

Partnership Working Strategy (2008/09)

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Partnership Working Strategy (2008/09)

Summary

The Partnership Working Strategy supports the other strategies of the Fire Authority to ensure that services will be developed in consultation and partnership with the local community and other local authorities. The Strategy iterates the Authority's commitment to support the promotion of community safety and sustainability in the broadest possible context.

This document draws together a partnership framework that the Fire Authority will apply in relation to its business work streams. In so doing, it shall actively endorse East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service to take a full and active role within the community partnership agenda.

This Strategy is intended to support the latest Fire & Rescue Service National Framework and the emerging Comprehensive Area Agreement/Assessment regime.

In addition, this Strategy endorses the continued partnership working both at National and Regional levels through the Chief Fire Officers' Association (CFOA) and through the Regional Management Board (RMB).

Partnership Working Strategy (2008/09)

1. Strategy Statement

- 1.1 East Sussex Fire Authority embraces the opportunity and challenge to deliver a diverse range of community services through a cohesive integrated partnership arrangement with public, private and voluntary sectors.
- 1.2 It has been fully demonstrated that greater community well-being can be achieved through collective goals and objectives, sharing of resources and visions in terms of overall well being and economic growth of communities.
- 1.3 In the formulation of partnership arrangements, the Fire Authority seeks to achieve the following overarching objectives:
 - To help improve public service efficiency and effectiveness through joint partnership approaches for the long term sustainability, community safety and wellbeing objectives within East Sussex and the City of Brighton & Hove;
 - To help to improved the community safety and well-being of the citizens of East Sussex and the City of Brighton & Hove;
 - To help improve the overall economy, efficiency and effectiveness of the community services provided by local government within our local area;
 - To help improve national and regional fire & rescue service joint service objectives;
 - To help achieve core objectives and targets laid out within the Fire Authority's Best Value Performance Plan;
 - To support the Fire Authority's strategic aim to reduce community risk through the effective implementation of its Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP).
 - To support the development of shared good practice through collective work streams.
 - To make better use of partnerships in delivery of services to local citizens.
- 1.4 The Partnership Working Strategy supports the other strategies of the Fire Authority. In particular, it links to the Authority's procurement strategy in that it recognises that the Service will increasingly deliver in collaboration with others to achieve the objectives of the Authority's Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP). The Strategy iterates the Authority's commitment to support the promotion of community safety and the achievement of Best Value. This Strategy presents a framework for the Fire Authority to effectively contribute towards the Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA) agenda for 2009 and beyond.
- 1.5 The Fire Authority seeks continual performance improvement and Best Value through partnership engagement within its core business streams, seeking opportunities to achieve economies of scale within the following key business streams.
 - Procurement
 - Estates Management
 - Learning and Development
 - Engineering

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- 1.6 The Fire Authority embraces the opportunities to support the Government agenda for modernising the Fire and Rescue Service through partnership working achieved through the Chief Fire Officers' Association (CFOA) and the Regional Management Board (RMB). In the formulation of national and regional partnership arrangements, the Fire Authority expects this Strategy to achieve the following overarching objectives:
- To help achieve greater national, regional and local resilience;
 - To help improve fire & rescue service efficiency and effectiveness through joint partnership approaches for the long term sustainability, community safety and wellbeing objectives on a national, regional and local basis and in particular for local citizens;
 - To achieve continuous improvement in our performance of the statutory duties placed upon the Fire Authority.
 - To achieve improvement in strategic risk and corporate governance.

2. East Sussex Fire Authority Partnership Framework

2.1 National and Regional Partnerships (CFOA)

- 2.1.1 The Fire Authority will actively encourage the members of East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service (ESFRS) to work within the ethos and objectives of the Chief Fire Officers' Association by supporting the professional development of the Fire and Rescue Service across its business streams specifically within the following agendas:

- Human Resources
- Service Delivery-Operational Response
- Service Delivery-Prevention and Protection
- Service/Corporate Support

2.2 Regional Fire & Rescue Partnerships

- 2.2.1 The Fire Authority will take a full and active engagement within the Regional Management Board (RMB) agenda to ensure that the citizens of East Sussex and the City of Brighton & Hove maximise from the benefits of such collective initiatives whilst ensuring that the Fire Authority achieves its overarching objectives described in 1.3 above.

2.2.2 The Regional Management Board (RMB) working agenda

Section 1: Meeting the needs of the National Framework for Fire and Rescue

- Support for the delivery of the regional procurement strategy.
- Reaching at least level 4 of the equality standard for local government across the region – support for further actions to meet at least level 4 of the standard by December 2012;
- Improving the region's performance in relation to environmental issues.
- Improving risk management across FRAs - a baseline assessment of current practice to establish a common minimum corporate risk management standard across the region.

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Section 2: Working together

- Evaluation of the potential for shared services.
- Delivery of common safety campaigns to take advantage of economies of scale and testing effectiveness of existing measures.
- Partnership development to allow FRAs to lead beyond authority.
- Further extension of ability to share information and learning across the region.
- Work with other Improvement Partnerships on Joint Projects;
- Support of regional projects to ensure service delivery points are fit for the future.

Section 3: Building capacity

- Ensuring Members achieve their political priorities for FRAs.
- Developing Future Leaders: sponsorship of places on the national future leaders' scheme and 'political' skills training for middle managers
- Extension of the Peer Review Brokering Service.
- Improvements arising from inspection, including value for money assessments.
- Facilitation and shared learning

2.2.3 Comprehensive Area Assessment

It is the Government's intention that Comprehensive Area Assessments (CAA) will drive the more effective delivery of improvements in local public services for citizens, especially those in most need.

The key delivery agent for this regime will be the Local Area Agreements. The CLG's ambition is for Local Area Agreements to provide local authorities, and partners, with the flexibility and capacity to deliver the best solutions for their areas through a reformed relationship between central and local government and will be the major driver in the new framework.

CAA will develop a shared view about the challenges facing an area, such as crime, community cohesion, a sustainable environment or public health issues, and will also create a more joined-up and proportionate approach to public service regulation. The intention is that Local Area Agreements will be the main route for Area Specific funding in the future. Additional funding relevant to services will be dependant on those services being an integral part of the LAA process. It is therefore vital, that East Sussex Fire Authority is represented on both LAAs within its area.

2.2.4 Local Area Agreements

A Local Area Agreement (LAA) is a three year contract negotiated between central government and local government setting out the priorities for a local area and how these will be tackled in partnership. The LAA also provides a way of strengthening partnerships and partnership working, pooling budgets and streamlining performance management systems.

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The LAA has 23 long-term goals (outcomes) such as protecting children and young people from harm and neglect, improving the independence, health and well-being of our residents, increasing economic activity and reducing crime. Each outcome has one or more targets that help us measure progress towards achieving the outcome. Some targets are 'mandatory' – meaning local authorities are required by government to deliver.

Local Area Agreements (LAAs) are of critical importance, not just to local communities, but also to the new relationship between central government and local authorities. East Sussex Fire Authority recognises that engaging with LAA's provides opportunities to reduce community risk to the full diversity of its community. To that end, East Sussex Fire Authority shall:

- Seek full opportunities to take a leading role and/or actively contribute to East Sussex County Council and the City of Brighton & Hove's LAA taking into account the Authority's overarching objectives in 1.3 above.
- To support the delivery and achievement of community outcome targets and to seek opportunities to secure Governmental rewards.

2.2.5 Local Strategic Partnerships

Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs) are non-statutory, multi-agency partnerships, which match local authority boundaries. LSPs bring together at a local level the different parts of the public, private, community and voluntary sectors; allowing different initiatives and services to support one another so that they can work together more effectively.

East Sussex Fire Authority through its Borough Commander framework shall seek opportunities to engage within district and borough community activities to achieve the overarching objectives detailed in 1.3 above

In addition, Borough Commanders shall seek to achieve the following:

- The cohesion between LSP community action plans and Station and Borough performance plans.
- To seek opportunities to delivery FRS community safety initiatives to hard to reach members of their local community.

2.2.6 Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships

Responsible authorities have a statutory duty to work with other local agencies and organisations to develop and implement strategies to tackle crime and disorder including anti-social and other behaviour adversely affecting the local environment as well as the misuse of drugs in their area. (s6, Crime and Disorder Act 1998 as amended by s97 & s98 Police Reform Act 2002 and s1, Clean Neighbourhoods & Environment Act 2005).

These statutory partnerships are known as Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships (CDRPs). The responsible authorities as set out in s 5 Crime and Disorder Act 1998 are:

- police authorities
- local authorities
- fire & rescue authorities
- primary care trusts (PCTS)

Borough Commanders and Station Managers shall uphold the Fire Authority's statutory duties as laid down within the act.

In addition, Borough Commanders and Station Managers shall seek to achieve the following:

- The cohesion between CDRP community action plans and Station & Borough performance plans.
- To seek opportunities to delivery FRS community safety initiatives to hard to reach members of their local community.
- Seek creative and initiative opportunities to effectively contribute to the well being of their local community.
- Maximise local intelligence to contribute to targeting key community risk based issues.
- Maximise local Fire and Rescue Service resources to ensure the effectiveness of resources are achieved against community outcomes.

2.2.7 Other Informed Partnerships Arrangements

The Fire Authority recognise the clear benefits of engaging in joint initiatives with other public, private and voluntary services that may fall outside the framework detailed above.

The Fire Authority shall endorse such partnership activities if clear and measurable benefits can be achieved for the citizens of East Sussex and the City of Brighton & Hove and clearly fall within the Authority's performance management framework for partnerships.

3. Performance Management of Partnerships

3.1 Evaluation of Partnerships

3.1.2 East Sussex Fire Authority is faced with ever increasing agendas with higher expectations from Government. This places a direct business need for the Fire Authority to ensure that its current capabilities are assessed in terms of Best Value and act upon the outcomes to achieve an optimum balance of work streams that provide the best community outcomes. This aspect can only be fully achieved through the effective evaluation of partnership working.

3.1.3 The Fire Authority will undertake an effective evaluation of all current partnership commitments as detailed within the ESFRS policy and procedure. This will enable the Fire Authority to provide a robust business approach when committing resources to partnerships based upon the 3 Es: Economy (minimum levels of input - value for money); Efficiency (effective use of resources allocated to the project) and Effectiveness (measurable outcomes to make a difference to the community).

3.1.4 Through the above framework the Fire Authority will be able to:

- Provide an effective system for evaluating all current and future partnership arrangements;
- Provide a means to assess objectively the relative benefits of these partnership arrangements on a consistent and regular basis against each other for a share of resources available;

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- Ensured that performance can be assessed on outputs and outcomes against defined resource inputs to allow effective measures to determine policy decisions on continual investment in particular partnerships; and
- Support the organisation by providing a process to only commit future investment in partnerships that meet organisational objectives cost effectively.

3.2 Partnership Focus Team

3.2.1 To drive the partnership agenda on behalf of the Fire Authority, the Deputy Chief Fire Officer shall on behalf of the Corporate Management Team:

- Champion the Partnership agenda through effective Corporate engagement.
- Provide support and direction to key service managers ensuring the key service objectives are achieved whilst maintaining best value of the services resources.
- Chair the Service's Partnership Focus Team (PFT).

3.2.2 The Partnership Focus Team's terms of reference:

To collectively performance manage the services approach to partnership engagement. Ensuring the effective use of service resources balanced against achieving a high level of community safety cohesion, whilst maintaining best value on behalf of the Fire Authority.

3.2.3 This will be achieved through the following objectives of the group:

- To establish effective performance management arrangements for all partnership working including performance reporting.
- To ensure the countywide partnership targets (LAA) that ESFRS are linked are being achieved.
- For Borough Commanders and Head of Business Assurance to report service level inputs to partnership engagement set against community activities/outcomes.
- Head of Community Safety to provide steerage on cross borough partnership priorities based upon ESFRS community safety strategies.
- For the Head of Community Risk to monitor and report on the current partnership effectiveness in relation to the Fire Authority's IRMP.
- For the group to prioritise direction of partnership engagement within their management area based upon Corporate Leadership and community risk.
- To share good practice between members to enhance community relations.

4. Equality Impact Assessment

4.1 A full equality impact assessment is being prepared to complement this Strategy. This is to ensure that our Strategy takes into account available community profiling information on the differing needs of needs of people living and working in our area and will further assist, along with risk reduction information to prioritise our future services.