be through the Dorset Strategic Partnership Board and the County Council as the accountable body.

10.Review

This partnership agreement will be reviewed by the Dorset Strategic Partnership Board and the County Council in the light of Government guidance and as a minimum every three years.

Kate Hindson, DSP Manager

Agreed September 2007

Amended September 2008