DEVON & SOMERSET FIRE & RESCUE AUTHORITY

REPORT REFERENCE NO.	**CSCPC/09/2**
MEETING	**COMMUNITY SAFETY AND CORPORATE PLANNING COMMITTEE**
DATE OF MEETING	**14 JANUARY 2009**
SUBJECT OF REPORT	**PARTNERSHIP GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORK AND TOOLKIT**
LEAD OFFICER	**ACFO (COMMUNITY SAFETY)**
RECOMMENDATIONS	***That the progress made towards the introduction of the Partnership Governance Framework and Toolkit as outlined in this report be noted.***
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	This paper provides a summary of the draft Partnership Governance Framework and Tool-kit applicable to both elected Members and Officers of the Service. The Framework introduces a structured means of administering, governing and reviewing the performance of all formal partnerships to ensure that the Service and the Authority is able to demonstrate that sufficient value is added as a consequence of our collaboration with significant partners. A presentation on the Partnership Governance Framework and Toolkit will be given at a future meeting of the Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Authority.
RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS	None
EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT	
APPENDICES	None
LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS	None

1.   **BACKGROUND**

1.1   The Service has worked for many years with partners, both formally and informally. Since 2002 the Service has been involved in Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships and more recently the Local Strategic Partnerships. Vitally, the Service has recently identified its contribution to the four Local Area Agreements (LAAs) in terms of mapping the activities and programmes with the prioritised indicators for each LAA Area.

1.2   Many other partnerships and relationships exist informally and have developed on an ad hoc basis over the years, some of which relate only loosely to the Service's goals. Similarly the profusion of partnerships has been managed on a local basis without a structured means of identifying the risks, costs and added value to the Service or the communities it serves.

1.3   Whilst the Service needs to continue to engage with the many partnerships that exist it equally needs to improve its partnership governance arrangements, risk management processes and its awareness of the partnerships overall contribution in terms of time, engagement and cost.

2.   **RATIONALE FOR A PARTNERSHIP FRAMEWORK**

2.1   There are a number of reasons why a partnership governance framework is needed;

- To promote **common understanding** of the different types of partnership activity and their relative strengths/weaknesses.

- To achieve **transparency** for our partners through the introduction of clear processes and standards.

- To demonstrate **purpose and added value** of all partnership working activities (in relation to Service priorities, its efficiency and costs).

- To be more aware of what the partnership working activities **deliver and to share good practices.**

- To make effective **resource decisions** and take into account the full contribution made by partnership working activities to the achievement of the Service goals and priorities.

- To ensure that **partnership performance monitoring and review** is fully integrated into our plans.

2.2   Additionally, there is a need to advise members and officers when engaging in formal partnerships with regard to the necessary skills and abilities, developing agreements in terms of their engagement and reviewing the effectiveness of their contribution and the partnerships achievements.

3.	**PARTNERSHIP FRAMEWORK DELIVERABLES**

3.1	The Service is seeking to introduce a Partnership Board. The Constitution and Terms of Reference for the Board will be submitted for consideration in due course but may include:

- to consider new partnership proposals;

- to review the performance of existing formal partnerships, and;

- to determine when a partnership may need to be come to an end.

3.2	The framework proposes the maintenance of a partnership database which will seek to catalogue all partnership details including:

- business case,

- partnership objectives, targets and outcomes,

- risks, liabilities and control measures,

- budget control mechanisms,

- point of contact,

- links to the corporate plan or other strategic imperatives,

- contractual obligations, etc.

3.3	The framework sets out clear principles for effective partnership working and identifies the skills required by elected members and officers when attending and engaging effectively with formal partnerships.

4.	**RECOMMENDATION**

4.1	That the progress made towards the introduction of the Partnership Governance Framework and Toolkit as outlined in this report be noted.

PETE SMITH
ACFO (COMMUNITY SAFETY)