

PARTNERSHIP GOVERNANCE STANDARDS

It is essential that the council ensures that good governance arrangements apply to any 'partnership arrangements' which are entered into as the quality of governance arrangements is a pre determinant of the success of the partnership.

For the purpose of this document a partnership is defined as 'an agreement between the council and one or more other bodies to work effectively together to achieve a common objective(s)'.

However that definition in itself covers many different arrangements with the term 'partnership' being commonly used to describe various different types of relationships which we have with other bodies.

The aim of this document is to question the type of relationship which exists with 'the other body' and through a process of elimination arrive at the type of partnership to which the guidance within this document is aimed at. (Appendix 1 refers).

Having established that the guidance applies to a particular partnership the next stage is to then assess the scale of that partnership (Appendix 2 refers). The outcome from this will then determine the type of governance arrangements which the council expects to apply to that particular partnership (Appendix 3 refers).

It should be noted that in regard to those partnerships to which this guidance applies:

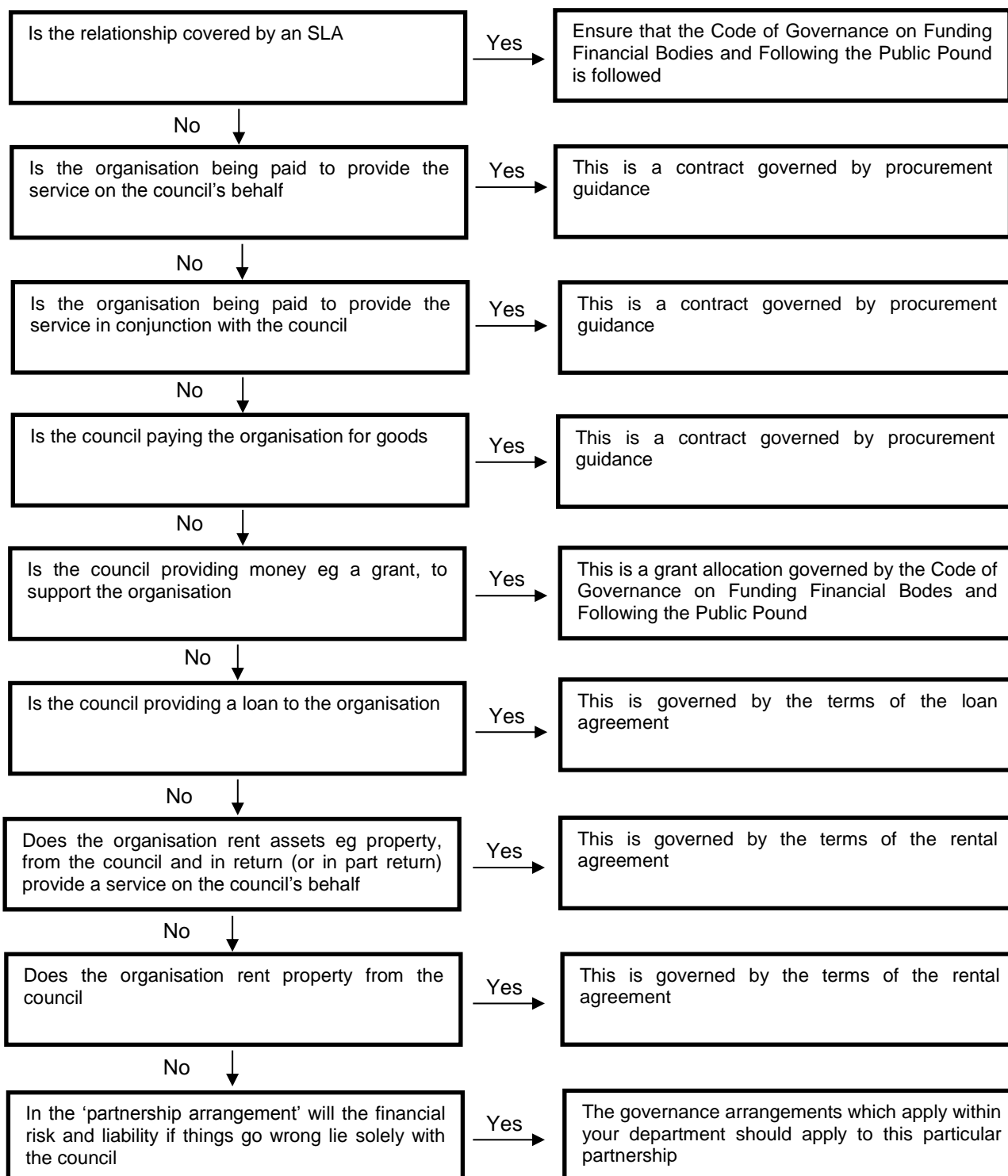
- The partnership must be registered in the council's partnership register which is held by Head of Law and Administration
- If it is a new partnership formal approval to enter into the partnership is given (Appendix 4 refers)
- As part of the annual departmental governance self assessment an assessment will require to be undertaken to determine whether the governance arrangements remain appropriate and indeed whether the partnership remains effective

Should you wish any clarification on the terms of this document please contact Head of Law and Administration.

If the answer to all of the questions is 'No' then the 'partnership arrangement' falls under the purview of this document and the guidance in the rest of the document applies.

If the answer to any of the questions is 'Yes' the 'partnership arrangement' does not fall under the purview of this document and the box on the right gives guidance on what should determine the governance arrangements of the relationship.

The questions are in no particular order.



Appendix 2

Not all partnerships are of the same scale, or carry the same degree of risk. A level of pragmatism has to be built into any arrangements so that smaller partnerships are not strangled by an inappropriate level of governance. To achieve this, the following grading system has been developed. It is a simple mechanism to gauge in rough terms the scale of the partnership. The governance required for the partnership will be determined by the scale of the partnership.

Score	1	2	
Criteria	Low to Medium	High	Score (1 or 2)
Estimated cost to or financial input by the council	<£150,000	>£150,000	
Proportion of funding the council is providing to the partnership	0 – 65%	66 – 100%	
Council staff required to support the partnership	Equivalent of up to 5 FTE	Equivalent of greater than 5 FTEs	
Estimated length of partnership	Up to 5 years	Over 5 years	
Partner involvement	Partners fully / partially engaged	Partners not fully engaged	
Have we done this before and are therefore confident we can deliver the expected outcomes?	Yes	No	
Strategic importance	Will affect delivery of none, 1 or 2 of the council's strategic objectives	Will affect delivery of 3 or more of the council's strategic objectives	
Partnership outcomes	Outcomes partially / clearly defined and measurable	Outcomes haven't yet been defined	
Does the partnership fulfil a statutory obligation	No	Yes	

Score the partnership 1 or 2, against each criterion. Once you have the total score for your partnership it can be graded into one of two categories, High or Low to Medium.

Score	Partnership Category
09 – 13	Low to Medium level
14 – 18	High level

Governance Requirements

The level of governance that must be applied to a partnership depends on its scale, ie how it has been assessed. The type of governance requirements for each category of partnership is set out below.

Governance Requirements	Low to Medium Level Partnership	High Level Partnership
Clearly defined vision, objectives & benefits	✓	✓
Organisational arrangements	✓	✓
Risk Register	X	✓
Financial Management	✓	✓
Performance Management	X	✓
Exit Arrangements	✓	✓
Public Engagement	X	✓
Accountability and Transparency	✓	✓

The above are considered to be minimum requirements however it is intended that the application of this should be flexible with deviation allowed where there is appropriate justification. In addition the scale of application of each of the requirements will vary according to the partnership and its particular issues.

The above relate to governance requirements of the 'partnership'. In addition members of the partnership would be expected to comply with the behaviour standards within their own organisation, as outlined within a code of conduct or equivalent.

Appendix 4

Before embarking on a new partnership arrangement it is important to get the relevant level of sign off. This table sets out who should approve the council committing to any new partnership.

Partnership Category	Approval
Low level to Medium level	Strategic Director / S95 Officer / Monitoring Officer
High level	Committee