

## **Framework for Partnership Working**

This framework guides our engagement with partnerships to ensure that our involvement is appropriate, accountable and makes a positive contribution to delivering for West Oxfordshire's residents, environment and the local economy.

The Council will work in partnership with others when:

- It helps us achieve our Council Plan priorities.
- It is the forum for representing the District's interests at a County, Regional or National level.
- We have a legal duty to do so.
- It is financially beneficial to do so.
- It reduces our risk (eg to the Council's reputation).

Where appropriate, each partnership the Council is a member of will have:

*Effective governance arrangements including:*

- Clear terms of reference, objectives, targets and performance management arrangements.
- Systems to manage risk and complaints.

*Defined lines of accountability, including:*

- Appropriate member representation with clarity over remit and extent of decision-making powers.
- Defined route for presenting partnership decisions to the Council's decision making and scrutiny process.
- Comprehensive briefing of members before each meeting.

*Arrangements to ensure openness and accessibility, including that:*

- Meetings are publicised in advance alongside agendas and reports.
- Minutes are accessible as soon as possible after the meeting.
- Good systems are in place to engage the public.

*Sufficient resources and systems to deliver partnership objectives and effective scrutiny, including:*

- Commitment of resources (staff and financial) to meet the Council's obligations to the partnership and ensuring efficient use of these.
- Opportunities to scrutinise the resource contribution to the partnership, including an annual report for Full Council about the partnership's work and its performance.

### **Partnership Principles**

West Oxfordshire District Council believes all members of a partnership arrangement should enjoy the following rights, and bear the following responsibilities, in any partnership arrangement and will conduct itself accordingly:

- To be treated with respect and as valued partners through listening to others, being able to express differing views and encouraging meaningful dialogue which enables consensus to be met through forthright debate.
- To be able to express operational constraints whilst taking a proactive, positive approach focussed on outcomes.
- To promote and support the aims of the partnership within their own organisation, recognising that formal decision making may lie with individual member organisations.
- To trust that the partnership will contribute to each of the member organisation's own objectives.
- To expect information to be shared freely by the partnership where it is legally possible to do so and to expect confidentiality to be respected.