

ITEM NO.	
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TITLE	: PARTNERSHIP GOVERNANCE REVIEW		
TO / ON	: AUDIT SUB-COMMITTEE		11 DECEMBER 2002
BY	: ASSISTANT CHIEF EXECUTIVE		
STATUS	: FOR PUBLICATION		

1.0 TYPE OF DECISION

1.1 What type of decision is to be taken:-

EXECUTIVE DECISION		COUNCIL DECISION	
Key		Non Key	

1.2 If a key decision, has it been included in the Forward Plan

Inclusion in Forward Plan	No	Date of Plan	
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2.0 SUMMARY

A review of partnership governance arrangements was included within District Audit's audit plan for this year. This area was included as it is recognised that partnership working is a key aspect of the change agenda in the public sector. In addition, Bury MBC is also carrying out a Best Value Review of Corporate Governance arrangements during 2002/03, in the context of the Council's corporate governance framework. The scoping for this review has also identified partnership governance as an area where much work has already take place, but as an area which requires further development.

During early 2002, District Audit carried out a review of Bury's partnership governance arrangements. The draft report was received on 18 November 2002.

3.0 OPTIONS AND RECOMMENDED OPTIONS (with reasons)

It is recommended that this report and the appended Action Plan is approved.

4.0 THIS REPORT HAS THE FOLLOWING IMPLICATIONS

Corporate Aims

'Partnership and Co-operation' is one Bury MBC's Core Values. In addition, partnership working is required in order to achieve each of the Council's corporate aims.

Policy Framework

Partnership working is required in order to deliver much of the Council's policy framework.

Statement by Monitoring Officer

Statement by Chief Financial Services Officer

Human Resource IT/Land and Property Implications

The Action Plan contains implications for training and development.

Wards/Area Boards affected

Improved partnership governance will impact on all wards.

Scrutiny Panel's Interest

All Overview Commissions.

Consultations

The review carried out by District Audit included consultation with some of the Council's key partners.

Call-in

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Briefings

Executive Members/ Chair	Yes	Chief Executive	Yes
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5.0 INTRODUCTION

5.1 A review of partnership governance arrangements was included within District Audit's audit plan for this year. This area was included as it is recognised that partnership working is a key aspect of the change agenda in the public sector. In addition, Bury MBC is also carrying out a Best Value Review of Corporate Governance arrangements during 2002/03, in the context of the Council's corporate governance framework which addresses the areas of:

Openness
Integrity, and
Accountability

5.2 The scoping for the Best Value Review has also identified partnership governance as an area where much work has already take place, but as an area which requires further development.

6.0 PARTNERSHIP GOVERNANCE REVIEW

6.1 The review focused on the Council's partnership working arrangements with:

Voluntary organisations
Health bodies
Agencies involved in delivering the SRB programme

6.2 The objectives of the review were to:

Identify the governance arrangements currently in place
Compare the governance arrangements with good practice
Identify opportunities to strengthen the operation of partnership working in Bury.

7.0 FINDINGS

7.1 The Review found that the Council had recognised the need for effective governance in its partnerships and some aspects of good practice were in place. In order to further develop this the Council needed to establish a corporate approach, including detailed guidance, on the governance corporate arrangements it expects to see in place with partnerships with which it is involved.

7.2 The Review report contained 10 recommendations:

- R1 Develop a corporate framework and guidance for the implementation of governance arrangements within the Council
- R2 Implement all of the recommendations in the 2001 Internal Audit report on voluntary arrangements
- R3 Finalise the local 'compact' dealing with the Council's partnership working with the voluntary and community sector.
- R4 Clearly define the roles and responsibilities of officers and members and ensure they are understood by all concerned in partnership working.
- R5 Develop a process for dealing with any conflicts that may arise between partnership members.
- R6 Develop a systematic process to ensure that the full legal implications for the Council of each partnership in which it is involved are fully identified and properly considered.
- R7 Incorporate partnership working into scrutiny arrangements
- R8 Establish clear lines of accountability within each partnership
- R9 Specify outputs and outcomes in agreements for partnership delivery
- R10 Establish effective financial monitoring arrangements for all partnerships

7.3 The Action Plan by which Bury MBC will respond to these recommendations is contained in Appendix 1 to this report. It should be noted that R1 above can be seen as the main recommendations, with R3 – R10 forming specific elements of a corporate framework for partnership governance.

7.4 In relation to R2, a revised Action Plan for the implementation of Internal Audit's report on voluntary arrangements is attached to this report as Appendix 2.

Background documents:

***Local Strategic Partnership – partnership protocol
Internal Audit Report – Voluntary Sector (2001)
LSP Accreditation Guidance***

For further information on the details of this report, please contact:

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