

Partnership Working

Standard Operating Procedure No. TFS – 007

Document Overview: -

A policy within which Wiltshire Fire & Rescue Service (Wiltshire FRS) will allow organisations to jointly plan a range of services to help make communities safer and stronger.

Wiltshire FRS recognises that partnership working is essential to deliver improvements in the quality of life for the people of Wiltshire and Swindon. It is committed to supporting all partnerships that can contribute to targets and objectives identified in the Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP).

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1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Wiltshire FRS is involved in a number of partnerships, formalised and ad-hoc across a diverse range of activities and it is important structures exist to ensure they are evaluated, resourced and receive appropriate Fire and Rescue Service representation.
- 1.2 Wiltshire FRS's engagement in each partnership must contribute to priorities and objectives in the IRMP 2006-10, the Communities Programme and wider safety agendas.
- 1.3 This policy gives due regard to the Audit Commission document 'Governing Partnerships - Bridging the Accountability Gap' 2005 and the Local Government Association document written in association with the Chief Fire Officers' Association (CFOA) 'Partnership Working With the Fire Brigade' 2002.

2.0 Partnership Definition

- 2.1 Partnerships are processes whereby different agencies work together to achieve better outcomes for projects or workstreams as measured by the needs of stakeholders, involving collaboration bringing together or making better use of resources. Working together requires development of commitment to shared agendas, effective leadership and respect for the needs of the partners.
- 2.2 From a Fire and Rescue Service perspective, any partnership engagement must be assessed against its benefits. These should ideally contribute towards the achievement of targets and objectives. In certain instances where a partnership does not fulfil this criterion, participation may still be justified on other grounds. Such determination will be based on the particular circumstances of the case.

3.0 Aim

- 3.1 This policy provides the framework to manage Wiltshire FRS's partnership commitments. It formalises working and ensures a consistent approach across all areas of Service activity and assists performance management. It gives guidance to managers responsible for formulating or supporting partnerships and facilitates assessment of their impact. A clear audit trail and record of actual opportunities/costs is also provided from the framework in this policy.

4.0 Types of Partnership

- 4.1 There are a number of partnerships Wiltshire FRS is already engaged in or anticipated to do so in the future and they fall into one of the groups below. These give an indication of the level of partnership work and anticipated commitment required in terms of representation and the likely scale or resources required in support of such engagement.

Statutory Partnerships	
Swindon Partnerships	Wiltshire Partnerships
Swindon Strategic Partnership	Wiltshire Strategic Board
Swindon Community Safety Executive Board	Safer Wiltshire Executive (SWEX)
Swindon Community Safety Operations Board	Safer Wiltshire Advisory Group (SWAG)
Local Area Agreement Project Board	
West Wiltshire Partnerships	North Wiltshire Partnerships
West Wiltshire CDRP Community Safety Partnership Executive	North Wiltshire CDRP Community Safety Partnership Executive
West Wiltshire Community Safety Partnership Lead Officers Group	North Wiltshire Community Safety Partnership Lead Officers Group
West Wiltshire Local Strategic Partnerships – Community & Neighbourhood Partnerships	North Wiltshire Local Strategic Partnerships – Community & Neighbourhood Partnerships
Kennet Partnerships	Salisbury Partnerships
Kennet CDRP Community Safety Partnership Executive	South Wiltshire Local Strategic Alliance
Kennet Community Safety Partnership	Salisbury Community Safety Partnership
Non-Statutory Partnerships	
Wiltshire and Swindon Road Safety Partnership	Wiltshire & Swindon Health Promotion Service
Wiltshire and Swindon Drug Action Teams	Wiltshire & Swindon BEM Groups
Wiltshire and Swindon Trading Standards Departments	Wiltshire & Swindon Sensory Loss Teams
Wiltshire and Swindon Social Services Departments	Wiltshire Ambulance Service
Wiltshire and Swindon Healthy Schools Teams	Wiltshire & Swindon Probation Service
Wiltshire and Swindon Housing Associations	Wiltshire & Swindon Primary Care Trusts
Wiltshire and Swindon Care and Repair Teams	Wiltshire Pensions & Benefits Team
Wiltshire Blind Association	Wiltshire Constabulary
Neighbourhood Watch	Youth Offending Teams
Bobby Van Trust	Crime & Disorder Team
Drugs and Alcohol Advisory Team	Age Concern
Street Warden Schemes	Help the Aged
Warm Hearted Homes	Safe and Secure Partnership
Meals on Wheels	Parish Councils

5.0 Principles of Partnership Working

- 5.1 The principles of working in partnership will generally be based on the stages shown in Section 6 below. Each partnership will have progressed through some or all of these general stages. In many instances Wiltshire FRS will not have taken the lead, coming to the process as a stakeholder after the partnership's inception. It is therefore important that personnel have an awareness of initial partnership work as well as mainstream progress through to the partnership reaching its objective(s). Coupled with this will be a personal requirement to understand financial arrangements that may apply to a particular partnership.
- 5.2 Whilst these aspects can be many and varied, managers directing Service resources into partnership commitments must consider certain essential principles:

6.0 Governance and Accountability

6.1 Conception

- a) Partners come together for mutual recognition of common need/goal and requirements of joint effort to obtain resources.
- b) Learn about partners: overcome different cultures (for example, public, private and voluntary sectors have different approaches). Build trust and respect.
- c) Examine needs: to build efficiency and capability. May require training and advice

6.2 Common Vision

The partners must:

- a) Establish common ground, and agree a shared vision and mission statement.
- b) Assess the need to involve others and establish stakeholders and sources of expertise.
- c) Develop means to acquire information and scope the tasks required.
- d) Produce an agenda for action.

6.3 Preparation

- a) Formalise the partnership.
- b) Produce a framework for decision-making and an organisational structure.
- c) Consider a partnership agreement. Balance formality with flexibility
- d) Set SMART objectives (Specific, Measurable, Agreed, Realistic and Timely).

- a) Establish a Management Team. This can be one person or a group (an executive), who oversee the work and ensure continuity.

6.4 Delivery

Partnership executive delivers to its action plan through:

- a) Maintaining the involvement of all partners.
- b) Formulating policy decisions.
- c) Ensuring the accountability of the partnership.
- d) Ongoing monitoring and feedback.
- e) Assessing, evaluating and refining the operations of the partnership.

6.5 Closure and Continuance

Exit strategy

- a) Change focus to a new set of goals.
- b) Continuation of the partnerships aims.
- c) Maintenance of project achievements.
- d) Dissemination and mainstreaming.
- e) Transfer of assets back to the community.
- f) Recycling

Note: These stages are guides and smaller partnerships may not require a formal agreement or structure. All will require SMART objectives, a delivery plan and exit strategy.

7.0 Developing Partnerships

7.1 Wiltshire FRS's IRMP and CSP are where the fundamental aspects of short and medium term planning are set out. Many of the objectives and targets offer opportunities to work in partnership. Within each of these publications the necessity for partnership working is clearly evident in order for Wiltshire FRS to achieve the diverse objectives required of a modernised Service.

7.2 In the emerging Community Safety (CS) environment, it is clear that not only Wiltshire FRS's objectives but also those of other organisations give need for partnership working. For partnerships such as CS Partnerships, Wiltshire FRS now has statutory responsibilities following the Police Reform Act 2002.

- 7.3 When developing new or reviewing existing partnerships, managers must consider four main points: -
- a) Service resources (financial and physical). Can they be justified against other priorities?
 - b) Will the partnership deliver tangible improvements towards Wiltshire FRS delivery in its widest sense?
 - c) What risks are presented in terms of 'partnership fatigue' or 'overstretch'?
 - d) Will participation bring a greater good to the community, despite not meeting core delivery targets?
- 7.4 Bearing these points in mind, as new partnerships are considered or existing ones reviewed, Wiltshire FRS needs to ensure that finite resources are used to best effect.
- 7.5 Whilst a number of partnership opportunities may be useful, it is important to keep in mind that there will always be a larger number of partnerships over and above those that Wiltshire FRS can justifiably be engaged in.
- 7.6 Global management of Service commitment to partnerships is critical and must ensure that each is clearly evidenced and considered against criteria that supports work towards Service objectives.
- 7.7 The following should be identified, discussed and agreed within the first six months of a new partnership.

<input type="checkbox"/>	Agree membership of partnership including roles of: accountable partner, chair and admin support.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Agree how decisions will be made within partnership
<input type="checkbox"/>	Identify if training is required.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Identify how other partners will share information with Wiltshire FRS.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Identify and agree each party's role and responsibility within partnership (consider the use of mini job descriptions)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Agree which organisation's procurement strategy to be adopted when buying/commissioning goods and services within partnership.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Identify and agree an appropriate exit strategy.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Agree what will happen to funding/procured goods should a party leave the partnership or the partnership ends.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Identify and agree performance indicators to measure the success of the partnership.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Introduce partnership plan complete with mission statement.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Finalise agreement documentation.

8.0 Management of Partnership Commitments

- 8.1 Partnership working may involve the expenditure of physical or financial resources and some opportunities will involve a financial agreement with one or other partners.
- 8.2 Managers should always conduct partnership arrangements with due consideration to probity, corporate governance and Wiltshire FRS's financial regulations.
- 8.3 Financial involvement in partnerships must be approved at the appropriate Service level with due regard to the type of commitment involved and this will apply retrospectively to all existing partnerships.
- 8.4 It will be necessary to obtain the following information from which evaluation of the Partnership's benefit can be determined:
 - a) Name/names of partners.
 - b) Nature of the partnership.
 - c) Partnership objectives.
 - d) Duration of partnership.
 - e) Partnership structure and constitution.
 - f) Benefits to Wiltshire FRS against objectives.
 - g) Statutory duty fulfilment.
 - h) Value of benefits to Wiltshire FRS (resources, access to funding etc.)
 - i) Benefits to partners of Wiltshire FRS involvement.
 - j) Costs to be incurred by Wiltshire FRS (initial, on-going, exit costs, etc.)
 - k) Performance indicators to be used in measuring Partnership effectiveness.
 - l) Level of representation/authority required and decision making authority.
 - m) Impact assessment on existing workloads - either local or Wiltshire FRS -wide.
 - n) Meeting frequencies.
 - o) Nature of any community safety objectives to be delivered.
 - p) Review process and reporting framework - responsible body.
 - q) Exit/onward strategy.

8.5 We have a statutory duty under the Police Reform Act 2002 to participate in collaborative partnership work with the five CS Partnerships, which operate in Wiltshire and Swindon.

8.6 Nominated lead managers for these partnerships should complete an annual Partnership Review Form (Appendix 'C' under forms) and send it to the Corporate Risk Registry (CRR) by the end of April.

9.0 Partnership Register and Monitoring

9.1 Following the approval of a partnership the Corporate Risk Registry (CRR) will record, log, track and report quarterly on all partnerships within the organisation.

9.2 This central register of partnerships will provide a focal point and ensure a coordinated approach is maintained.

9.3 Following approval for partnership engagement (either new or continuation), Service staff designated as representatives for each partnership will receive written details of their involvement and responsibilities. This will comprise the following information:

- a) Authority and decision making level.
- b) Reporting requirements (including review periods and copies of minutes as required).
- c) Resource deployment or allocation in terms of opportunity costs.
- d) Budgetary allocation and necessary management protocols.
- e) Wiltshire FRS themes/issues to be communicated and progressed at specific partnerships.
- f) Performance and risk management considerations.
- g) Linkage to Personal Development Review (PDR) objectives for Managers.
- h) Responsibilities for stages of partnership proposal, review and monitoring will be as follows:

Stage	Responsible Officer
Determination of Partnership opportunity (new or existing).	Proposing/reviewing Manager.
Compile business case.	Proposing/reviewing Manager.
Determine organisation fit against performance plan/Service objectives.	Line Manager (dept. head).
Complete Partnership commitment monitoring document (admin).	Proposing Manager in conjunction with Line Manager.
Funding evaluation as appropriate.	Director of Finance.
Evaluation/co-ordination and health check.	Area Manager Risk

Review and approval.	Area Manager Risk
Partnership agreed.	Area Manager Risk
Approval and guidance to staff.	Area Manager Risk
Corporate register	Area Manager CRR
Review and monitor arrangements	Area Manager CRR
Host partnership meetings quarterly	Area Manager CRR

9.4 Each lead partnership manager will be responsible for the accuracy of the central register.

10.0 Health Check

10.1 A vital element of successful partnership working is to ensure Wiltshire FRS is partnered with others who hold similar values and standards that need to be maintained at all times.

10.2 Appropriate checks will need to be made with potential partners regarding Health and Safety, Equality and Diversity issues and information regarding a partnership's financial status and probity.

10.3 Finance and risk information arising from partnership engagement will be entered onto Wiltshire FRS's risk management register.

11.0 Health and Safety

11.1 Health and safety is an integral part of partnership agreements and to enable Wiltshire FRS's compliance with Health and Safety legislation, potential partners will have to demonstrate compliance in connection with the type of business involved.

11.2 Risks to any partnership project will be assessed and communicated to all partners by the project manager. The Area Manager Risk will also consider risk to the organisation from each partnership agreement on an individual basis.

12.0 Race Relations

12.1 To the extent necessary to enable Wiltshire FRS to comply with Section 71 of the Race Relations Act 1976 and other race equalities legislation, including the Race Equality Scheme, the potential partnership shall need to demonstrate:

- a) Compliance with the Commission for Racial Equality Code of Practice for Employment.
- b) They do not discriminate unlawfully on grounds of race.
- c) Their best endeavours to promote equality of opportunity and good relations between persons of different racial groups.
- d) That any other persons engaged in or about the work comply with the foregoing sub-paragraphs a), b) and c).

13.0 Financial Status

13.1 The Director of Finance will have overall responsibility for financial commitment to partnerships. However, not all partnerships will require significant deployment of resources, allowing local determination of appropriateness. The following framework indicates approval levels for Partnerships on cost / value basis.

Type of Partnership	Anticipated Value	Approval Level
Regional - Service - Department - Station Partnerships.	> £50,000	Fire Authority
Service - Department - Station Partnerships.	£1,000 - £50,000	Wiltshire FRS Management Board
Service - Department - Station Partnerships	<£1,000	Budget Holder in conjunction with Line Manager

14.0 Termination

14.1 Termination of a particular partnership engagement will usually occur as a consequence of the normal anticipated closure and exit strategy for the partnership concerned. Wiltshire FRS reserves the right in exceptional circumstances to terminate any partnership that may threaten or damage Wiltshire FRS.

14.2 This risk will be minimised by the appropriate and detailed checks set out in Section 9 and the review process integral to management of partnership commitments. However, such action may become necessary during the partnership life cycle to protect Wiltshire FRS.

14.3 Additionally, ending a partnership engagement may be applicable as Wiltshire FRS's requirements or those of the partnership change. This is normally highlighted during review but may require interim assessment according to circumstances. Advice and guidance should be sought from the Area Manager Risk in each instance. It is the responsibility of the lead manager for the partnership to ensure minutes are posted in the appropriate folder. Minutes of meetings will be found on the "X" drive/Central/Operational Intelligence/Partnership Works.

15.0 Partnership Forms

- a) Partnership Questionnaire (Appendix 'A' under forms)

Use: when evaluating a potential new Partnership (or existing at 1st January 2006).

- b) Partnership Commitment Feedback (Appendix 'B' under forms)

Use: For approving manager when providing feedback for potential/existing partnerships.

- c) Partnership Reviews (Appendix 'C' under forms)

Use: For annual Partnership review, completed by the nominated lead person.

d) Partnership Evaluation (Appendix D)

Use: For annual Partnership review for Local Strategic Partnership and Community Safety Partnership only, to be completed by nominated lead person

e) Task list of a good Partnership (Appendix F)

Use: Aide Memoire when entering into a Partnership

16.0 Review

16.1 The policy notes shall be reviewed by the Area Manager CRR following:-

- a) Receipt of new information.
- b) An accident or accident investigation.
- c) Introduction of new or change to existing working procedures.
- d) Introduction of new technology.
- e) In any event after a period of three years.
- f) At any other time when the current procedure is deemed to be invalid.

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

THIS LINK IS NOT YET ACTIVE