Risk Management Strategy

1. Introduction and Purpose

1.1 In this strategy "risk" is defined as something happening that may have an impact on the achievement of the Council's objectives. Risk management in East Herts Council is about managing our threats and opportunities to create an environment of "no surprises".

1.2 By managing our risks effectively we will be in a stronger position to deliver services in accordance with our corporate priorities. By managing our opportunities we will be in a better position to provide continuous improvement in our services and better value for money.

1.3 A risk management strategy is an essential element of strategic and service planning and is a fundamental aspect of East Herts Council's system of corporate governance. The risk management strategy is closely linked to the Council's corporate priorities for serving the district.

1.4 This risk management strategy describes the processes put in place to identify, assess, review and report on strategic risk issues and describes the principles that underpin our approach. Officers also manage day to day operational risks following similar methodology. Strategic and Operational risks are reported to CMT on a quarterly basis.

1.5 We aim to become one of the leading authorities in risk management and to be innovative in our management of threats and opportunities. We are committed to be an exemplary of good practice and to serve the residents of our community by the provision of value for money services.

1.6 **A**ccountability, **e**ffectiveness, **i**ntegrity, **o**penness and inclusivity and being **u**p to date are the key principles of corporate governance that underpin our risk management strategy. As we implement the strategy we will continue to embed these principles into the culture of the organisation. Managers need to view risk management as an integral part of their job and the Executive must keep the key risks faced by East Herts Council under regular strategic review.

1.7 We will ensure that our strategy is kept up to date with current good practice.

Risk Management Strategy

2. Identifying Risks & Assessment

2.1 Our approach to risk management is objective driven. Corporate Priorities are supported by objectives and Service Plans and these are the focal points to identify threats and opportunities to East Herts Council.

2.2 The risk identification and evaluation process is delivered through four key mediums:

- An annual review of strategic risks areas by Members of the Executive and senior management.
- Annual Service Planning processes linked to the Councils Corporate Priorities.
- Risk opinions contained within all committee reports, and
- Risk management workshops undertaken as part of project management and procurement exercises.
- Risk management training for members and officers.

The above five measures are used to develop a risk hypothesis i.e. a model containing the major risk areas for the authority coupled with a corporate perspective on the level of strategic risk that can be tolerated in the following areas:

- Policy and decisions
- Change management
- External factors
- Financial
- Service delivery
- Reputation, and
- Continuity

2.3 The risk assessment process involves:

(a) Rating the potential impact on the business if the risks arose using the following scores

5   Catastrophic
4   Major impact with long term implications
3   Major short term impact
2   Moderate long term impact
1   Moderate short term impact
0   Little impact;

The Risk Management Cycle

**RISK
IDENTIFICATION**

ASSESSING THE RISK

**RISK
TREATMENT**

MONITORING
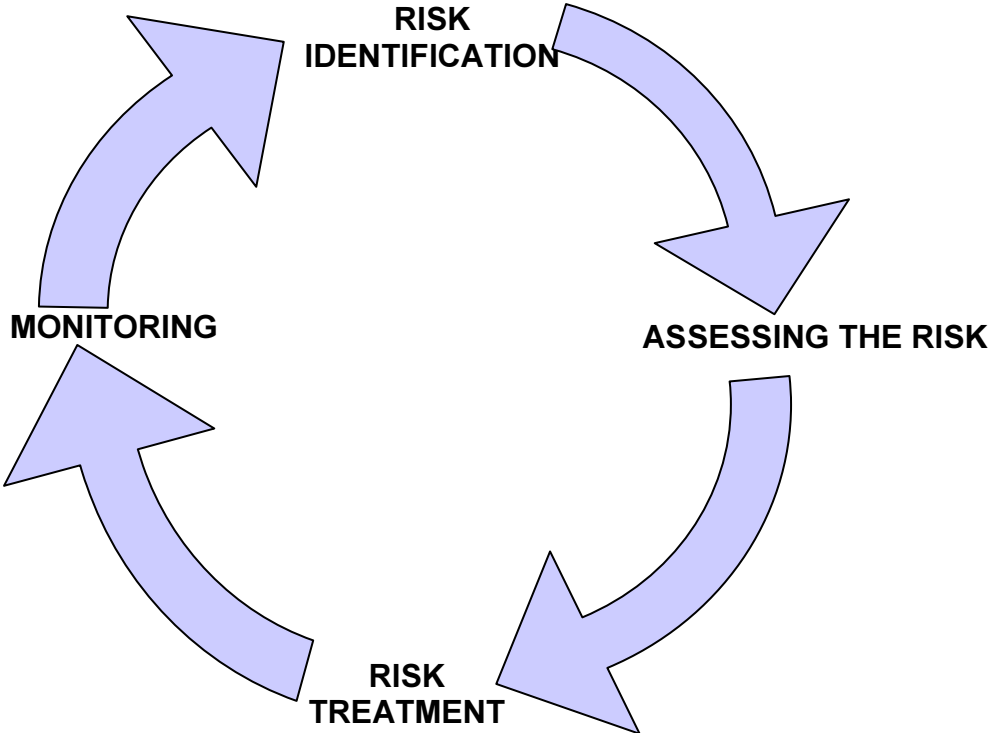
Risk Assessment

- Once we have identified & described the risk you must undertake a **Risk Assessment**

- Consider **Abstract and Residual Risk**

- Consider **Impact and Likelihood of Event**

- Impact both in terms of threats & opportunities may be from 0 to 5 (0 being little impact , 5 being catastrophic)

- Likelihood from 0 to 5 (0 being a remote possibility and 5 being very probable in the near future)

Risk Management Strategy

(b)   Rating the likelihood of the event happening without controls being in place using the following scores

5	Very probable in the near future
4	Very probable in the medium term
3	Probable (more than 30% likely)
2	Moderately likely (between 10 and 30% chance)
1	Unlikely (less than 10% chance)
0	Remote possibility (less than 1% chance in foreseeable future);

Impact Table - Both Threats and Opportunities
(in 6 x 6 format)

5	**Catastrophic impact**
4	**Major impact with long term implications**
3	**Major short term impact**
2	**Moderate long term impact**
1	**Moderate short term impact**
0	**Little impact**

101

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Table for Likelihood of Occurrence

5	Very probable in the near future
4	Very probable in the medium term
3	Probable (more than 30% likely)
2	Moderate likely (between 10 and 30% chance)
1	Unlikely (less than 10% chance)
0	Remote possibility (less than 1% chance in the foreseeable future)

(c)   Having considered the potential impact and likelihood of an event happening given an absence of control the "abstract risk" position is determined.

Impact/Likelihood Matrix

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	0	1	2	3	4	5
Catastrophic 5				Critical		
Major 4 Long Term	Contingency			Critical		
Major 3 Short term	Contingency			Critical		
Moderate 2 Long term	Control			Caution		
Moderate 1 Short term	Control			Caution		
Little 0	Control			Caution		
Impact	0	1	2	3	4	5
	Remote	Unlikely	Moderate	Probable	Very probable	Very probable
Likelihood					Medium term	

Likelihood

(d)   Executive Members and senior officers then provide details of existing controls employed to manage identified risks and undertake further evaluation. By considering the potential impact and likelihood of an event happening given the existing control environment the "residual risk" position is determined and is measured using the following ratings:

Critical
Caution
Contingency
Control

Risk Management Strategy

3. Review and Report (Risk Mapping)

3.1   Executive Members and senior officers use Strategic Risk Workshops, Strategic and Service Planning, Risk Opinions contained in Committee reports and risk assessments as part of project management and risk assessments as part of procurement processes to identify significant risks that require further review and monitoring.

3.2   The purpose of this detailed risk mapping is to identify risks and responsible officers for controlling risk elements hereafter referred to as Champions. In designating ownership of risk themes, care is taken not to create accountability and authority miss-matches. For this reason Champions have been set at Director and Head of Service level.

3.3   Champions are required to prepare risk registers where a residual risk rating exceeds the **"Control"** area of tolerance. Risk registers are used to provide demonstrable evidence of how risks are being controlled and to provide action plans covering the following twelve-month period to maintain or further mitigate levels of risk. The following general approaches can be adopted to respond to risk and a proportionate response will be taken to reduce risks to a level that is low as is reasonably practicable:

- *Transfer the risk* through such things as conventional insurance or by asking a third party to take on the risks in another way.

- *Tolerate the risk* where effective action against a strategic risk may be limited, or where the cost of taking action may be disproportionate to the potential benefit gained. In this case the effective management response will be to monitor the risk to ensure that its likelihood or impact does not change.

- *Treat the risk* where the purpose of the treatment is not to terminate the risk but rather is to instigate a planned series of mitigating actions to reduce the risk to an acceptable level.

- *Terminate the risk* where the risk is eliminated altogether.

The implementation of action plans contained in risk registers are monitored through Covalent which is East Herts Council's performance management system. The Covalent system tracks risk events from their **original** risk assessment (residual risk) to their **current** risk assessment and provides the **target** risk assessment following a twelve month period of risk management. East Herts Council has therefore integrated its risk management and performance management systems.

Risk Management Strategy

3.4 Appropriate and effective reporting arrangements reinforce and support the Council's risk management activities. Risk management is a dynamic process as new risks are identified, existing risks are terminated, contingency plans and countermeasures are updated in response to changing internal and external events and the assessments of likelihood and impact reviewed in light of management actions.

Reporting arrangements consist of five forms:

(a) Directors are required to bring to the attention of the appropriate Executive Portfolio Holder any new and emerging strategic risk at the earliest opportunity. The Executive's attention to new strategic risk management issues is also made via risk opinions contained in the formal committee reporting mechanism. The Executive is as a result appraised on new strategic threats and opportunities as they present themselves to East Herts Council. The Forward Planning mechanism is also used to identify those issues that require full consultation otherwise it is the Champions responsibility to consult as necessary. Where appropriate the Executive will require a risk register to be compiled and maintained by a designated Champion.

(b) The Executive approves the Risk Management Strategy.

(c) The Executive approves the Strategic Risk Registers.

(d)   Utilising the Covalent system Champions provide feedback and management assurance to the Executive on a three monthly basis covering the implementation of action plans to mitigate and control risks tracked by risk registers. Reports providing feedback and management assurance are subject to a scrutiny process by Members prior to being submitted to the Executive.

(e)   [To underpin management assurance, staff of the Internal Audit section undertake ad hoc independent assurance reviews to confirm the integrity of management assurance statements and to provide an opinion on the systems of risk management. The independent assurance is reported to a Scrutiny Committee and then to the Executive for consideration.] – What will be the future approach for this?

All Members receive annual awareness training on risk management. Members of the Executive receive training on risk management. The Members of the Audit Committee receive annual training on risk management. The Audit Committee monitors the effective development and operation of risk management and corporate governance in the Council.

Risk Management Strategy

4. The Future

4.1   Risk management is a continuous process and should not be seen as a periodic exercise. The Executive will keep the key risks faced by East Herts Council under regular strategic review by obtaining ongoing management opinion on risk, by approving the Risk Management Strategy, , by approving Strategic Plans, by approving Strategic Risk Registers and through processes of management assurance and independent assurance. The Executive and Corporate Management Team receive quarterly monitoring reports on Strategic and Operational risks. Appropriate action will be authorised where risks have changed significantly.

4.2   Managers must view risk management as an integral part of their job and appraise the Executive on new strategic threats and opportunities as they present themselves to East Herts Council. Management of risk will continue to be further embedded into the business culture through performance appraisal and development processes.

4.3   As part of the risk identification process "horizon scanning" techniques will be used to identify new issues that may pose future risks to the achievement of the Council's priorities, or that may provide new opportunities to enhance the Council's means to meet its priorities. CMT will consider new potential risks on a quarterly basis (?)

4.4 A project plan covering planned enhancements to the system of strategic and operational risk management will continue to be updated to reflect best practice. The project plan is administered by a Risk Management Group of officers that reports to CMT. The project plan will include milestones including key reporting targets, training programmes, enhancement initiatives and measures to fully embed risk management into East Herts Council's governance arrangements.

[4.5 A training budget will be maintained to assist in risk management training and for raising the awareness of risk management issues?]

4.6 The Insurance Officer will be a Member of the Association of Local Authority Risk Managers (ALARM) (anyone else?) as this is the national forum for risk management in the public sector. This will provide opportunities to keep abreast of good practice and will act as a forum to network with other risk management practitioners.

Appendix A Risk Management and Partnerships

'*Governing Partnerships*' published by the Audit Commission recommends that organisations should:

- Know the partnerships they are involved in, and how much money and other resources they invest in them. They should review each partnership to strengthen accountability, manage risks and rationalise working arrangements.

- Establish clear criteria against which partnerships can be evaluated to determine that they help to achieve partners' corporate objectives cost-effectively.

- Take hard decisions to scale down their involvement in partnerships if the costs outweigh the benefits, or if the added risks cannot be managed properly.

- Agree and regularly review protocols and governing documents with all partners.

- Tell service users and the wider public about how key partnerships work, where responsibility and accountability lie and how redress can be obtained through joint complaints procedures.

The Council needs to have robust foundations in place to embed consistent, robust governance and risk management into its partnerships.

To achieve this, it will have in place a Partnership Protocol to ensure that partnership agreements, exit strategies, true engagement with partners and clear allocation of risk to achieve robust management are in place.

A partnership register will be prepared which will include:

- who is involved and what are the governance arrangements e.g. contract, constitution
- what role does the Council have, e.g. provides funds,
- what are the objectives of the partnership
- what benefits will the organisation gain from the partnership
- fit to corporate objectives
- what resources/ commitment is required
- what are the timescales

The Council will define expectations around governance arrangements (including standards of risk management).

To achieve this, it will put corporate controls in place for initiating partnerships, monitoring partnerships and formally closing partnerships.

When setting up new partnerships the following checklist will be applied:

- Rationale for the Partnership
- Added Value from the Partnership
- Governance arrangements
- Performance management
- Financial management
- Risk management
- Exit arrangements
- Service to the public

Before proceeding with a partnership, Partnership Assessment Document will be prepared. The Partnership Assessment Document provides information needed to decide whether or not the partnership should go ahead. The document will be used:

- To ensure the partnership has a sound basis before the Council makes any major commitment;

- To act as a base document against which the partnership's continuing viability can be assessed

A Partnership Assessment Document shall address the following points:

- What is the partnership aiming to achieve?
- What benefits and risks does the partnership bring to the Council – value for money?
- How does it fit the Council's priorities?

- Who is going to be involved and what are their responsibilities and commitments?
- How and when will it happen?

The Council will ensure that there are appropriate partnership governance arrangements to ensure:

- Partners bring clarity to the governance of their collaboration

- Agreement about purpose, membership and accountability

- Clarity around whose interests partners represent and how they will handle disputes

- All partners are satisfied with the outcomes of the partnership compared to the input of resources.

Partnership agreements will contain clear information on:

- Name of the partnership
- Aims and objectives
- Timescales
- Membership
- Powers
- Roles
- Income / Other resource contributions
- Meetings – frequency, quorum rules, chairing and voting
- Decision making process – scope and timescales
- Performance management arrangements
- Ownership of assets
- Amendments to the partnership rules
- Minutes
- Exit strategy

The following processes will be used to ensure that the Council is achieving the agreed outcomes, obtaining full value and the benefits still outweigh costs.

Internal Processes

- Use of the Partnership Assessment Document with regular review and updating

- Partnership meetings with reports to Members and managers.

Partnership Processes

- Formal arrangements for partnership representatives to report back to the partnership and to individual organisations

- Impact and outcome measures are used and reported

- SMART action plans, targets and indicators that can be monitored effectively

- Performance and monitoring reports are regular agenda items with the opportunity to challenge and feedback

- Scrutiny arrangements involve partnerships.

Partnership Risks

The Council will seek a true partnership approach using the Council's risk management system to achieve a genuine consensus about the objectives and main risks, avoiding hidden risks.

There should be a clear allocation of roles, responsibilities and risks and ownership as to how the partnership and risks will be managed.

This will be achieved by early resolution of key issues prior to initiation or part of the formal initiation with regular meetings where risk management will be formally on the agenda.
Ground rules will be agreed between partners including information requirements, level of engagement and formulating key processes such as risk management.

The Council will ensure that partnerships have a sound risk management approach by requiring a risk management protocol as part of overall governance arrangements. There should be an agreed methodology to be used that satisfies all partners interests with clear monitoring arrangements linked to performance management. Effective risk management in the Council's partnerships will be achieved by:

- Common understanding of objectives
- Clear understanding of risk management responsibilities
- Assurance that partners risk management / corporate governance arrangements are adequate
- Openness and honesty around risks
- Sharing of risk assessments
- Common language / approach for partnership
- Consensus

Details of these processes are contained in the Partnership Protocol.

Appendix B - <u>Partnership Protocol</u>

1. Purpose of the protocol

This protocol aims to provide a guide to the key processes that should be followed when establishing and maintaining effective and empowered partnerships. The protocol defines the types of partnership which involve the Council. The protocol outlines:

- The process to follow when establishing or joining new partnerships
- The process to follow when reviewing existing partnerships.

The appendices of this protocol form a toolkit for officers to use when assessing existing or potential partnerships.

The Council has listed existing partnership working within the Council. A partnership register has been established which will need regular reviewing and updating.

The partnership register includes:

- who is involved and what are the governance arrangements e.g. contract, constitution
- what role does the Council have, e.g. provides funds,
- what are the objectives of the partnership
- what benefits will the organisation gain from the partnership
- fit to corporate objectives

- what resources/ commitment is required
- what are the timescales

[Compare with existing data.]

The purpose of the partnership register is:

- To identify when the Council is in a partnership;

- To provide a mechanism for reviewing partnerships to avoid duplication or overlap and to review the Council's resources applied to the partnership

- To provide clarity about partnerships and explain why the Council is involved, who is leading on behalf of the Council and how progress is being reported.

The databases will be kept updated on an annual basis, with changes being notified to those affected, as they occur.
A list of partnerships will be produced annually and reported to the Audit Committee [?}.
By analysing the partnership register the Council will be able to use the information to:

- Make informed decisions about continuing to be involved in partnerships, rationalising the number of partnerships, and concentrate on partnerships that lead to the achievement of our corporate priorities.

- Understand the benefits achieved from the Council's contributions (value for money) and the relationship with external funding and how they help the Council to engage with the community

- Improve the project management and governance arrangements for the partnerships.

- Identify gaps in the delivery of our outcomes where developing a partnership may be an appropriate method to achieve them.

2. How to use the protocol

Existing Partnerships

Ensure that the partnership is recorded on the partnership register and the entries are current (Appendix C)
Undertake the partnership self assessment (Appendix D).

Consider whether the partnership should continue. If so, complete a review of the partnership and action plan (Appendix E). If not proceed to leave or dissolve the partnership.

Update the partnership register.

<u>New Partnerships</u>

Consider if involvement in a partnership is the appropriate mechanism.
If the creation of a partnership is appropriate, the following checklist should be considered:

- Rationale for the Partnership
- Added Value from the Partnership
- Governance arrangements
- Performance management
- Financial management
- Risk management
- Exit arrangements
- Service to the public

Before proceeding with a partnership, Partnership Assessment Document will be prepared (Appendix F). The Partnership Assessment Document provides information needed to decide whether or not the partnership should go ahead. The Document will be used:

- To ensure the partnership has a sound basis before the Council makes any major commitment;

- To act as a base document against which the partnership's continuing viability can be assessed

A Partnership Assessment Document shall address the following points:

- What is the partnership aiming to achieve?
- What benefits and risks does the partnership bring to the Council – value for money?
- How does it fit the Council's priorities?
- Who is going to be involved and what are their responsibilities and commitments?
- How and when will it happen?

The Council enters into procurement arrangements. Such arrangements should be covered by the Council's procurement and contractual rules and be subject to properly drafted commercial contracts, and are not therefore covered by the guidance in this protocol as they have separate specific legal requirements and procedures that will need to be followed.

Partnerships also need to be ranked partnerships in terms of their potential risk to the Council.
The following gives guidelines as how to classify the potential risk a partnership may pose in terms of finance, although the use of other resources and loss of reputation also need to be considered when making the final judgement.

High Risk: Partnerships where the Council is the responsible authority
In a number of key partnerships the Council acts as the accountable body and may take on the legal or financial management of partnership activity as well as employing staff. These partnerships create associated responsibilities and carry significant risk. . E.g. the Local Strategic Partnership

Medium Risk: Key regional, County wide and District wide partnerships
The Council plays a key role in a number of local and regional partnerships, but does not have financial resources to manage, and the accountable or lead body role is undertaken by another agency. These partnerships are still extremely important in terms of achieving the Council's priorities and other key strategy outcomes, but the responsibility and therefore risk for the Council is less.

Low Risk: other partnerships and working groups
The Council is involved in numerous other partnerships involving several agencies. Officers throughout the Council work with internal and external groups and informal partnerships that meet to share experiences and develop good working practices, as well as supporting the delivery of small projects. These partnerships can often be extremely important in terms of developing relationships with partners and ultimately delivering better services to local people; however the risks for the Council are not seen to be high.

3. What is a Partnership?

The Council works with many different partnerships that range from major partnerships with funding and financial responsibilities to small groups that meet to share best practice. A detailed list of the partnerships can be found in the partnership register. *Electronic link*. Appendix C gives a summary of the information that is available for each partnership.

There are many descriptions of partnerships. The definitions for the Council are:

1) A trusted relationship to deliver a service.
2) Two or more organisations sharing risk, reward and resources.
3) Two or more organisations working together to deliver a mutually beneficial service / outcome that meets their respective objectives (on a value for money basis).

4. Process for reviewing an existing partnership

Existing partnerships must be reviewed on a regular basis to determine whether they are still required, evaluate how effectively they are working and to make recommendations for improvement. It is recommended that partnerships be reviewed at least every two years.

A self-assessment tool has been designed to assist with this process and is given in Appendix D. Appendix E contains a template for a partnership review and action plan. As part of the review it may be advisable to undertake a survey to learn more about partners' views and to look at how the partnership can move forward.

If there are areas where the partnership needs to change or develop further, these issues should be addressed in an action plan and built into the activities of the partnership.

5. Ending a partnership relationship

Whilst reviewing any particular partnership, it may become apparent that the Council no longer need to be part of any particular partnership activity. This may come about due to the completion of the partnerships activities with outcomes achieved, or through a realisation that the partnership is not achieving either it's own or the Council's outcomes, or that the partnership is not performing and there may be a better way to achieve the desired outcomes.

If the partnership is not performing as it should for the partners as a whole or for the Council as a partner, there should be an exit strategy in place to minimise the problems of closure or withdrawal. Before that decision is taken, the partners or the Authority alone should consider whether there is any realistic prospect of improving the partnership's performance.

Where the Council proposes to leave a partnership as it does not meet our priorities, it should consider carefully the risks of withdrawal, including any damaging publicity, any damage to partner or client relations, any loss of influence and any costs which may need to be written off, and decide how these can be managed.

For strategic or joint delivery partnerships, a report should be prepared for Corporate Management Team that includes the lessons learnt from the involvement in the partnership. A clear analysis for discussion with the other partners of why it is taking this step and the proposed timetable for withdrawal should also be prepared.

6. Creating or joining a new partnership

When forming or joining a new partnership, enthusiasm to have an impact and to deliver results can overtake the need to develop the right environment for

partners to work well together and have all of the necessary arrangements and procedures in place.

Time should be spent in the early stages to develop trust, respect and openness to enable all partners to make a valuable contribution. For the partnership to be effective it must have all of the required arrangements and procedures in place. The Council must ensure that the partnerships it works with operate legitimately have the required governance arrangements in place.

To avoid duplication and unnecessary time and effort, those considering establishing or joining a new partnership should consider the following:

- Is a new partnership really necessary?
- Will this partnership duplicate the work of other groups?
- Can the Council work with an existing partnership instead?
- Will the work of the partnership contribute to the delivery of the Council's priorities?
- Is forming a partnership the best way of achieving the required outcomes?
- Has the Council involved the relevant Members and officers?
- If necessary, has authority been given for the Council to enter into the partnership?

A more detailed checklist is given in the Partnership Assessment Document in Appendix F.

These questions are not intended to discourage partnership working; they are intended to ensure that the partnerships that exist are necessary, appropriate and the most effective approach to improving service delivery.

7. Partnership Agreements

All partnerships that are high or medium risk must have a comprehensive written agreement in place. By having such documents in place there should be a shared understanding amongst partners about the desired outcomes of the partnership, membership and accountability.

No one single form of agreement will be appropriate for all kinds of partnership and the process of agreeing a governing document is an important part of partnership development. The Partnership Assessment Document in Appendix F gives some guidelines towards the considerations for the contents of such a document.

8. Registering a partnership

Every partnership shall be registered on the partnership register. The partnership register is a centralised record of the partnerships which involve the Council.
It is kept up to date by the Performance Team.

It is the responsibility of each Head of Service to ensure that all of the partnerships affecting their service are registered.

Authority to enter new partnerships needs to be obtained prior to registration on the partnership register.

9. Reporting progress

An annual review of partnerships will take place by Corporate Management Team and [Audit Committee]. Heads of Service will therefore be asked to update the information annually.

Individual partnerships will still need to meet their normal reporting mechanisms whether through Committee or Corporate Management Team.

10. Implementation and Monitoring

Over the next 12 months major partnerships across the Council will need to ensure that they have in place, comprehensive Partnership Agreements and that they have addressed any issues arising out of the self-assessment process. All other partnerships will need to ensure that they are registered on the authority's partnership register.

The protocol and toolkit will be reviewed initially on an annual basis to ensure that any lessons learnt can be incorporated into future documents.

Appendix C - Partnerships Register

The table below outlines the information held on the partnership register for each partnership.

[Add existing data}
Lead Officer/Director
Actions
Comments
Targets
Fit to priorities
Risk level

Lead Body & Contact:
The organisation name and contact person from that Organisation

Accountable Body & Contact:
Occasionally, the lead organisation may not be the (financially) accountable organisation.

Other partners: List the other partner organisations involved

Partnership timescale (End date):
The anticipated timescale for the partnership, or end date if definite

Area covered: This relates to geography not subject

Responsible to: Is this a sub-group of a bigger partnership? If yes, what?

Responsible for: Opposite to above – list any sub-groups of the partnership

What resources (money or time) do the Council contribute?
What is the Council's contribution e.g. money, office space, staff time, etc

What are the future commitments?
Resource expectations from the Council for the duration of the partnership

Total partnership budget:
Give total budget for partnership and include the timescale that is relevant for.

Who else funds the partnership?

Review of partnership done

Results of partnership review

Appendix D - Partnership Self-Assessment

Give scores to each of the 4 categories below

- **Delivery of key corporate actions**

- **Has the partnership produced clearly defined outcomes?**

- **Does the partnership have a project or action plan?**

- **Partnership performance**

Options:

A: Continue involvement

B: Need to invest time to improve the performance management of the partnership or consider another mechanism for achieving the outcome

C: Is there another reason (e.g. political) for our involvement? Recommend that keep a watching brief rather than attend meetings

D: Seriously question continued involvement in the partnership, and work to develop exit / closure strategy.

Appendix E - Partnership review and action planning checklist

Partnership management and administration:

- Does the partnership have agreed outcomes and SMART actions?
- Are there terms of reference for the partnership?
- Is there a partnership board, which monitors performance?
- Is there regular, good quality, performance management reports to the partnership board or the Council?
- Does the partnership have a project or work plan?
- Is the partnership realistically sized and resourced?
- Are those attending arriving at partnership meetings well briefed and clear about their roles and responsibilities?
- Do partnership members have a written statement of their roles, responsibilities and expectations?
- Are clear agendas circulated at least one week in advance of meetings?
- Are meetings well planned with enough space for relevant discussion and decision-making?
- Do partners attend meetings on a regular basis as outlined in their written statement of responsibilities?
- Are there clear, concise and accurate minutes?

- Do partners have a clear understanding of what they take back from the group to their own organisations?
- Are action points acted upon by all partners?
- Does the partnership assess and evaluate risk as part of your decision-making?

Reviewing Partnership Effectiveness:

- Does the partnership review its effectiveness against agreed aims, objectives, targets and action plans?
- Does the partnership review/use information gathered from internal and external sources?
- Does the partnership undertake an annual review of the continuing appropriateness and effectiveness of the organisational structure and partnerships way of working?
- Does the partnership have any external review or monitoring mechanisms?
- Does the Council require and act upon partnership review information findings and recommendations?
- Has the partnership undertaken an equalities impact and need assessment?
- Does the partnership tackle issues where one or more partners are not fulfilling its role or objectives within the partnership?

Partnership Communication:

- Does the partnership have clear lines of communication to:
- Senior managers and or Members
-     Community or service beneficiary

Appendix F - Partnership Assessment Document

Partnership - Key Information:

- What is the partnership intended to achieve (clear, documented and agreed objectives and targets)?
- What is its intended lifespan?
- What other organisations will be represented on the partnership?
- Who will lead the partnership?
- What will the partnership expect of the Council?
- Are there clear partnership rules of engagement?
- Have other delivery options been considered and evaluated (including risk analysis of opportunities and threats)

Assessment of the fit with the Council:

- What is the expected role and contribution of the Council?
- How does this participation contribute to the Council's corporate outcomes and key corporate actions?
- Is participation in the partnership or its objectives within existing service plans?
- Is this a partnership or is it really something else e.g. SLA or simple funding request?

Resource Implications:

- What are the resource implications (staff, capital and revenue funds, use of assets)?
- What is the identified resource availability?
- How could the Council resource its participation?
- 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 partnership tie in with other partnerships, or other areas of the Council's work?
- Are there cross-service opportunities or conflicts?
- What will the Council contribute to the partnership? What will be the direct benefits to the Council of participation in the partnership?
- Are there Health and Safety considerations from revised working conditions?
- Has an Equality Impact and Needs Assessment been completed for the partnership?

Corporate Sign-off:

- Has the partnership involvement been tested and cleared through proportionate lines of management?

Partnership Agreements:

Partnership agreements will contain clear information on:

- Name of the partnership
- Aims and objectives
- Timescales
- Membership
- Powers
- Roles
- Income / Other resource contributions
- Meetings – frequency, quorum rules, chairing and voting
- Decision making process – scope and timescales
- Performance management arrangements
- Ownership of assets
- Amendments to the partnership rules
- Minutes
- Exit strategy