

PARTNERSHIP WORKING POLICY

Reference	SNTC/COR-002	Adopted by	Town Council
Prepared by	C Robson (Town Clerk)	Adopted date	13/12/22
Monitored by	Town Clerk	Minute reference	TC-114-22/23
Monitoring Review	Every four years	Review date	December 2026

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The definition of a partnership is:

- 1.1.1 The Town Council and partner(s) working together to produce a deliverable where both parties are involved in the decision-making process.
- 1.1.2 The Town Council considers the key to a successful partnership as active collaboration between parties.
- 1.1.3 Where the Town Council commits funds, however sourced, to a partnership it must ensure that these are spent in an open and transparent manner.
- 1.1.4 The Town Council may be required to undertake a risk assessment and/or due diligence for any new partnership arrangements.

2. ENTERING A PARTNERSHIP

2.1 Before entering into or continuing any partnership the potential benefit of the Council's participation should be assessed against its own aims, objectives and responsibilities.

2.2 A partnership may be appropriate when:

- 2.2.1 The work of the partnership supports and contributes to the Council's strategic priorities and supports the Council's principles and ethos such as equalities and diversity;
- 2.2.2 The work of the partnership benefits residents, the local economy and visitors to the town;
- 2.2.3 The partnership is able to carry out or support functions the Council needs efficiently, provides resource capacity the Council does not have, or enables better performance than the Council could do on its own;

2.3 A successful partnership relationship involves the following:

- A clear vision.
- A set of objectives which, where possible, need to be Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Timebound, Effective and Resourced.
- A clear structure where all partners have agreed terms of reference, terms of accountability, and agree on strategy, aims, roles and responsibilities.
- Where applicable, an agreed timeframe/action plan.
- A review process to review the partnership's performance and its work.
- A reporting mechanism to keep all partners informed of progress.

3. PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENTS

3.1 All partnership arrangements will have a formal partnership agreement in place based upon the principles under this policy. This shall be in line with a prescribed format developed by the Town Clerk.

3.2 Partnership agreements shall designate a lead partner.

3.3 The lead partner shall provide a project evaluation.

3.4 Partnership agreements shall give the Council the right to:

- a. Request any information deemed relevant by the Council regarding the project in order to make an informed decision, in particular in relation to;
 - Funding and allocation of funds requested.
 - Background information related to project providers e.g:
 - a. Who are the individuals or bodies applying for partnership funding.
 - b. Details of interests (pecuniary and non-pecuniary) of the individuals/bodies providing services and professional input to the project.
- b. Request original receipts for expenditure.
- c. See a time and cost breakdown for management/professional fees.
- d. See income/expenditure accounts for the project.

3.5 Personnel within a partner organisation shall uphold the Nolan Principles and act within the code of conduct applicable to councillors in all partnership activities.

3.6 Partnership agreements shall set out the responsibilities of each partner.

3.7 Partnership agreements shall set out the limit of liability for the Town Council.

3.8 The lead partner will be responsible for holding documents for various statutory and grant body requirement periods.

4. PARTNERSHIP EVALUATION

4.1 The lead partner shall provide a project evaluation in the prescribed form.

4.2 The evaluation required under 3.1 shall be provided within 14 days of the end of the project, subject to exigencies. The Town Council must be notified of such exigencies in advance.

4.3 The responsible Town Council committee should review the effectiveness of the partnership either at the end or at least annually for long-term partnerships.

4.4 Where there is a long-term partnership, the relevant Town Council committee should receive update/status reports at least once a quarter.

5. PARTNERSHIP FINANCES

5.1 The breach of a partnership agreement shall entitle the Town Council to the return of any funds provided.

5.2 The Town Council shall be entitled to a refund of funds contributed if they are not spent in accordance with the partnership agreement.

5.3 Any agreement which would result in a payment to a partner must follow the approval and payments process set out within the Council's Financial Regulations.

5.4 A partnership or agreement shall set out what any Council provided funds should be spent on.

5.5 A partnership agreement shall set out what happens to any leftover funding or surplus derived from a partnership activity.

5.6 As any funds from the Council are public money, then the procurement framework of the partnership should be broadly comparable to the Council's. Where the Council is the Accountable Body, the Council's Financial Regulations must be complied with, regardless of the funding source.

5.7 VAT is a very complicated area and advice from the Council's RFO must be followed. Specialist advice may also be required. Without proper adherence to VAT legislation the "partnership" may find that its funding is less than expected, and if VAT rules are not followed this might mean that interest and penalties have to be paid.