

North Somerset Partnership Governance Handbook



All members of the NSP Board are asked to sign the North Somerset Partnership Agreement. Members include local agencies and organizations working to improve quality of life for residents in North Somerset who have been nominated by the appropriate sector bodies.

This Agreement is not legally binding and the statutory requirements of members come first. However, all members of the Partnership are asked to voluntarily commit themselves and their organisation to abide by the Governance Framework within the Handbook if they wish to be involved in the NSP.

All members of the NSP will be given a paper copy of this Handbook and it will also be available on the Internet.

The NSP Board must agree any changes to the Framework and Handbook. Any NSP Board member can suggest changes.

Version	Approved/Amended	By Whom	Date
1.	Approved (– with Executive to agree own policy on quorum and substitutes in Aug 09)	Board/ Executive	July 2009/ Aug 2009

Contents:		
1.	Vision	5
	Aim	
	Objectives	
2.	Code of Conduct	7
	Nolan Principles	
	At meetings	
	Dealing with unacceptable conduct	
	Declarations of Interest and disputes	
3.	Membership	9
	Termination of membership	
4.	Partnership Risk Assessment	11
5.	Accountability	11
6.	Review and Termination of Partnership	13
7.	Changes to Governance Framework	13
8.	Structure	15
	Introduction	17
	Board	
	Purpose	
	Roles	
	Responsibilities	
	Outline role of Private Sector Board Members	
	Outline role of Voluntary & Community Sector	
	Outline role of Public Sector Board Members	
	Selection of Board members	
	Review and change in membership	
	Selection of Chair & Vice Chair	
	Meetings	
	Operation	
	Decision making/Urgent decisions	
	Executive	23
	Purpose	
	Responsibilities	
	Selection of Executive members	
	Meetings	
	Delivery Partnerships	25
	Purpose	
	Roles	
	Role of delivery partnership chair	
	Membership	
	Meetings	
	Review of delivery partnerships	
	Stakeholders	29
	Purpose	
	Stakeholder meetings	
9.	OTHER:	
	Equalities	31
	Consultation & Engagement	
	Communication	
	Sharing Information	
	Contracts	
	Resources	
	Scrutiny	
	Performance Management & Hierarchy	35
Appendix 1	Structure diagram	37
Appendix 2	NSP Member Organisations	39
Appendix 3	Duty to cooperate in setting LAA targets	41
Appendix 4	Partnership Agreement form	43

1. The North Somerset Partnership (NSP) is the local strategic partnership for the area and brings together key interests to deliver the North Somerset vision.

1.1 Vision:

The long-term vision of the NSP is set out in the North Somerset Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS) 2008-2026 – ‘Improving our communities together’.

It is:

‘Sustainable, inclusive, safe, healthy, prosperous communities thriving in a quality environment’.

To achieve this vision a number of shared priorities and associated aims and improvements have been developed with our partners and communities. These are:

- Tackling disadvantage and promoting equality of opportunity
- Developing strong inclusive communities
- Ensuring safer communities
- Improving health and wellbeing
- Developing a prosperous economy and enterprising community
- Living within environmental limits

1.2 Aim:

The aim of the Partnership is:

- To bring together the key public, private, voluntary and community sector organisations in North Somerset (with a commitment to, and/or impact on, the future well being and development of the district) to improve the quality of life for all who live, work, invest and spend their leisure time in North Somerset.

1.3 Objectives:

The objectives of the Partnership are:

- To set the overall strategic vision for North Somerset through the development, implementation, monitoring and review of the Sustainable Community Strategy
- To be a catalyst for improvement: better local outcomes, more effective partnership working, more responsive services and better value for money
- To bring about the strategic alignment of plans, partnerships and initiatives within North Somerset and which affect the Sustainable Community Strategy.
- To enable local people and communities (through consulting, informing and advising) to identify needs and priorities which inform the strategic vision of the Partnership and actively shape the development and delivery of services
- To manage risks that may affect delivery of the SCS
- To promote an exchange of ideas, knowledge and information between communities, partners and sectors to develop learning and understanding of needs within North Somerset
- To promote the interests of North Somerset beyond the District’s boundaries within external organisations, sub-regional bodies, regional bodies and Central Government

2. CODE OF CONDUCT

- Partnership members are expected to uphold the law and act responsibly on behalf of the Partnership and all stakeholders.
- The Partnership expects the standards outlined in the Nolan Principles and guidelines to be maintained by its members at all levels, including the Board, Executive, Delivery Partnerships and Stakeholders.

Based on the Nolan Principles – The Seven Principles of Public Life

Selflessness: Members of the Partnership should act solely in terms of the public interest. They should not do so in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends.

Integrity: Members of the Partnership should not place themselves under any financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organisations that might seek to influence them in the performance of their official duties.

Objectivity: In carrying out business, including making public appointments, awarding contracts, or recommending individuals for rewards and benefits, members of the partnership should make choices on merit.

Accountability: Members of the Partnership are accountable for their decisions and actions to the public and must submit themselves to appropriate scrutiny.

Openness: Members of the Partnership should be as open as possible about all the decisions and actions that they take. They should give reasons for their decisions and restrict information only when the wider public interest clearly demands.

Honesty: Members of the Partnership have a duty to declare any private interests relating to their partnership duties and to take steps to resolve any conflicts arising in a way that protects the public interest.

Leadership: Members of the Partnership should promote and support these principles by leadership and example.

- Confidential material, including material about individuals should be handled in a sensitive and appropriate manner.
- Members should never, in their public or private lives, behave in a manner that might bring the Partnership, or the role of the member, into disrepute.
- Members are accountable to the constituency or organisation that elected or nominated them and should act accordingly.
- Partners have signed their commitment to the **North Somerset Compact**, which sets out guidance and standards for cooperative working between voluntary and community groups and public agencies. The North Somerset Partnership expects activity to follow best practice and will monitor and review the Partnership's activity.

2.1 Conduct at meetings

- All meetings will be conducted in line with the agenda agreed with the Chair. Agenda items may be added in advance of the meeting with the agreement of the Chair. No items will be added to the agenda at meetings without the permission of the Chair. A Forward Plan will be maintained, mapping out key agenda items for the next 12 months.
- Meetings will be conducted in line with normal good practice for debate: which includes remarks being directed through the Chair; members making efforts to ensure that views of other members are heard; comments should relate to issues not persons; decisions will be made through consensus between members, speaking one at a time and in a concise manner, keeping to time and the agenda.
- All members are expected to treat each other with courtesy and respect, acting in non-discriminatory manner and recognising the skills and experience each member brings to meetings.

2.2 Procedure for dealing with unacceptable conduct

- If any member's conduct or attendance falls below the standard expected, then the Chair of the Board, Executive or Delivery Partnership may initiate steps to deal with that member in accordance with the Partnership's governance framework 'Termination of Membership' process.

2.3 Declarations of interest & disputes

- NSP Board, Executive and Delivery Partnership decisions must be taken, and be seen to be taken, in the interests of the wellbeing of North Somerset.
- A partner must regard himself or herself as having an interest in any matter if a decision upon it might reasonably be regarded as affecting the financial position of the Partner, a relative or a friend, or of the organisation the partner has an association with, either as an employee, volunteer or manager. Such interests will be declared and noted at the commencement of the item to be discussed or when the interest becomes apparent. The Chair may ask the Partner to withdraw from the meeting room whilst the matter is being considered at the meeting.
- The minutes of the meeting should record any declaration of interest and the action taken.
- Any disputes within the Partnership will be resolved by the NSP Board.

3. MEMBERSHIP

- The NSP is an inclusive forum bringing together partnerships and organisations through good will and a shared common purpose.
- It is agreed and understood it is the senior partnership in the area, with its membership drawn from the most senior decision makers. It is a non-statutory partnership.
- The Partnership operates strategically. Implementation will be through its associated partnerships, member organisations and delivery partnerships formulated from organisations and community representatives as required.
- Organisations and partnerships have existing accountabilities and these remain the same. Individual partners will remain responsible and accountable for decisions about their own services and resources.
- Where an individual partner has goals primarily set by central government the Partnership will identify the appropriate contribution that its members can make to achieve those goals.
- Membership includes the acceptance of the responsibility to work within the terms of the governance framework.
- Membership of the Board and Executive is primarily aimed at organisations rather than individuals. However, the partnership has a responsibility to actively involve under-represented groups and it may wish to involve individuals on delivery partnerships where they represent a minority interest or issue.

3.1 Termination of membership

- If a member of the Board or Executive fails to attend three consecutive meetings they will automatically cease to be a member unless the failure to attend was due to some reason approved by the Chair. The nominating sector will be invited to nominate a replacement representative.
- If the Chair of the Board, Executive or Delivery Partnership considers there is evidence that a member may have acted in such a way that contravenes partnership policies, membership may be reviewed.
- The organisation nominating or appointing a member shall have the right at any time to nominate a new representative who meets the membership criteria.
- The organisation nominating or appointing a member shall have the right at any time to terminate such an appointment either for conduct or other legitimate and justifiable reason.

4 Partnership Risk Assessment

- The Partnership Board, Executive and Delivery Partnerships will be expected to identify, manage and mitigate risks to the delivery of their objectives.
- Key risks to the achievement of the partnership aims and objectives will be identified together with strategies for how these risks will be managed. The ownership of risks between partners will be clearly identified.
- The risk assessment will be documented in a Partnership Risk Register, which will be regularly reviewed by the NSP Executive. The Executive will ensure that strategies to manage risk are effective, any new risks identified have been addressed and identify whether there are any signs of risks occurring.

5. Accountability

5.1 Partnership to the Public

- The Partnership will report regularly to the public on progress and development both at a strategic and at a delivery level. This will include an annual conference, and may also include a series of organised events or the publication and distribution of an annual report to account for the delivery of the Sustainable Community Strategy and Local Area Agreement. Updates on progress and developments will be reported regularly on the website, through the Stakeholder Bulletin and the Stakeholder Forum.

5.2 Delivery Partnerships to the Executive & Board

- Delivery Partnerships will be accountable for performance and Delivery Partnership Chairs will report on performance in their action plans to the NSP Executive on a six-monthly basis. The Partnership will expect all chairs to ensure that delivery groups engage and consult with a wide range of stakeholders on a regular basis to inform decision-making in the planning, delivery and evaluation of partnership work.

5.3 Executive to Board

- The Executive will be accountable to the Board for actions undertaken on behalf of the Board to ensure delivery of the Sustainable Community Strategy and Local Area Agreement. Executive meeting notes will be circulated to all Board members following each meeting and key issues brought to the next Board meeting as appropriate. The Executive will also report to the Board on performance at least annually.

5.4 To Partner Organisations

- All partners have the responsibility to report back to their respective organisations or sectors on a regular basis and to consult with them on future directions and developments.

6. Review and Termination of Partnership

- Members recognise the need to keep the operation of this partnership under review. They recognise that changes in legislation may amend the way its members deliver services in the future.
- There is also an awareness of the constraints that are imposed through audit and central government on the spending programmes of many of the members and the partnership will need to keep under review the opportunities that more formal structures may provide for the effective spend of such monies through the partnership and the North Somerset Sustainable Community Strategy.

7. Changes to the Governance Framework

- The Executive of the NSP will review the Governance Framework not less than every two years, with any changes to be agreed by the Board.

8. Structure

The North Somerset Sustainable Community Strategy is the key document for the partnership. Its broad principles and identified issues and actions will provide the basis for establishing an efficient structure and appropriate work programmes.

Board

Board membership is drawn from across the public, business, voluntary and community sectors. The Board has ultimate responsibility for ensuring delivery of the vision outlined in the Sustainable Community Strategy and will review and evaluate progress.

The Board will consider the impact of wider issues on North Somerset communities and delivery of the vision and determine how these may be addressed together.

Executive

Membership of the Executive will also be drawn from across all sectors and will include delivery partnership chairs. The Executive will support the Board through implementation of Board priorities.

The Executive will monitor progress in delivery, by the delivery partnerships, of the aims of the Sustainable Community Strategy through the performance management framework.

Delivery Partnerships

Membership of delivery partnerships will be from all sectors and will include a broad range of views to inform and influence the direction of work and oversee its delivery.

Each delivery partnership works to prioritise, plan and deliver key work that supports their shared priority. However, they will also work together to achieve synergy between work areas when delivering cross cutting shared objectives.

Stakeholder Forum

The Stakeholder Forum will bring together a much wider range of interests and views not only to inform and influence the partnerships work but also to hold the Board to account for its work and delivery of the aims within the Sustainable Community Strategy.

Review of partnership and work programme

In order to be effective the NSP must review its structures and activity regularly. In 2008 a governance and performance management review was undertaken by the NSP. This review resulted in a new structure for the NSP (set out in appendix 1) as well as the development of a performance management framework.

When undertaking future reviews the Partnership will take account of significant changes in government policy and priorities, regional and sub-regional governance and changes to the structures and resources of our own partners.

8.1 Board

Purpose: To provide strategic leadership for the NSP to enable the successful development and delivery of the Sustainable Community Strategy and key work programmes ensuring positive outcomes for local people and communities.

8.1.1 Roles:

- Provide leadership and influence
- Set priorities and clarify direction
- Strategic decision making
- Identifying, understanding and responding to the needs of local communities
- Considering risks and opportunities
- Relationship management
- Partnership development
- Build and maintain a performance culture
- Oversee communication and community engagement at a strategic level – ensuring that the ‘duty to involve’ is fulfilled
- Build a strong relationship with Government via Government Office South West
- Ensure links with regional partnerships i.e. West of England Partnership
- Provide an overview of activity to maximise resources and capacity
- Providing added value through aligning responses to local issues
- Agree, delegate and monitor work undertaken by the Executive.

8.1.2 Responsibilities

1. To work collectively for the social, economic and environmental well being of the people of North Somerset
2. To play a key part in the long term strategic direction and development of the partnership and to take collective responsibility for approving and delivering its vision, policies, strategies and action plans
3. To take responsibility for innovation and future development of the partnership
4. To champion the partnership within their own organisation and sector, to act as its advocate and ensure that their organisation/sector plays a full part in delivering its policies, strategies and targets
5. To act as a channel of communication between the Partnership and their organisation/sector at a senior policy level and to ensure that the perspective of their organisations/sector is effectively communicated and taken account of in the partnerships strategic planning
6. To support the development and implementation of an integrated performance management framework for the partnership and its partners
7. To lead in promoting and brokering interagency and inter sector work to improve service outcomes and the well being of North Somerset communities
8. To maximise investment opportunities’ for the area and ensure that resources are utilised effectively to achieve agreed outcomes

9. To promote and demonstrate the partnership's commitment to sustainable development, community focus and engagement, tackling inequalities and disadvantage and promoting community cohesion, equality and diversity
10. To represent the partnership at a sub regional and regional level as appropriate

The role of Business/Private Sector Representatives – An outline

1. Represent the interests of the Partnership and ensure an up to date awareness of issues affecting businesses in North Somerset
2. Be clear and consistent about the interests being represented when contributing to the partnership's business
3. Ensure that the partnership take into consideration the views and concerns of the business/private sector to ensure that decision making reflects local needs
4. Support the implementation of the SCS and identify opportunities for cross sector working to meet locally identified needs where appropriate
5. Provide information and feedback about the work of the partnership and its work programmes to business/private sector networks

The role of Voluntary and Community Sector Representatives – An outline

1. Represent the interests of the Partnership and ensure an up to date awareness of issues affecting voluntary organisations and community groups
2. Be clear and consistent about the interests being represented when contributing to the partnership's business
3. Ensure that the partnership take into consideration the view and concerns of the voluntary and community sector to ensure that decision making reflects local needs
4. Support the implementation of the SCS and identify opportunities for cross sector working to meet locally identified needs where appropriate
5. Provide information and feedback about the work of the partnership and its work programmes to the voluntary and community sector

The role of Public Sector Representatives – An outline

1. Represent the interests of the Partnership and ensure an up to date awareness of issues affecting communities across North Somerset
2. Be clear and consistent about the interests being represented when contributing to the Partnership's business
3. Ensure that the Partnership takes into consideration the views and concerns of local residents to ensure that decision making reflects local needs

4. Identify opportunities for cross sector working and play an active part in developing and delivering policies, programmes and action to meet locally identified needs where appropriate
5. Support the implementation of the Sustainable Community Strategy through member's organisational business planning processes and development.
6. Provide information and feedback about the work of the Partnership and its work programmes to their member organisation

8.1.3 Selection of board members

- The Partnership will agree its own membership through a sectoral nomination process.
- Member organisations will be selected from the public, private and voluntary & community sectors.
- Member organisations from each sector will be committed to being represented at the most senior managerial level and should include senior decision makers.

8.1.4 Review and Change of Membership

- The NSP Board will review the appropriateness and balance of its membership a minimum of once every three years.
- Any requests or suggestions that another organisation be invited to join the NSP will be considered against the following criteria:
 - The ability of the organisation to exert a strategic influence on the future of North Somerset
 - The commitment and strategic fit of the organisation to, and with, the NSP agenda
 - The willingness of the organisation to provide a representative of sufficient seniority to influence decisions about programme spending, effective coordination of services, rationalisation of plans and partnerships.
- If a representative of an organisation that is a member of the NSP changes employer, their membership of the NSP will automatically cease with immediate effect. Any proposals for replacement member must come through the nominating organisation or sector.

8.1.5 Selection of Chair and Vice Chair

- The Board will elect a Chair and Vice-Chair from amongst their number. The Chair and Vice-Chair should not be from the same organisation. The election of the Chair & Vice-Chair will take place every 12 months, or earlier if either post should become vacant, and no later than eighteen months after the previous election. It is recommended that elections for both posts should be undertaken at the same time and no later than within three months of each other.
- The Chair and Vice-Chair are to be elected by the whole board following nomination.
- All nomination papers will be circulated six weeks prior to the meeting at which the election is to take place

- All nominations should be received no later than two weeks before the meeting at which the election is to take place
- Chair and Vice Chair can serve for a maximum of four consecutive years.
- Election will be by secret ballot.

8.1.6 Meetings

- Meetings will be held every quarter, usually in January, April, July and October
- No business will be transacted at a Board meeting unless a quorum of members is present. A quorum will be one half of members, of which there must be at least one representative from each sector present.
- In the absence of the Chair or Vice Chair the Board will elect a Chair for the duration of the meeting.

8.1.7 Operation

- The designated representative of the member organisation should be committed to attending all Board meetings. No substitutes will be allowed.
- If a member of the Board fails to attend three consecutive meetings they will automatically cease to be a member unless the failure to attend was due to some reason approved by the Chair. The nominating sector will be invited to nominate a replacement representative.
- Regional and Government Office South West observers will be invited to Board meetings on a regular basis with other experts being invited as appropriate. The Policy & Partnership Team should be informed of any additional officers attending the meeting to observe.
- The Board will be supported by the Policy & Partnership Team
- The Chair of the Board will finalise the agenda
- Business items for the agenda should be communicated to the Policy & Partnership team four weeks before the meeting
- Reports and appendices should be received electronically by the Policy & Partnership team two weeks prior to the meeting – reports received after this deadline are not guaranteed to be included on the agenda.
- Reports should be on the NSP Report Template
- There will usually only be one principal item for debate and decision on each agenda – an item for debate may be added to a future agenda by liaison with the Policy & Partnership Team
- Presentations should be no longer than 15 minutes – allowing time for debate
- Presentation material should be received by the Policy & Partnership team at least 24 hours before the meeting

- The principal item for debate will be followed by a short business session
- Items for Information reports will not be presented but taken as read, however members will be able to comment or ask questions at the meeting
- The Policy & Partnership Team should be advised of any additional people attending to present a report, take part in a presentation or a debate
- Papers will be made available one week before the meeting. Board members will normally receive these electronically. Paper copies via post can be sent on request.
- Public awareness will continue to be developed. This will include all meeting information being made public on the NSP website. Meeting Agenda and papers will be available one week before the meeting.

8.1.8 Decision-making

- North Somerset Partnership is committed to maintaining transparency and clarity in the decision-making process and to ensure that all decisions are open to scrutiny and challenge.
- As far as practicable, business will be conducted in the spirit of partnership and consensus will be sought without recourse to votes.
- In exceptional circumstances where a vote proves necessary a quorum of the membership must be present. Each member will have a single vote and in the event of a tied vote the Chair will have a second and casting vote. Officers in attendance and other observers will have a non-voting advisory role.

8.1.9 Urgent decisions

- Where an urgent decision is needed between meetings, the NSP Chair and Vice Chair together may take that decision or delegate decision power to the NSP Executive.
- Urgent decisions taken between meetings will be reported to the next meeting of the Board

8.2 Executive

Purpose: To support the implementation of the priorities and direction set by the Board

8.2.1 Responsibilities

1. To take decisions on behalf of the Board within the context set by the NSP in the SCS.
2. Lead negotiations of the LAA and MAA and ensure it is effectively performance managed
3. Have devolved responsibility for securing implementation of these key work programmes on behalf of the NSP.
4. Monitor the work of Delivery Partnerships, assessing their performance and the Partnership's performance as a whole, against agreed objectives.
5. To take forward follow up actions requested by the Board.
6. To resolve issues falling between delivery partnerships
7. To report to the Board on those initiatives that it has responsibility for, as well as providing six-monthly and/or annual reports on the performance delivery of the LAA and SCS.
8. Manage risks on behalf of the Board and act as owner of the NSP Risk Register.
9. To review delivery partnership action plan Equality Impact Assessments and Sustainability Appraisals on a regular basis

8.2.2 Selection of Executive members

- The Vice Chair of the Partnership Board will be Chair of the Executive.
- The Chairs of the four delivery partnerships, or their designated representative as agreed with the Executive, will have an automatic place on the Executive.
- Taking account of this there should be a balance of public, private, voluntary and community sector representation on the Executive.
- A representative of Government Office South West will be invited to attend Executive meetings as an observer.

8.2.3 Executive Meetings

- To take place monthly or at such frequency as it considers appropriate to undertake its responsibilities.
- Members of the Executive should be committed to attending all Executive meetings. However, it is recognised that on occasion this may not be possible. Executive members may therefore nominate one named substitute to attend meetings on their behalf. It is expected that the substitute will have been fully briefed and have delegated authority for decision-making. These arrangements to be reviewed regularly to ensure they are working effectively.

- Agenda and papers to be circulated one week in advance.
- The Executive will be supported by the Policy & Partnership Team
- No business will be transacted at a meeting of the Executive unless a quorum of members is present. A quorum will be half of the membership, with no less than five regular members being present at the meeting.
- It is assumed that the Executive will generally operate by consensus but in the event that a vote is necessary, the Chair will have a second and casting vote.
- Meeting notes will be circulated to the full Board after each Executive meeting and key issues brought to the next Board meeting as appropriate.

8.3 Delivery Partnerships

Purpose: To bring work areas together enabling an integrated, sustainable approach to delivering the NSP shared priorities

8.3.1 Roles

Government guidance (*Creating Strong, Safe and Prosperous Communities – Statutory Guidance, 2007*) expects that delivery partnerships will:

- Support the executive board of the NSP
- Have clear lines of accountability to the Board
- Provide the NSP with sufficient information to make decisions
- Be directly involved in decision making processes
- Co-ordinate the delivery of priorities
- Work with the NSP as a whole to collectively shape and steer the strategic commissioning of local services across the locality turning the long term vision for the area into a reality

Additionally, the NSP review (2008) identified the following key roles for delivery partnerships:

- Resource planning and alignment
- To review and monitor the relevant SCS shared priority including priority setting, implementation of actions and monitoring of targets.
- Action planning - To develop an Action Plan that sets out their programme of activity. These plans will contain specific measurable appropriate realistic and time limited targets to be met each year including those for delivery of the relevant part of the SCS and LAA. Delivery partnerships may also be tasked with specific action by the Executive
- Influencing commissioning, procurement and delivery
- Localised performance/financial management and reporting – including reporting of relevant LAA/MAA and National Indicator Set targets to the Executive or Board
- Links to regional/sub-regional activity at a theme level
- Coordinated communication and community engagement with partners at theme level*
- Cross theme working - To include identifying barriers to achieving targets and possible solutions to overcoming these barriers
- Contributing to the delivery of all shared priorities through specific and joint work programming across delivery partnerships, where appropriate - Delivery partnerships have designated responsibility for particular aims although some measures under these aims will be delivered by other partnerships. In this case the delivery partnerships will be required to liaise with appropriate colleagues to develop a coordinated response.
- Each delivery partnership will develop their own Terms of Reference being mindful of their roles and responsibilities as identified within this document

* in line with the 'duty to involve'

8.3.2 The role of Delivery Partnership Chairperson

The general responsibilities to be undertaken by a delivery partnership Chairperson include:

- Providing a strategic lead in the development of the delivery partnership and motivating people and organisations to contribute to the vision and shared priorities for the area
- Working with others to champion the work of the partnership and ensure appropriate links are made to develop a sustainable approach
- Ensuring the delivery partnership recognise and focus on cross cutting issues identified within the Sustainable Community Strategy
- Having an understanding about what contributions different stakeholders can bring to achieve the best possible outcomes

Specific responsibilities include:

- Chairing meetings and ensuring actions are taken forward by relevant partners
- Feeding back NSP developments to delivery partnership members and other interests
- Attending Executive meetings to represent the delivery partnership, reporting on progress and challenges and influencing decisions from the delivery partnerships perspective
- Leading the development of action plans to implement the aims of the Sustainable Community Strategy
- Ensuring effective performance monitoring of agreed actions and targets within the LAA and delivery partnership action plans as appropriate

8.3.3 Membership

- The delivery partnerships will determine their membership as appropriate to deliver their work programme as identified in the Sustainable Community Strategy. Due regard should be given to:
 - Ensuring all sectors have the opportunity to participate
 - Strong voluntary and community sector representation
 - Inclusion of Town & Parish Council representatives
 - Inclusion of children & young people's representative
 - Involvement of appropriate levels of management from partner agencies to ensure the role of the group is fulfilled
- Delivery partnership members are responsible for:
 - Bringing information and carrying out responsibilities on behalf of their organisation or agency to the delivery partnership
 - Contributing to the work of the delivery partnership including delivery of assigned responsibilities
 - Communicating proposals to their own agency and constituent organisations within their sector
 - Responding to delivery partnership matters outside of meetings
 - Taking responsibility for collating a response on behalf of their organisation to consultation requests

There should be a core membership but others may be co-opted as 'experts'. Sub-groups or task and finish groups, which are operational in nature, may be formed to focus on particular areas of work.

8.3.4 Delivery Partnership Meetings

- Delivery partnerships will meet as necessary to achieve their action plan, but at least quarterly.
- Delivery partnerships will be expected to organise their own administrative arrangements, with secretarial support being supplied by partner organisations as a contribution in kind to the Partnership. This will include the production and circulation of agenda, papers and minutes, as well as a quarterly update on activity to be placed on the Partnership's website, along with the meeting minutes.

8.3.5 Risk Management

- Delivery partnerships will be responsible for completing and maintaining a risk register for their partnership. This will become part of the overall partnership risk register.

8.3.6 Review of Delivery Partnerships

- The relevance of delivery partnerships and their associated groups should be reviewed every three years in line with evolving objectives and priorities of SCS – this may lead to dissolution of some partnerships and the setting up of new partnerships.

8.4 Stakeholder Forum

Purpose: To contribute to and influence NSP work

- The stakeholder forum will include a broad range of groups and organisations based in North Somerset, for example community groups, Town & Parish councils and other 'informed stakeholders'
- The stakeholder forum will enable the LSP to engage with a broad range of partners both thematic and area based.

8.4.1 Stakeholder Forum Meetings

- Will be held as necessary – at least annually
- Will bring together members of the partnership across all sectors and neighbourhoods.
- Will provide an opportunity for the wide constituency to identify needs, share expertise, consult, communicate and promote success.

The forum will meet to:

- Receive feed back from NSP on progress of delivery against the Sustainable Community Strategy
- Hold the Board and Executive of the NSP to account and 'test' what it is doing is of use to local people in North Somerset
- Be consulted with and raise current or emerging issues that need to be considered in revising the existing Sustainable Community Strategy, delivery partnership action plans and priorities

9. OTHER

9.1 Equalities

- The Partnership's vision stresses the importance of creating an inclusive district and improving the quality of life of all citizens.
- The work of the Partnership will embrace the spirit and implementation of equalities legislation to ensure that we deliver fair and equitable work programmes that are accessible to all by:
 - Meeting the needs of all the communities it serves or hopes to benefit
 - Improving the way services are delivered
 - Contributing to a culture of inclusion, based on mutual respect for diverse people
 - Preventing discrimination and exclusion in the way the partnership operates and its outcomes
 - Improving public confidence in local services
- The Partnership has a commitment to undertake an Equalities Impact Assessment for implementation of the Sustainable Community Strategy, including the Local Area Agreement.

9.2 Consultation & Engagement

- The Statutory Guidance '*Creating strong, safe prosperous communities*' identifies the expectation that local strategic partnerships will coordinate consultation and engagement activity, helping partners to fulfil the Duty to Involve.
- A framework will be developed whereby clear processes and systems will be identified in order to encourage effective consultation and engagement across the partnership and North Somerset communities
- Partners have signed their commitment to the North Somerset Compact, which sets out guidance and standards for consultation and information sharing. The North Somerset Partnership expects communications, information and consultations to meet best practice in terms of accessibility and will monitor and review the Partnership's activity.

9.3 Communication

- A framework will be developed whereby clear processes and systems will be identified in order to provide effective communications across the partnership and to all stakeholders
- The Policy & Partnership Team will support partners in communicating with a wider audience, and raising awareness of the North Somerset Partnership's work, progress and achievements.
- Partner members have a critical role in establishing two-way communication; ensuring communications are cascaded down, across and within member organisations, networks and stakeholder audiences.

9.4 Sharing information

- The North Somerset Partnership and associated groups will comply with the legislative requirements of the Data Protection Act 1998 and the Freedom of Information Act 2000 to safeguard the privacy and confidentiality of all personal information.

- Wherever possible partnership members shall share information about their organisations' services and customers where that information is relevant to the aims and objectives of the partnership and SCS
- Where such information is confidential – eg for reasons of commercial, customer or client confidentiality – that member shall seek to provide the information in such a form as to assist the partnership while resolving those confidentiality issues

9.5 Contracts

- In the interests of simplicity any contracts with third parties, whether for employment, supplies or services will be entered into by one of the members, not the partnership as a whole.
- If the partner entering into the contract is only willing to do so on the basis of financial support from any or all of the other partners then no contract should be awarded until the financial support relied upon is agreed and set out in writing
- No partner has the power to commit any other partner to any expense unless expressly and specifically agreed
- Any partner holding funds provided by any other partner will maintain accounts and provide such information at any time as may be reasonably requested.

9.6 Resources

- All members of the Partnership will need to identify how they will support the NSP and its development as well as deliver of the Sustainable Community Strategy. This may include general allocation of staff time, resources and identification of other possible funding sources, as well as specific allocation of resources designed to support a project for which they are responsible, or involved in, but which is to be undertaken within the framework of the SCS
- At all times any funding or resource will still be the responsibility of the member organisation. It is not proposed that the Partnership will have a budget or specific funding for the use of the Partnership. Existing resources or grants through normal working practice of the members will be the main source of funding.
- It is recognised that some flexibility is required as each of the Members will have different audit and public probity demands to satisfy. However, within these constraints members agree to commit themselves to operating through the NSP in accordance with the North Somerset Sustainable Community Strategy.

9.7 Scrutiny

- All members of the partnership (Board/Executive and delivery partnerships) will abide by the nationally recognised Nolan Principles and standards for ensuring probity and good governance in public life.
- The NSP will report annually to the stakeholder forum
- The Council, and in particular its overview and scrutiny functions have a role to hold partnerships to account and scrutinise the achievement of outcomes. Scrutiny of the NSP and delivery of Sustainable Community Strategy and Local Area Agreement will be through the scrutiny panels.

- The NSP shall report at least annually on performance and feedback quarterly on Board business following each NSP Board meeting to the full Council of North Somerset. The purpose shall be to report on the progress and activities of the partnership.
- The NSP has a high-level performance management role in respect of the NSP Executive and Delivery Partnerships. This role is discharged through the annual performance report made to the NSP Board on the implementation of Sustainable Community Strategy and Local Area Agreement including the contribution of Delivery Partnerships.
- The NSP Board or Executive may call for reports at any time on issues of concern
- Regular performance reports will be available via the NSP website
- The Annual performance report will be published as a public document and will be reported to the NSP Board and NSC Scrutiny Panels.
- The Executive will encourage learning about best practice across the delivery partnerships.
- The Executive will arrange a self-assessment of the NSP as part of its Annual Performance management approach. It may also commission external peer reviews of NSP and partnership activity from time to time.

10. Performance Management

The NSP is responsible for ensuring delivery of the North Somerset Sustainable Community Strategy and Local Area Agreement. A performance management framework has been developed to assist various parts of the Partnership to achieve the shared vision, priorities and aims.

The framework is intended to provide a comprehensive, clear and coordinated overview of all activity carried out within the Partnership as a whole, to assure the NSP that progress is being made on all aspects of the SCS and as a basis for communication with and accountability to local communities and other stakeholders.

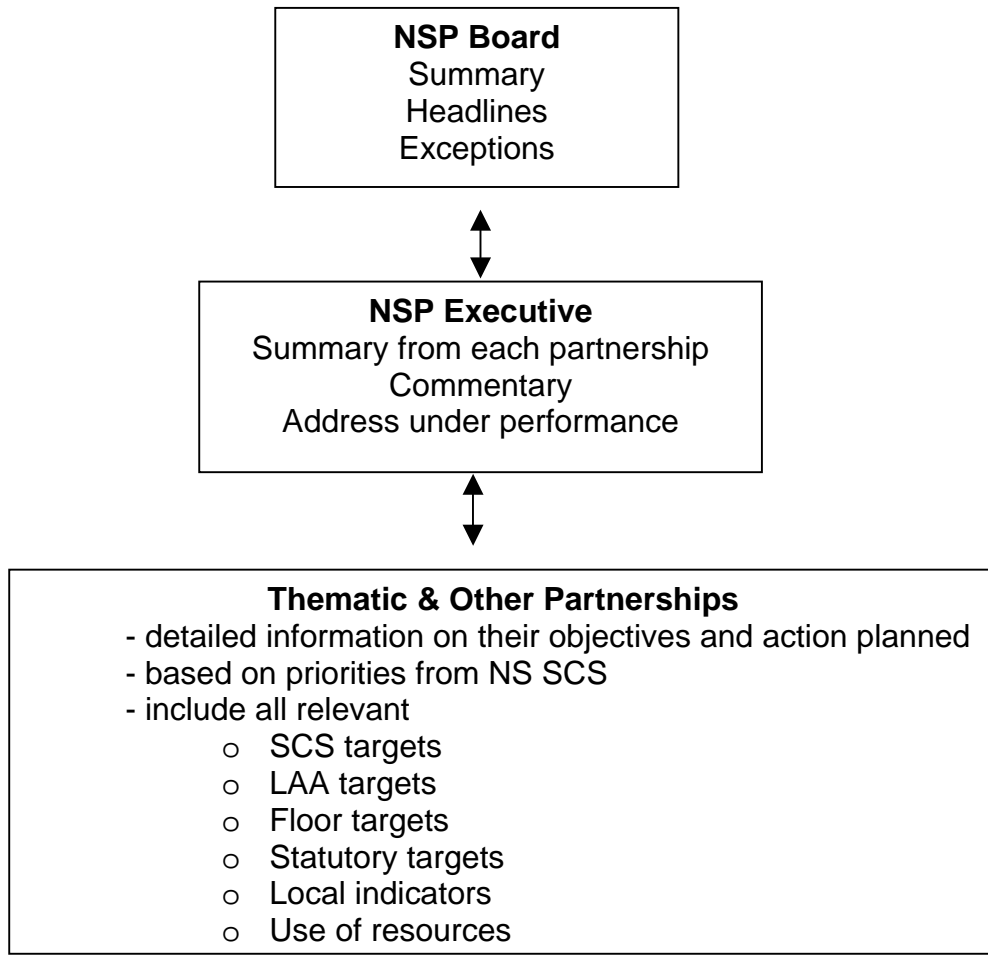
The framework needs to be:

- Evidence based – plans are based on facts so that performance can be objectively assessed
- Assist the partnership to measure, to understand and to improve performance
- Enable comparisons to be made of local progress over time
- Enable the partnership to assess the ‘value for money’/‘added value’ of its programmes, policies and projects.
- Support excellent communication through the partnership
- Involve better, not extra, plans
- Assist all parts of the partnership to reduce the social, economic and environmental disadvantage which many local communities face

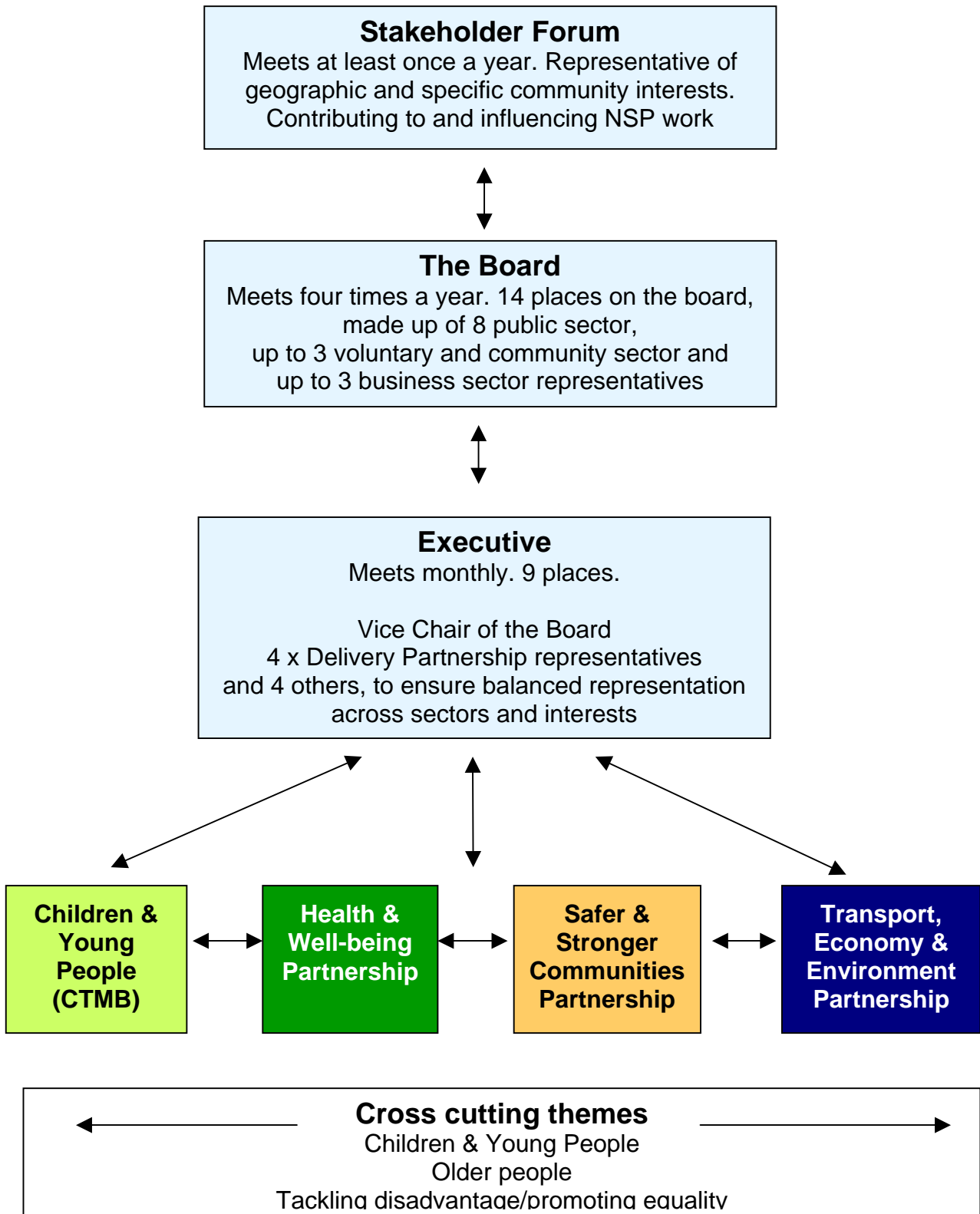
The Performance management framework must:

- Establish baselines from which progress and improvement will be planned and monitored
- Identify gaps which must be narrowed
- Support strategies for each delivery partnership, incorporating objectives, priorities and targets
- Focus on actions, identifying responsibility, accountability and resources
- Enable the delivery partnerships and Executive to monitor action, to assess effectiveness, to learn from experience and revise strategies and action plans when necessary

Performance Management Hierarchy Diagram



Structure Diagram



Appendix: 2

NSP Board Membership –

Public Sector

Avon & Somerset Constabulary
Avon Fire & Rescue Service
Children's Trust Management Board
Environment Agency
NHS North Somerset
North Somerset Council
Weston College

Private Sector

Bristol International Airport
North Somerset Enterprise Agency
North Somerset Initiative

Voluntary & Community Sector

Community Action
NSHousing
Voluntary Action North Somerset

Observers

Government Office South West
South West Regional Development Agency

NSP Executive Membership –

Vice Chair of the NSP Board

Chair or designated representative from:

Children's Trust Management Board
Transport, Economy and Environment Partnership
Health & Wellbeing Partnership
Safer, Stronger Partnership

Weston College
Business representative
NSHousing
Voluntary Action North Somerset

Observer

Government Office South West

Appendix: 3

Local Area Agreements (LAAs) are three-year agreements negotiated between local areas and the Government, designed to help local partner agencies work together more effectively to improve quality of life for local communities.

Although North Somerset developed an LAA in 2007 (to run to 2010) all local areas were required by central government to have a new Local Area Agreement in place by June 2008.

The new agreement contains a total of 69 performance indicators and is based around four theme blocks:

- Children & Young People
- Economic Development & Environment
- Health & Wellbeing
- Safer & Stronger Communities

Performance indicators in the new agreement were drawn from the new National Indicator Set of 198 indicators published in October 2007 and include 16 statutory Department of Children, Schools & Families education and early years targets.

A number of organisations have a **duty to cooperate** in setting of LAA targets (*Creating strong, safe prosperous communities statutory guidance* (July 08)):

Arts Council
The Broads Authority
Chief officer of Police
District Authorities
English Heritage
The Environment Agency
Fire & Rescue authorities
Health & Safety Exec
Highways Agency
Jobcentre plus
Joint Waste Authorities
Joint Waste disposal Authorities
The LSC
Metropolitan Passenger Transport Authorities
Museums, libraries and archives council
National Park Authorities
Natural England
NHS Foundation Trusts
NHS Health Trusts
Police authorities
Primary Care Trusts
Local Probation Boards/Probation Trusts
Regional Development Agencies
Sport England
Transport for London
Youth Offending Teams



Partnership Agreement

I
(name of member)

on behalf of
(name of organisation)

agree to contribute, as a partner member, to the North Somerset Partnership and its achievement of the agreed vision, aims and improvements for North Somerset, as set out in the Sustainable Community Strategy 2008-2026.

I have read and understood the Governance Handbook and accept my responsibilities as a partner member of the North Somerset Partnership.

Signature

Date