



# Partnerships & Collaboration Policy

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## **1. Policy Purpose**

The Police & Crime Plan 2016-21 sets out the Police & Crime Commissioner's and Cheshire Constabulary's commitment to partnership working. Partnerships are integral to the development of policing, community safety and service delivery. Partnerships however, can present challenges and risks. This policy provides an overarching framework setting out the Police and Crime Commissioner's (Commissioner) and Cheshire Constabulary's vision, aims and approach to partnerships and collaboration, including with regards to initial decision making, review and evaluation.

## **2. Who should use this Policy?**

All Officers and Staff currently involved in or considering partnership working.

The police and/or Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) representative on the partnership should have the appropriate authority to contribute and make decisions on behalf of the OPCC and Cheshire Constabulary according to the specific documented partnership agreement.

## **3. Vision**

To work effectively and efficiently with local communities, other police services, public, private and community and voluntary sector organisations to deliver better outcomes for Cheshire's communities.

## **4. Overarching Aim**

The aim of effective and efficient partnership working is to deliver the Police & Crime Plans ambition of even safer communities for the whole of Cheshire through supporting the achievement of the Plans four priorities:

- A police service connected with communities
- To support victims and protect the vulnerable
- To prevent crime and anti-social behaviour
- A police service fit for the future

## **5. Context**

The Crime and Disorder Act 1998 places a statutory duty on Chief Police Officers and other responsible authorities to work together to develop and implement a strategy for reducing crime, disorder and reoffending. Responsible Authorities are the police, the local council, fire and rescue, health and probation services

Provisions in the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 place a mutual duty on Commissioners and responsible authorities in Community Safety Partnerships to cooperate to reduce crime, disorder and re-offending. The Act also requires that PCCs have regard to the relevant priorities of each responsible authority.

There is also a similar reciprocal duty on the PCC and criminal justice bodies to cooperate.

Furthermore, the Commissioner is charged through both the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act and through amendments to the Crime and Disorder Act to have regard to and work in partnership with local statutory and voluntary organisations to achieve the priorities of the Police and Crime Plan.

As a result of the review of the partnership provisions of the Crime and Disorder Act 1988, the Home Office published a guide to effective partnership working. The guide outlines six hallmarks of effective practice:

- Empowered and effective leadership
- Intelligence led business processes
- Effective and responsive delivery structures
- Engaged communities
- Visible and constructive accountability
- Appropriate skills and knowledge

It is important to understand that the involvement in partnerships, however small or seemingly insignificant, can carry legal, procurement, financial, personnel, reputation and service delivery risks and implications for the PCC, the Force and for partners.

## **6. Approach - Types of Partnerships**

Cheshire Constabulary and the Commissioner are party to many forms of collaborative or partnership working with other agencies and organisations as a means to achieve more efficient and effective delivery of policing and criminal justice services.

These typically fall into the following categories:

- Statutory

These are partnerships that are governed by statute, for example these include Multi-agency public protection arrangements (MAPPA) and community safety partnerships.

- Strategic

These are formalised partnerships set up to deliver core policing or criminal justice objectives. They can either be force-wide or local relationships that bring together public, private, business community and voluntary sectors to co-ordinate initiatives and services to support one another so they can work together more effectively to meet shared outcomes. They include Cheshire's Criminal Justice Board. Where partnerships involve grant funding, for example the partnership between the Youth Justice Service and the Police & Crime Commissioner, then a legal grant agreement will be required.

- Operational Partnerships/Ad-hoc

These are achieved by working together to target issues identified by local people. This may include partnership working between representatives from the following groups: police officers, police community support officers (PCSOs), Special Constables, local authority members and officers, youth workers, health workers, housing officers, fire officers, volunteers and others as appropriate.

- Collaborations

Collaborations take many forms: some national; others regional or with other forces who have a shared aim. Most collaborations are between police forces but others are also in place for example between Cheshire Constabulary and Cheshire Fire & Rescue Services for the provision of Joint Corporate Services. Most if not all collaborations will require some investment of resource and a commitment to share oversight and governance.

In addition to this policy, a protocol applies to those collaborations which are subject to a written agreement pursuant to Police Act 1996 Ss 22A, 23 and 23A. All such collaboration agreements must be approved by the Chief Constable and Commissioner prior to signature. The aforementioned protocol sets out the criteria against which such collaboration proposals should be evaluated and is included at Appendix One. Collaborations not pursuant to Police Act 1996 Ss 22A, 23 and 23A will be subject to separate legal agreement and must be approved by the Chief Constable and Commissioner prior to signature following consideration of the same evaluation criteria.

## **7. What is not a partnership?**

Using the term 'partnership' incorrectly can create confusion and raise unrealistic expectations.

The following are not partnerships:

- Networks of personal or professional relationships (e.g. membership of a professional body)
- Customer/supplier or contracted services
- Conferences
- A consultative or advisory group or panel with no direct delivery function (e.g. Police Consultation Groups)

## **8. Establishing Partnerships**

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

While the need for each partnership group to add value is recognised, it is important to recognise the differences between each partnership.

Approval for entering into a new collaboration pursuant to Police Act 1996 Ss

22A, 23 and 23A requires agreement by the Commissioner and Chief Constable in line with the Protocol found at Appendix One. Collaborations not pursuant to Police Act 1996 Ss 22A, 23 and 23A must be approved by the Chief Constable and Commissioner prior to signature following consideration of the same evaluation criteria

Approval for entering into a new strategic partnership should be agreed with the relevant Chief Officer portfolio holder and the Commissioner's Chief of Staff, and Appendix 2 provides a broad template to follow.

A Statutory based partnership does not require a Partnership Assessment (Appendix 2). Reviewing these partnerships is covered in Section 15.

## **9. Partnership Agreements**

The idea of a shared vision of purpose is a vital factor, without it a partnership is unlikely to be in a position to deliver. It is therefore essential that the partnership has agreed clear aims and desired outcomes and that these are documented and delivery against outcomes is monitored.

Partners need to ensure that the governance of their partnership is clear to all concerned. Any financial relationship with a partner must be fully documented and legally binding. A formal agreement will bind together all of the issues of concern including the financial arrangements, governance and exit strategy.

It is important to note that there is no 'one size fits all' approach to the governance of partnerships. Arrangements in place must be appropriate to the particular partnership and proportionate to the risks involved.

## **10. Responsibilities of Managers**

To follow the guidance that this document set outs for all partnerships, ensuring appropriate arrangements for the management of the partnership and any related contracts and service level agreements are put in place.

If appropriate to consult, as early as possible with the Head of Legal Services, the Chief Finance Officer and the Assistant Chief Officer regarding the development of the appropriate Partnership Assessment, correct treatment of taxation, appropriate financial and operational arrangements for the project, and any other accounting arrangements as necessary.

## **11. Risk Assessment**

There is a degree of risk in all partnerships, but it is accepted that risk management will be proportionate to the type of partnership and the potential benefits so as not to inhibit possible opportunities that may emerge. The types and levels of risk will vary from partnership to partnership; therefore the governance structure needs to be dynamic in order to accommodate the different levels of partnership with which the force and the Office of the Commissioner is involved. It

is also essential to recognise the different perspectives of risk, as the risk to one organisation may not be a risk to another.

## **12. Exit Strategy**

A clear exit strategy needs to be in place for all partners to deal with both the planned and unplanned cessation of a partnership arrangement. This should form part of the partnership agreement and be agreed by all partners.

## **13. Information Sharing Arrangements**

Information is a valuable asset and consequently needs to be suitably protected, and it is important that responsibility is assigned and appropriate controls are put in place.

All partner agencies must/will comply with information law and related legislation including:

- The Data Protection Act (2018)
- The Computer Misuse Act (1990)
- Freedom of Information Act (2000)
- General Data Protection Regulations (2018)

If information sharing is applicable to the partnership, it is recommended that the Information and Compliance Department are consulted for advice and guidance.

## **14. Register of Partnerships/ Collaboration arrangements**

A register of Collaboration arrangements is maintained and monitored by the Planning, Performance and Risk Manager within the Constabulary. This register is reviewed on a regular basis to ensure that it provides an accurate account of the collaborations of which Cheshire Constabulary is a member.

Collaborations are reviewed annually to ensure that where appropriate scrutiny and transparency is in place to ensure that best value is being achieved. For some collaborations this includes regular performance reports that are submitted to Chief Officer Group.

A register of strategic and statutory partnerships will be maintained and monitored and aligned with this process.

Details of Operational/Ad hoc partnerships will be held locally.

## **15. Reviewing Partnerships**

A standard criteria against which collaborations will be reviewed is formalised by the Planning, Performance and Risk Manager and confirmed to Chief Officers annually.

For statutory and strategic partnerships, there should be a partnership review at

least annually or where significant change occurs, such as in relation to the partnership's priorities or funding, and amended where agreed and appropriate. This will be led by the identified partnership lead and a checklist at Appendix 3 has been developed to assist with this.

This will help to ensure that they are continuing to deliver on the shared outcomes and value for money for the local community.

Where a partnership meeting is not adding value for money, but there is a statutory requirement to attend, the lead officer should work with the group to revisit the partnership terms of reference, membership, etc., to confirm the partnership is delivering on specified outcomes and that there is added value and fulfilment of statutory responsibilities.

Any reviews will be added to the partnership register so that there is a central record.

## **16. Consultation**

The Commissioner, Chief Constable, Office of the Commissioner and key stakeholders in Cheshire Constabulary have been consulted on the content of this policy.

## **17. Equality Impact Assessment**

The policy has been subject to an equality impact assessment