



Better Governance and Accountability

Oxfordshire Partnership Governance Framework 2009

HANDBOOK

June 2009

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Introduction to the handbook

The governance framework is intended to help partners implement the outcomes set out in Oxfordshire 2030. It does this by setting out the roles, accountabilities and responsibilities of those involved, and how performance, risk and finance will be managed.

The framework has been developed for implementation from June 2009, but will be subject to continual development and regular review to reflect experience, best practice, changes nationally in the framework for local area agreements, together with local needs and priorities.

Checklist for thematic partnerships

The Public Service Board agreed the partnership structure on the 18th February 2009.

As a result all thematic partnerships are asked to ensure that the following points are implemented by December 09 in order to report back to the Public Service Board.

- ❑ To report to the Public Service Board on progress with Oxfordshire 2030 targets for which they are the lead partnership
- ❑ The Public Service Board shall commission thematic partnerships to have the overview of targets supporting Oxfordshire 2030 and are responsible for recommending and performance managing them
- ❑ Report on Oxfordshire 2030 for the Oxfordshire Partnership annual progress report in November 2009 and future reporting as outlined in paper to the OP in June 2009.
- ❑ To ensure terms of reference are in place
- ❑ To ensure delivery groups are in place for all targets owned by the partnership
- ❑ To ensure the partnership and all delivery groups (these may be existing or newly formed) have clear terms of reference and members are identified
- ❑ Where targets require more than one partnership to deliver actions they must ensure that appropriate links are in place for joint management of those targets.
- ❑ To ensure that partnerships establish links with other partnerships where that impacts on delivery of targets.
- ❑ To ensure that communication links are developed between thematic partnerships and district local strategic partnerships where that can have a positive impact on the delivery of targets.
- ❑ To ensure that partnerships maintain up to date web pages that are linked to the Oxfordshire Partnership website – including information about meetings (notice of meetings, location, agendas, minutes, supporting papers), role and purpose, membership and contact details. All agenda papers for partnership will be available on the website at least 5 clear working days prior to the meeting.
- ❑ All partnership meetings will be held in public unless any matter to be discussed is exempt from disclosure e.g. if the freedom of information act or data protection principles apply.
- ❑ Where partnerships wish to consult on and agree a collective strategy or plan all the agencies involved in delivery shall have had the opportunity to clarify and agree their support agree in advance of meetings, including the identification of the capacity and resources required for delivery.

Detailed Checklist for individual partnerships:

a) Spatial Planning and Infrastructure Partnership:

- A new partnership to be formed which develops the role of the Oxfordshire Member Steering group as a strategic county-wide partnership
- Terms of reference and membership to be developed and agreed
 - Delivery groups to be in place - It will be up to the Spatial Planning and Infrastructure Partnership to determine.

The Partnership is responsible for the following targets (this will change over time as targets are regularly refreshed)

| Partnership | Local Area Agreement & medium term Local Targets | Delivery Group |
|---|--|--|
| <p style="text-align: center;">Spatial Planning and Infrastructure Partnership</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase net additional homes provided. (local area agreement target NI 154) • Number of affordable homes delivered (gross) (local area agreement target 155) • Increase access to services and facilities by public transport, walking and cycling. (local area agreement target NI 175) • Reduce the number of households living in temporary accommodation. (local area agreement target NI 156) • The District Councils will ensure the delivery of new housing development to at least code level 3 in the Code for Sustainable Homes. • The District Councils Local Development Frameworks, to be adopted by 2011, will include a range of policies and proposals to deliver higher environmental standards and to reflect the delivery of the minimum requirements in the Code for Sustainable Homes | <p>Housing Delivery Group (Housing Partnership)</p> <p>NEW: Transport / Access to Services Delivery Group</p> |

b) Children’s Trust

- The Trust has recently undertaken a review of governance. This proposes the following changes: Delivery Groups for performance management, joint commissioning and participation & involvement. Three area trust board to be established (Area Central, Area Northern and Area Southern).

The partnership shall

- be accountable to the Public Service Board for the targets for which it is responsible in the Oxfordshire 2030 Delivery Plan (local area agreement and local targets).
- further develop links with district / local partnerships to strengthen consultation and engagement on local needs.

The Partnership is responsible for the following targets (this will change over time as targets are regularly refreshed)

| Partnership | Local Area Agreement & medium term Local Targets | Delivery Group |
|-------------------------|---|--|
| Children’s Trust | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase the numbers / percentage of all 16 to 18 year olds who are in education, training or employment. (local area agreement target NI 117) • Reduce the inequality gap in the achievement of a Level 3 qualification by the age of 19. (local area agreement target NI 81) • Mandatory educational attainment targets (local area agreement NIs 72, 73, 74, 75, 83, 87, 92, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 100, 101) • Increase the percentage of school pupils who travel to school by walking, cycling, by bus or through car sharing (local area agreement target NI 198) • Improve the stability of placements of looked after children: number of moves. (local area agreement target NI 62) • Increase young people’s participation in positive activities. (local area agreement target NI 110) • Reduce the under 18 conception rate. (local area agreement target NI 112) • Increase the number of schools in the healthy schools programme (local area agreement 1/CYP4) • Reduce the number of vulnerable homeless 16/17 year olds (local area agreement /CYP7). • Reduce hospital admissions caused by unintentional and deliberate injuries to | Performance management, Joint commissioning and Participation & involvement subgroup. Three local partnerships will be established (North, central, South) |

| | | |
|--|---|--|
| | <p>children and young people (local area agreement target NI 70)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reduce obesity among primary school age children in year 6 (local area agreement target N1 56)• Increase the number of young people participating in the youth service (local area agreement 1 /CYP13, links to NI 110)• Reduce the number of half days missed by children looked after (local area agreement 1/CYP14) | |
|--|---|--|

c) Stronger Communities Partnership:

- Terms of reference and membership to be developed
- The Partnership shall further develop links with district / local partnerships to strengthen consultation and engagement on local needs.

The Partnership is responsible for the following targets (this will change over time as targets are regularly refreshed):

| Partnership | Local Area Agreement & medium term Local Targets | Delivery group |
|---|--|---|
| Stronger Communities Partnership | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase participation in regular volunteering (local area agreement target NI 6) • NI 7 (creating an environment for a thriving voluntary, community and faith sector) • Ensure that the impact of decisions made by public service providers that affect local and rural services is assessed through a customer impact assessment. • Increase the number of communities benefiting from involvement in local community planning to 8 -10 communities starting per annum and 20 already in development (April 09) • Increase the number of actions (identified as local priorities in community-led plans) are progressed within one year of publication to at least 50%. (April 09) | <p>OVSDP with OCVA Volunteer Centre, Cherwell CVS, Volunteer Link-Up (West Oxon).</p> <p>New: Local Community –led Planning Delivery Group.</p> |

d) Health and wellbeing Partnership:

- ❑ Clarify partnership governance arrangements for homelessness and supporting people
- ❑ Further develop its ownership of actions which reduce inequalities and break the cycle of deprivation

The Partnership is responsible for the following targets (this will change over time as targets are regularly refreshed):

| | | |
|---|--|--|
| <p>Health & Well-Being Partnership</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase the number of vulnerable people achieving independent living. (local area agreement target NI 141) • Reduce the delays in transferring people from hospital to home and other types of care (NI 131) • Increase the numbers of carers receiving needs assessment or review and a specific carer’s service, or advice and information (local area agreement target NI 135) • Establish a common referral assessment process (local area agreement 1/HCOP8). • Reduce the gap in all-age all cause mortality between the worst and best 20% (local area agreement target NI 120) • Improve mental health and well-being in the adult population, especially among vulnerable groups and those living in areas with worse outcomes focusing in particular on employment and housing. • Increase adult participation in sport. (local area agreement target NI 8) | <p>Supporting People. Preventing ill health in older people group. Promoting mental well-being strategy/ delivery group. Healthy weight strategy group. Reducing health inequalities steering group H&W-B partnership manages NI131. Local area agreement 2 Carers Group quarterly monitoring group. Sports Partnership.</p> |
|---|--|--|

e) Safer Communities Partnership:

- ❑ Terms of reference which provide clear and detailed guidance on its governance arrangements
- ❑ Ensure that there are consistent links between Police Neighbourhood Action Groups, District Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships and itself.

The partnership is responsible for the following targets (this will change over time as targets are regularly refreshed):

| Partnership | Local Area Agreement & medium term Local Targets | Delivery Group |
|---|--|---|
| <p>Safer Communities Partnership</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce hate crime in Oxfordshire (Actions to reduce hate crime commence November 2008. Baseline and target to be set June 2009). Links to NI1 and NI 140 • Reduce the assault with injury crime rate. (local area agreement target NI 20). • Increase the number of drug users in effective treatment (local area agreement) target NI 40) • Dealing with local concerns about anti-social behaviour and crime. (local area agreement target NI 21) • Reduce repeat incidents of Domestic Violence. (local area agreement target NI 32) • Reduce first time entrants to the Youth Justice System aged 10 – 17. (local area agreement target NI 111) • Reduce the harm caused to young people under 18 caused by the use of illicit drug and alcohol use (local area agreement 1/S&SC) • Reduce crime rates including vehicle crime, burglary, theft, criminal damage, assault, woundings and robbery (local area agreement 1 /S&SC) <p>Targets to be set by Safer Communities Partnership date TBC</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An increase in the number of young people engaged in organized activities • A decrease in the number of young people entering the criminal justice system • A reduction in the number of complaints of antisocial behaviour associated with public houses • Improve public perceptions around the levels of anti social behaviour and the behaviour of others (NI 17) • A reduction in alcohol related A&E | <p>Safer communities officers group,</p> <p>5 Tactical Business Groups (Alcohol, Drugs, Domestic abuse, PPO, Youth offending)</p> <p>Communications group</p> <p>Oxford Building resilience amongst communities</p> |

| | | |
|--|--|--|
| | <p>admissions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• A reduction in the number of alcohol related assaults• A reduction in the level of alcohol related criminal damage• A reduction in the number of shops and pubs found to be prepared to sell alcohol to children• Reduce priority crime and fear of crime.• Reduce harm caused by drug misuse to individuals, the family and wider community through increased numbers entering and drug treatment programmes, offenders completing the programme and quantities of drugs seized.• Reduce the rate of Domestic Violence• Build resilience to violent extremism (NI 35) | |
|--|--|--|

f) Environment and Waste Partnership:

- ❑ A thematic partnership is established bringing together waste, the environment, climate change and flooding
- ❑ Terms of reference and membership to be in place
- ❑ The partnership shall be accountable to the PSB for the targets for which it is responsible in the Oxfordshire 2030 Delivery Plan (local area agreement and local targets).
- ❑ The Partnership shall further develop links with district / local partnerships to strengthen consultation and engagement on local needs.

The Partnership is responsible for the following targets (this will change over time as targets are regularly refreshed):

| Partnership | Local Area Agreement & medium term Local Targets | Delivery groups |
|---|--|--|
| <p>Environment and Waste Partnership</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce the amount of residual household waste per head (local area agreement target NI 191) • Increase the amount of household waste recycled and composted (local area agreement target NI 192) • Improve street and environmental cleanliness (reduce levels of graffiti, litter, detritus and fly posting) (local area agreement target NI 195) • Improved street and environmental cleanliness – reduce fly tipping. (local area agreement target NI 196) • Reduce CO2 emissions caused by local authority activities (local area agreement target NI 185) • Develop plans that help Oxfordshire adapt to climate change (local area agreement target NI 188) • Report annually on NA 197 (biodiversity) on local wildlife sites • Carry out a minimum of 25% more drainage clearing focused on areas vulnerable to flooding • Increases our preparedness and responsiveness to flooding including managing flooding events including improvements to joint emergency planning. • Supports EA to implement all planned flooding alleviation schemes • Supports the district councils to ensure new developments reduce the risk and minimise the impact of flooding • Ensures all flooding alleviation schemes planned by local authorities are implemented • Ensure waste, minerals and highways plans include measures to reduce flood risks • develop a programme and local targets (date TBC) which engage residents, communities and businesses in energy and water reduction. • Implement actions set out in Habitat action plans for Oxfordshire • Report annually on core/contextual biodiversity indicators as part of the annual monitoring report • Work with partners to maintain and enhance sites of | <p>Flooding Action Group</p> <p>New : Climate Change Delivery Group.</p> <p>New : Biodiversity Delivery Group</p> <p>Waste / Clean & Green Delivery Group.</p> |

| | | |
|--|---|--|
| | special scientific interest, local wildlife sites and other key sites | |
|--|---|--|

g) Oxfordshire Economic Partnership:

- The partnership develops a close working relationship with the Strategic Planning and Infrastructure partnership
- The partnership shall report to the Public Service Board on progress with Oxfordshire 2030 targets for which they are the lead partnership: NI 163 and 164 (increase % of population qualified to skills level 2 / 3 respectively); local area agreement 152 (reduce the numbers of work age people on out of work benefits).

The Partnership is responsible for the following targets (this will change over time as targets are regularly refreshed):

| Partnership | Local Area Agreement & medium term Local Targets | Delivery Group |
|---|--|--|
| <p>Oxfordshire Economic Partnership</p> <p>including the Learning & Skills Partnership</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase the GVA per head of Oxfordshire’s population from its current position of 13th out of 131 NUTS3 (county) regions nationally to one of the top 10 in the NUTS3 league by 2010 • Reduce the numbers of working age people on out of work benefits. (local area agreement target NI 152) • Increase the percentage of the working age population qualified to at least Level 2 or higher. (local area agreement target NI 163) • Increase the percentage of the working age population qualified to at least Level 3 or higher. (local area agreement target NI 164). • Increase the economic impact of tourism, increasing the value of tourism activity for local businesses. The aim therefore is to increase the value of tourism activity that directly benefits local business in terms of direct business turnover from the 2006 baseline of <u>£1,198,616,000</u> (from economic impact model data commissioned from Tourism South East). • Increase the promotion of cultural and sporting events within tourism and create 5 new festivals/events with a national profile by 2012 • Increase the number of those joining Oxfordshire County Council apprenticeship schemes by 100% by December 2010 (2009 target is 50/2010 target is 100) • Increase numbers of Level 2 Health and Social Qualifications in the workforce. (PCT / Learning & Skills Partnership to set target by Jan 09). Local target. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ OEP Board ▪ New : Tourism Group (including Oxford Inspires) Learning & Skills Partnership :- ▪ Worklessness Group ▪ Employment and Skills Board / Workforce Group ▪ ... with PCT ▪ ... with County Council |

Thematic Partnership: Terms of Reference Proforma Example:

The following provides an outline format for terms of reference for thematic partnerships as guidance only. Some of the partnerships have statutory or other responsibilities, which necessitate terms of reference of a different nature. Those should however, address the role of the partnership in relation to the Oxfordshire Partnership, and especially the responsibility to ensure engagement with other partnerships and District Local Strategic Partnerships.

Aim and Objectives (of the Partnership)

- List the aims and objectives of the partnership here.
- Good practice would be a separate paragraph with a short explanatory sentence for each aim and objective.

Purpose (of the Partnership)

- The overall purpose of partnership will be to agree to work together; to avoid duplication, and to ensure that shared resources are used within a best value framework.

Accountability (of all the partners)

- A statement about how and to whom the partnership is accountable and what that accountability includes.
- A statement on the constituent members' accountability to each other including any expectations of behaviour.

Partnership Principles

The following list could be included under this sub-heading:

The members agree to work together actively to achieve the aims of the partnership on the basis of:

- Visible commitment and 'ownership' by the various member organisations and individual representatives
- Mutual trust and respect
- Openness and transparency
- Effective communication and accountability
- Removal of barriers to equality of access and opportunity
- Effective decision making

Membership (of the Partnership)

List information like:

- The number of representatives from organisations in the public, private and the voluntary and community sectors, which are actively involved in the area and why they were chosen;
- Who chairs and vice-chairs the partnership;
- How often the membership is reviewed and any time limits that an individual representative can serve on the partnership
- All meetings are open to the public
- Link on the Oxfordshire Partnership website to be kept up to date to include: agenda's, minutes and dates of meetings,

Roles and Responsibilities (of Partnership members)

- List the roles and responsibilities of each of the constituent members of the partnership here. It may be appropriate to talk more generally about what the voluntary and community sector, the business sector and the public sector members each bring to the partnership as groups, and the areas of the partnership activity that they will be responsible for delivering.
- In taking the lead in relation to (specify detailed remit) as a thematic partnership within the Oxfordshire Partnership, the (name of group) will ensure that communications with stakeholders are effective and in particular that there are arrangements in place to ensure that:
 - The priorities of District LSPs in relation to (specify detailed remit) are addressed
 - The District LSPs are engaged as appropriate in making arrangements for the delivery of the partnerships programmes locally

Chairman and Deputy Chairman (of the Partnership)

- How often the Chairman/Deputy Chairman will be elected
- If the Chairman/Deputy is to be permanent or rotating chair.

Meetings:

- A schedule of meetings to be produced. Where possible these should be in advance of the Public Service Board meetings.
- All papers and meeting dates to be posted on the Oxfordshire Partnership website and be kept up to date
- Quorum
- Responsibility for the setting of meetings, agendas, working papers, minutes etc

Equalities and Inclusion:

- A statement on how the partnership will operate and actively value the benefits of diversity and ensure fair treatment and equality of opportunity. This includes representation and participation on the partnership.
- A statement on how and when the partnership will carry out Equalities Impact Assessments on its functions, policies and services.

Secretariat:

- A short statement on which constituent member(s) will provide the secretariat function

Termination of partnership involvement:

- A short statement on written notification to the Chairman and secretariat of the intention to leave the partnership.

A checklist for setting up a new Delivery Group

Delivery Groups:

Each thematic partnership shall establish support groups (for example officer steering groups/performance management groups) who shall be responsible for operational delivery of activity to meet targets in the Oxfordshire 2030 Delivery Plan (including the Local Area Agreement).

Membership, although originally envisaged as officer based, is down to the thematic partnerships to agree, in consultation with their Delivery groups.

Delivery groups will be responsible for:

- Identifying actions required to deliver against the target and carrying out these actions.
- Maintaining action plans – including the primary responsibility for data quality, risk management and performance reporting to the relevant thematic partnership.
- Consulting and engaging with the public and service users as appropriate.
- Ensuring that actions are identified to mitigate identified risks.
- Escalating any blockages in carrying out these actions and any new and emerging risks to the thematic partnership.
- Reporting to thematic partnership on the relevant actions in Oxfordshire 2030 and the Local Area Agreement.

Before setting up a delivery group please ensure the following points are considered:

- What is the group intended to achieve?
- What is its intended lifespan?
- What other organisations will be represented on the group?
- Who will chair the group?
- Are there clear partnership rules of engagement?
- How will the group manage performance and report to the thematic partnership?

Resource implications:

- What are the resource implications (staff, capital and revenue funds, use of assets)?
- What is the identified resource available?
- Are there other sources of funding available?
- Are there future budget implications?

Other considerations:

- Are there arrangements for monitoring, reporting, review and exit?
- How does this delivery group tie in with other groups and other service's objectives and priorities?
- Are there cross-service opportunities or conflicts?

Financial decision making in partnership

Status of partnerships

- Most partnerships are not legally constituted bodies but are freely entered into to meet collectively agreed objectives.
- The County Council is currently required by the government to have partnerships for children and young people and community safety.
- The Waste Partnership is a legally constituted partnership to deliver waste services. In this sense it is more of a service commissioning and delivery arrangement than a partnership.
- Oxfordshire Economic Partnership is a company limited by guarantee
- Supporting People also have arrangements for making decisions about commissioning services.
- As the upper tier authority the County Council is required to ensure that a strategic partnership framework is in place.
- All public sector bodies including district councils share the “duty to co-operate” in identifying priorities (Oxfordshire 2030) and delivering on Local Area Agreement targets.

All public bodies have a statutory responsibility and fiduciary duty to ensure that public money is properly accounted for and that responsibility extends to any funding within the terms of the Local Area Agreement. Oxfordshire County Council is responsible for promoting clear financial responsibility and accountability and robust performance and risk management arrangements. This framework sets out governance arrangements to ensure efficient and effective delivery of the financial management of the Oxfordshire Local Area Agreement. It has regard to the Audit Commission’s guidance on working in partnerships ‘Bridging the Accountability Gap’ and the need to manage risks around:

- Accountability between partners
- Clarity on the processes for making decisions about the allocation of funding
- Scrutiny of expenditure and allocations
- The adequacy of the systems for financial budgeting control and monitoring (performance and financial) within the partnership
- The adequacy of partners financial skills, resources and systems to plan and report on expenditure
- Ensuring that there is clear ownership for each of the outcomes, performance measures, targets and improvement plans within the local area agreement
- The requirements and standards of accounting and financial records necessary to demonstrate effective stewardship of public funds

General Decision-Making Principles

The general principles of decision-making under this Governance Framework are as follows:

1. Decisions will be made by consensus
2. Partnerships will support and influence accountable bodies but will not replace their decision making powers

Nothing in this framework shall, or is intended to, delegate any member/authority's decision-making functions.

Financial management framework for pooled funding

The framework for the management of any locally pooled funds will be set out in a financial agreement between Oxfordshire County Council, as the accountable body, and lead delivery bodies receiving funding. These agreements will reflect terms and conditions in the Government's grant determinations, and local arrangements for performance management and decision making in respect of the Local Area Agreement. Clarity in accountability and responsibility will be incorporated into the funding agreements that will include:

- The amount allocated to the recipient and purpose for which it is allocated
- Definitions of eligible expenditure as defined in the grant determination, including the nature of any spend that is not eligible
- Restrictions where applicable on how much of the funding is specifically for capital spend or revenue spend
- Arrangements for payments of funds to partners including dates, payment methods, and profiling of payments
- The governance arrangements applicable to any locally pooled funds in the Local Area Agreement, including arrangements to agree the allocation and any redistribution of funds, and any to changes in spending plans
- Financial reporting, including the timing and accounting basis for reporting eligible expenditure
- Limits on amounts that can be carried forward to subsequent years
- Audit arrangements, including access to information for internal and external audit purposes
- Circumstances that could give rise to withholding, termination or recovery of payments
- Arrangements for recovery of funds
- Shared risk ownership for financial management across the pooling authorities, with clarity on how the costs of an overspend will be shared.
- The need for a clear exit strategy on use of resources within the pool, (although should apply in general to financial management in partnerships) i.e. contracting should only be on terms relative to certainty of on going funding, as should recruitment of staff on specific partnership projects etc. As above the sharing of risk for use of resources should be stipulated so any liability through poor financial management resulting from decisions by the Partnership are shared.

Decision making in relation to Area Based Grant

Area Based Grant is a non-ringfenced, central grant introduced from April 1 2008. "Non-ringfenced" means that there are no conditions attached to the way the funding is used. The aim of Government is that the grant will increase local flexibility over the use of resources, and further reduce onerous reporting requirements. Local authorities are free to use the totality of their non-ringfenced funding as they see fit to support the delivery of their local, regional and national priorities in their areas. It primarily does not provide new money but simply redirects an authority's existing specific grant streams into a single pot.

Allocations of Area Based Grant in Oxfordshire will be paid directly to Oxfordshire County Council and directly to individual districts, as notified by the Department of Communities and Local Government.

Oxfordshire County Council will receive £26.95 million in 09-10, the vast majority of which is funded by upper tier grants (education, personal social services, etc), but there is also some funding for Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships within its allocation.

The intention of the local authorities is to continue using Area Based Grant as it is currently used for this financial year and for the financial year 2010-2011 and this operates as a default position.

Area Based Grant Decisions:

1. Decisions regarding the allocation of Area Based Grant will be made by consensus
2. For the financial years 2009-2010 and 2010-2011, it has been agreed that the default position will be to allocate Area Based Grant so that services are funded as they currently funded.

Responsibilities of Accountable Bodies in respect of Area Based Grant

Once a decision has been taken regarding the allocation of Area Based Grant, the accountable body is responsible for spending that funding for the agreed purpose (in accordance with its constitution and internal requirements)

Partnership Performance Management

Definition and Background

The recent governance review agreed that thematic partnerships would now have responsibility for driving delivery of the Local Area Agreement 2 targets, the Sustainable Community Strategy (Oxfordshire 2030) and the National Indicator (NI) set. In tandem with this development, an opportunity emerged for partners from across the County to come together in order to agree a common set of standards and policies for performance management. The Partnership Performance Management Framework, led by Oxfordshire County Council's Policy Unit, but designed and agreed through a collaborative effort by all partners, is the process designed to grasp this opportunity.

How the New Framework Works

In essence, the framework divides target responsibilities along the following lines. With regard to each identified LAA2 target, SCS target, or other NI:

- The named **target lead** is the person responsible for delivering results against the target.
- The **thematic partnership** will hold the target lead accountable
- Collection, aggregation and communication of the actual information that enumerates this process are responsibilities of the **data owner**, who also stands over the data and ensures its quality.
- The **data generator**, in turn, is the person who actually provides this numerical information to the data owner; the generator may, of course, be more than one person, and may also involve officers from more than one organisation.

Central Roles and Expectations

Each **thematic partnership** is ultimately responsible for delivery of the targets that fall within its remit, and each thematic partnership must therefore hold the individual target leads to account; this is the minimum expectation of the new framework. However, it remains for each thematic partnership to decide, for itself, how best to discharge this function: a given partnership may, for instance, delegate this responsibility to a responsible officer group. It is also for each partnership to consider the subsidiary tasks that will go with holding the target leads to account – for example, partnerships may wish to consider carrying out risk analysis on each of its targets. Where desired, OCC Policy Unit Officers will be available to support this process.

For **partner organisations** within each partnership (such as district councils, the Primary care Trust (PCT), Jobcentre Plus, etc.), it is the responsibility of each to nominate an officer who will co-ordinate that organisation's response to the management and communication of target information, in line with the new framework. That person is most likely to be a member of the organisation's performance team, but this is for the organisation itself to decide. Where an organisation does report against a target, or part of a target, it will have the opportunity to comment on this information in its own name. Also, final data from the data owner reported by an organisation against a County-wide target can also be used to manage internal or local performance, insofar as each organisation wishes to do so.

The **Oxfordshire County Council Policy Unit**, which has overall responsibility for supporting the thematic partnerships in this work, will provide support to organisations implementing this process as described above. However, while the policy unit also has overall responsibility for collating data and guaranteeing its quality, partner organisations

still have a responsibility, in their own rights, to consistently deliver high-quality data to the unit. The Policy Unit will also report quarterly on each thematic partnership's performance management to the **Public Service Board (PSB)**, which is the body finally responsible for delivering LAA2 and Oxfordshire 2030.

Coming Soon

A detailed performance management project handbook is in development which will provide guidance on performance management, project management, risk and data quality. This will be developed in consultation with the project group and made available to thematic partnerships in July.

Risk management

Partnerships have a responsibility for the identification and management of risk. Risks should be managed in the following way;

- Strategic risks to the Partnership as a whole will be managed by the Partnership Development Group (to be established) on behalf of the Oxfordshire Partnership.
- Thematic partnerships should ensure that strategic risks are identified and managed appropriately. Strategic risks can be escalated to the Oxfordshire Partnership as required.
- Risks to delivery of partnership targets should be identified and managed by the target leads and appropriate support group. They should be escalated in regular performance reports as appropriate. More guidance on risks to delivery can be found in the performance management framework.

For further support and advice on managing risk in the Partnership contact the county Risk Adviser in Oxfordshire County Council.

Equality and Diversity

All partnerships will be expected to promote the right for everyone to participate as full citizens in all aspects of life by encouraging initiatives that remove barriers to participation and by actively promoting equality and inclusion. This will contribute to building successful, strong and cohesive communities.

Partners must be committed to challenging all forms of discrimination, promoting equality of opportunity and encouraging good community relations.

Individuals and agencies must not discriminate against people they come into contact with during their work with, or on behalf of the partnership on the basis of their disability, age, race, colour, nationality or ethnic origin, religion or belief, sex, marital status, responsibility for dependants, sexual orientation or transgender status.

All individuals will be expected to comply with equality legislation and the agreed equal opportunities policy of the partnership. We are all different and it is expected that this diversity will be respected and welcomed.

In all the partnership's work this will be demonstrated by:

- Treating others with dignity and respect
- Not making assumptions about a person or a group of people
- Not making judgements about a person or group of people
- Promoting equality by not discriminating unlawfully against any person or group of people, promoting equality of opportunity and good community relations
- Not doing anything which compromises or which is likely to compromise the impartiality of those who work for, or on behalf, of the local authority

All partnerships will be expected to have EQIAs in place (equality impact assessments)

Scrutiny

The increasing profile of the role of LSPs brings new opportunities for scrutiny, but also a need to work at a higher level, and to ensure the County Council and Districts have a cohesive and well thought out approach to the management of scrutiny and partnerships.

The benefits scrutiny can bring are around:

- Enhancing the democratic leadership of partnerships
- Helping to build not undermine, effective partnership work
- Adding value
- Improving the performance of partnerships
- Widening the conversation (e.g. using scrutiny to engage local people with service providers)

Scrutiny members will be expected to hold the Oxfordshire Partnership to account. Their role will include challenging executive decisions; reviewing policy; informing policy development; and monitoring/reviewing external partnership arrangements.

At County level this will be fulfilled by Oxfordshire County Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee. At District Local Strategic Partnership level it is proposed that District scrutiny members will champion local priorities, which are important and pursue effective delivery at local level.

Where Oxfordshire County Council is a key service provider and partner for example, children and young people, social care, highways, joint scrutiny arrangements between Oxfordshire County Council and Districts may be developed to consider both local and strategic matters.

Arrangements shall be developed to ensure that there is an annual programme that scrutinises outcomes and governance standards.

Communication

We believe effective communication at all levels of the Oxfordshire Partnership and with the public is crucial to our success. We expect Partnerships to communicate regularly with their partners and stakeholders and contribute to partnership wide communication activities. Partnerships should ensure that the following are in place:

- Opportunities for consulting and engaging with the public are fully explored and undertaken as appropriate.
- Learning and development needs of the partnership have been identified and a plan is in place
- The relevant partnership page on the Oxfordshire Partnership website is kept up to date e.g. meeting papers/dates of future meetings
- Partnerships contribute to regular communications such as the Oxfordshire Partnership newsletter
- Partnership members communicate partnership news, decisions, and activities back to their own organisations.

Audit

Many different audit services have a right of access to the partnership and for different reasons.

Where central government funding has been provided either directly or passported via an agency to the partnership the National Audit Office, as the external auditors of the central government have a right of access to the partnership and its records. Similarly the government department that provided the funds may enquire and check the funds provided have been used in accordance with purpose that they were intended or seek assurance from the Accountable Body's (Oxfordshire County Council) internal audit services. These rights of central government are included in statute.

The external auditors of the partnerships funders for example district councils may require assurances similar to those of the central government department.

As the Accountable Body for the Local Area Agreement, Oxfordshire County Council's external and internal auditors will seek assurance through audit review on the effectiveness of partnership working for financial and non financial risks. External audit will require assurance of financial transactions and Key Lines of Enquiry. Internal Audit will require assurance on partnership working from the Oxfordshire Partnership.

The potential number of interested audit functions should not provide undue bureaucracy and duplication of information requests and scrutiny for a partnership. A recent example is for Oxfordshire Waste Partnership (OWP) where an initial internal audit was carried out by the Accountable Body's internal auditors followed by a separate internal audit review by the OWP's appointed internal auditors. Information was shared between both internal audit functions and reliance placed on the Accountable Body's own internal audit review. Both reviews had different scopes.

Insurance

Where the partnership is directly responsible for delivering services they shall ensure that adequate insurance arrangements exist to cover the activities of the partnership.

If the partnership is a separate legal entity such as a limited company the insurance cover will be in the name of the partnership. Where any insurance is provided by the key sponsor/Accountable Body partnership officers must ensure that adequate insurance arrangements are in place.

There will be a link between the risk register the use of external insurance as a risk mitigation tool.

Complaints

Each partnership should ensure that a robust complaints procedure is in place. In the same way that all organisations involved in the partnership benefit reputationally from success so the impact of a complaint can have a similarly significant adverse impact.

The complaints processes in place should address instances where the complainant has already raised the same issue with the relevant partner organisation.

Business Continuity

The partnership should ensure that it has adequate business continuity arrangements in place to enable it to continue to provide its desired outcomes. These business continuity arrangements will include issues such as the loss of directors, loss of specific grant funding. Where weaknesses are identified with business continuity arrangements entries will be made in the partnership's risk register and reviewed by the partnership board.

Partnership Information Sharing

Partnership working often involves sharing personal and non-personal data obtained from many different sources. It is important that when sharing information it is done only when it is lawful to do so and in accordance with any applicable law, such as the Data Protection Act 1998, Human Rights Act 1998 and the common law duty of confidentiality.

Below are generic principles on information sharing which partnerships should adhere to. For some services, there are detailed information sharing protocols and procedures which also need to be followed.

- Partnerships will only share data that is relevant to the achievement of a legitimate objective and only when it is fair and lawful to do so.
- Partnership organisations will ensure that staff who process personal data and sensitive personal data will have received adequate personal scrutiny and training.
- For all data transferred between partnerships the receiving body will be aware of the source should any errors be detected and any information requests be received.

The partnership board officer will seek guidance from the data controller for the source of the data should any queries arise.

- The controls required on data sharing should not be seen as a deterrent to partnership working but as assurance to other stakeholders that a partnership has the capability and capacity to effectively manage the implications of such action.

Partnership governance self assessment

Oxfordshire Partnership is committed to promoting effective partnerships. The 'Partnership Self Assessment', has been developed to enable the Partnership to assess the 'health' of all key partnerships within the Oxfordshire Partnership framework.

The data received from the Self Assessment will be used to inform the Annual Report on partnership working (which will be discussed by the Oxfordshire Partnership and Public Service Board) will help to determine the level of support needed to facilitate the development of each partnership. Every partnership will be asked to complete the self-assessment annually. This will ensure that good practice is implemented, risks are reduced, financial and legal implications have been assessed and priorities met.

The self-assessment will be piloted with a number of thematic partnerships over the summer and then rolled out to all in 2010.

Examples of skills and knowledge required for Partnership Working:

The following table shows the types of skills and knowledge required for successful partnership working. It is unrealistic to expect one person to possess all of these. But when considering the partnership's membership, it will be useful to consider these skills and knowledge requirements.

Leadership:

| Skills | Knowledge |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coalition building • Vision and consensus building • Communicating • Consulting • Managing change • Delegating • Influencing • Negotiating and assertiveness • Resource allocation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Needs and opportunities which provide the basis for common ground • Policy and funding developments • Partners' roles • Contributions • Constraints • Motivations |

Trust

| Skills | Knowledge |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building relationships • Managing expectations • Promoting dialogue • Listening • Empathy • Managing conflict • Giving constructive feedback • Managing communications • Team working | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group dynamics • Cultures • Values and ways of working with others • Forms of partnership arrangements |

Learning

| Skills | Knowledge |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Problem solving • Creative thinking • Systems thinking • Networking • Diagnosing performance issues • Scrutiny | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Benchmarking • Partnership review and evaluation • How to promote learning in partnerships • Facilitation techniques |

Performance Management

| Skills | Knowledge |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Negotiating • Setting objectives and performance | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partnership structures • Accountability mechanisms |

| | |
|---|---|
| measures <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project planning/management • Business planning | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Managing meetings • Ways of making better use of resources |
|---|---|

Value and Culture

| Skills | Knowledge |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding diversity • Effective communication • Corporate governance • Risk management • Policy creation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risk methodology • Aims and objectives of partner groups |

Strategic issues

| Skills | Knowledge |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decision making • Community/business empowerment methodologies • Thinking about and preparing for future challenges | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community needs • Strategic functioning • Long-term assessment • Environment factors |

Useful contacts:

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Oxfordshire Partnership website: where you can access up to date information on the thematic partnerships, meeting papers etc.
www.oxfordshirepartnership.org.uk

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Stronger Communities Partnership

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Useful websites:

www.audit-commission.gov.uk

www.idea.gov.uk

www.ncvo-vol.org.uk

www.acre.org.uk