

BABERGH DISTRICT COUNCIL

FROM: Project & Programme Executive

REPORT NUMBER **G155**

TO: OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY
(COMMUNITY SERVICES) COMMITTEE

DATE OF MEETING: 4 December 2007

REVIEW OF STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

1. **PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1.1 To seek Members' agreement to the criteria, methodology and timetable of a review of the Council's strategic partnerships (which are identified in the report).

2. **RECOMMENDATION**

2.1 That the proposals detailed in paragraphs 5.5 – 5.14 of this report be approved.

The Committee is able to resolve this issue.

3. **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

3.1 This report carries no financial implications other than officers' time.

4. **RISK MANAGEMENT**

	Risk Description	Likelihood	Seriousness or Impact	Mitigation Measures
4.1	Review and streamline our membership of partnerships in order our limited resources are focused on what matters and delivers Babergh's priorities/corporate objectives	Significant	Critical	Decision by Members on which strategic partnerships we will focus on

5. **KEY INFORMATION**

5.1 The last 15 years has seen a proliferation in partnership working for local authorities. This has partly arisen from statutory requirements, but also in response to the wider challenges of the need to deliver more seamless services, provide greater choice for service users and ensure value for money.

5.2 The pressure for local authorities to enter into partnership working is likely to increase. It is, therefore, crucial that the Council assesses the effectiveness of its partnership working. It is considered the Council is involved in three types of partnerships:-

- a) Strategic partnerships i.e. multi agency political partnerships that concentrate on strategy rather than delivery.
- b) Significant partnerships i.e. service specific significant partnerships.
- c) Community partnerships i.e. grants or where services are "bought".

- 5.3 This report asks Members to support a review of the strategic partnerships in which the Council is involved to assess the impact of the partnerships on the delivery of the Council’s corporate priorities and, where appropriate, determine and agree actions to improve the experience of working in partnership, and make partnerships more productive.
- 5.4 The review of strategic partnerships needs to be both effective and manageable in terms of staff resources available to undertake the work. Hence it is proposed that the review is undertaken in two phases.
- 5.5 The proposed range of strategic partnerships for review in Phase 1 are:

Partnership	Current BDC Councillor Representation
▪ Babergh Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership	Nick Ridley Martyn Booth
▪ Babergh East Local Strategic Partnership	Penny Clarke
▪ Haven Gateway Partnership	John Hinton
▪ Suffolk Development Agency	Richard Cave

It is proposed that the Phase 1 review would commence immediately.

- 5.6 The proposed range of strategic partnerships for review in Phase 2 are:

Partnership	Current BDC Councillor Representation
▪ Suffolk Strategic Partnership	Nick Ridley
▪ Accountable Bodies Group for Local Area Agreements	Nick Ridley
▪ Pathfinder	Nick Ridley

- 5.7 It is proposed that the timetable for the Phase 2 review would be determined once:
- Outcomes, and lessons learned from Phase 1 review, are known.
 - Outcome of possible countywide discussions on scrutiny arrangements for Phase 2 partnerships is known.
- 5.8 This report does not review service specific significant partnerships e.g. Suffolk Joint Waste Partnership with Mid Suffolk District Council, leisure partnership with South Suffolk Leisure etc. These partnerships are the main contractual relationships for the delivery of services and will be subject to the Council’s performance management arrangements.

5.9 In addition, the report does not review community partnerships which involve the Council allocating grants or buying services from third parties e.g. town/parish councils, voluntary organisations. These ‘community partnerships’ involve the allocation of funding in accordance with policies to be approved by the Council, and are included in the separate piece of work of reviewing the Council’s grant scheme.

Criteria for Assessment of Partnerships

5.10 Following research of ‘best practice’ by the Audit Commission and the Improvement and Development Agency, it is suggested that each partnership is assessed against the following criteria:-

(a) **Geographical Fit**

How does the geographical area covered by the partnership under review fit with other partnerships (does it duplicate or overlap)?

(b) **Effective Governance**

- (i) Is the partnership inclusive i.e. are senior key decision makers invited to attend and do they actually attend?
- (ii) Are there adequate recorded minutes of decisions taken?
- (iii) Are there adequate terms of reference for the partnership?

(c) **Scale of Critical Issues**

- (i) Is there an identified range of critical/strategic issues to be addressed by the partnership within its geographical area?
- (ii) Can/does the partnership address Babergh’s corporate priorities?
- (iii) Is the partnership able to adequately influence regional agendas?
- (iv) Will the partnership be able to effectively meet the demands of the Comprehensive Area Agreement (CAA)?
- (v) Have critical success factors been developed which enable the effectiveness of the Partnership to be monitored on an annual basis.

(d) **Sustainability/Capacity**

- (i) Does the partnership have a jointly agreed programme of activity that fits the needs of the majority of the partners such that those partners feel the partnership is helping delivery of their own objectives?
- (ii) Are the partnerships sufficiently flexible and robust to be able to fit and adapt to any changes that may occur from the emerging Pathfinder initiative?
- (iii) What is the cost to Babergh of the partnership, in terms of funding and officer time?
- (iv) What are the benefits, measured in terms of tangible outputs and outcomes, to Babergh?
- (v) Taking into account (iii) and (iv), does the partnership represent value for money?

(e) **Other Criteria**

During the process partners will be provided with the opportunity to suggest any other criteria which they feel should be taken into account and assessed by the review.

5.11 Members may be aware of concerns expressed by the Babergh East LSP about its future. At a

recent Board Meeting, the Chief Executive and the Corporate Director explained Babergh's current position and, in particular, that this review was to be undertaken. It was agreed that the criteria for the review would be shared with the LSP before it was agreed by this Committee. The criteria were considered by the LSP Board at its meeting on 29 November 2007 and their views will be submitted verbally to the Committee.

Methodology

5.12 This review will be lead by the Corporate Director. Babergh Officers will work with the lead officer from each partnership to assess the criteria in 5.10 above by obtaining the views of:-

- (b) Babergh's elected Member on each partnership.
- (c) A partner agency on each partnership.
- (d) The Babergh lead officer on each partnership.

Additionally, insofar as the Babergh East LSP is concerned, discussions will also take place with Mid Suffolk District Council about any strengths and opportunities for the two LSPs to join.

5.13 A report outlining findings, conclusions and recommendations, including a process for the future monitoring and reviewing of Strategic Partnerships will then be made. Any future monitoring will need to be both effective and proportionate.

5.14 The timetable for the Phase 1 review is:

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|------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| ▪ Obtain views of relevant parties | December/January 2008 |
| ▪ Drafting of report | February 2008 |
| ▪ Management Team consideration | 3 March 2008 |
| ▪ Committee consideration | 25 March 2008 |

6. **APPENDICES**

None.

7. **BACKGROUND PAPERS REFERRED TO**

None.

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23 November 2007

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