



Working in Partnership Policy

Directorate: Customer and Neighbourhood Services

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1. Introduction

Salix Homes has a commitment to partnership working and is involved in a number of partnerships at a local and regional basis. Effective partnerships help us deliver a high quality, value for money service to our customers.

This policy outlines how we will decide what type of partnership we will become members of and the reasons why. We recognise that partnership working requires a culture of shared ownership and common working arrangements across organisation and professional barriers.

It also outlines the criteria for entering into or establishing a partnership.

Salix Homes will meet the requirements of the Homes and Communities Agency (formerly the Tenant Services Authority) national standards and the requirement for local standards in operating this policy. The most relevant standard in this case is the Local area co-operation standard.

2. Aim / Purpose of the Policy

The aims and objectives of this policy are to;

- Set out how we will establish formal relationships, working at both strategic and operational level, where there are clear opportunities to achieve our corporate objectives.
- Support the delivery of our business plan outcomes by helping to ensure our partnerships operate effectively and efficiently.
- Help to drive down our operational costs and help us maintain tenancies, reduce ASB and other neighbourhood issues, and create healthy, strong and confident communities.
- Provide the vision and scope for partnership, in particular by establishing the difference between partnership working, joint working and contractual working arrangements

3. Policy

The following partnerships are covered by this policy:

Partnership Working

Salix Homes considers a partnership as a formal working arrangement involving ourselves and one or more independent bodies, from any sector, who share responsibility for agreeing and/or then delivering a set of planned actions and outcomes. This may be due to the need to meet legislative or statutory requirements, or to help us achieve our corporate priorities.

A partnership approach has a number of benefits for both service users and providers:

- Removal of barriers to achieving outcomes
- Providing more consistent, co-ordinated and comprehensive approach to delivery of outcomes
- Access to a range of different skills necessary to delivering outcomes
- Developing a holistic approach rather than silo working amongst agencies
- Providing a broader range of services and skills to achieve outcomes rather than those provided by a single agency
- Develop a better understanding of others' skills
- Recognise and utilise the strengths and areas of expertise of all partner agencies involved
- Making the best use of available resources by co-ordinating them in a cost effective way including pooling resources

In summary all partnerships will agree:

- A shared strategic vision
- Resource availability/requirements, including dedicated time commitment for resources
- How the partnership will operate
- Who will be involved in the partnership
- Clear roles for each partner, including who will chair the partnership
- Clear, measurable outcomes, that demonstrate the value added through the partnership
- Risks associated with the partnership
- Timescales for review or life of partnership
- Commissioning and management arrangements
- Arrangements for sharing information
- Arrangements for multi-agency training to promote mutual understanding
- Monitoring and evaluation arrangements for both the partnership and the service
- Who will provide administrative support

Partners should:

- Be independent bodies working willingly in collaboration with each other.
- Have shared ownership of the partnership including creating a supportive atmosphere
- Agree to co-operate and commit resources to achieve a common goal/s.
- Create a process by which to work together, to develop and implement and monitor a joint programme of work.
- Be prepared to share relevant information, risks and rewards.
- Recognise the statutory obligations of all members of the partnership and their discretionary functions
- Be prepared to accept decisions made by the partnership within the agreed parameters
- Agree at the outset who will chair the partnership and reasons for this.

Entering into a new or existing partnership

Salix Homes will determine the suitability for entering into a formal partnership against the following criteria:

- How the work of the partnership contributes to our corporate priorities and outcomes.
- How the work of the partnership benefits residents, businesses and visitors in the areas we own and manage.
- Is the partnership able to carry out functions Salix Homes needs efficiently, or enable better performance than we could do on our own, or able to act as a delivery agent for our corporate strategy?
- Are there arrangements in place to regularly monitor and report on the effectiveness of the partnership?
- Is there clarity on roles of appointed members, reasons why they are a member of the partnership and what their remit is?

Salix Homes will go through a clear decision making process before committing itself to a partnership.

Depending on the type of partnership proposed and commitment in respect of resources and time there are a number of routes that approval for entering into a partnership can take.

What is not covered by this policy:

- **Contractual Arrangements**
Contractual Arrangements are not regarded as a partnership for the purposes of this policy. A formal contractual arrangement is one made by Salix Homes with an external agency or body to deliver a service on its behalf where Salix Homes and the service provider do not necessarily have a shared objective, for example, a simple contractual arrangement. Salix Homes is the sole procurer of the service and the third party is the contracted provider. This is a contractor/client relationship and it may involve a formal tendering exercise.
- **Joint Working Arrangements/Collaborative Working**
Forums or groups that the Elected Members and/or Officers belong to who come together to discuss policy, strategy or forthcoming issues will only be considered a partnership for the purposes of this policy providing there is a formal agreement and agreed outcomes in place.
- **Joint working where Salix Homes provides funding over a fixed period in return for an agreed set of actions, for example, community funding agreements (grants) with the voluntary sector, will not be considered partnership working under the terms of this policy.**
- **The policy does not apply to our relationship with services, third-party service providers or the wide arrange of organisations with which we have an informal working relationship as part of our operational activities.**

4. Service Standards & Performance Measures

Performance Monitoring

Salix Homes will carry out quarterly reviews of each of our partnership arrangements to ensure they are achieving what has been agreed. The timings of the reviews will be agreed at the outset in the establishment of the partnership.

An annual programme of auditing of partnerships will take place to assess their viability and contribution to our business priorities including providing value for money. Consideration will be made as to whether the existing arrangement should be allowed to continue based on whether the costs outweigh the benefits, as well as broader political and local political considerations. A scorecard will be created to help assess the viability of the arrangement.

Performance indicators will be included in every partnership arrangement and these will be monitored at regular intervals to ensure all agreed outputs and outcomes are being met. These indicators will also be evaluated against our corporate risk register and the impact they have in mitigating relevant risks.

The performance of this policy will be measured through 100% of partnerships achieving their aims and objectives.

5. Risks

Our customers' personal data is compromised through a partnership

Responsible for risk: Partnership owner and Salix Homes lead officer

Mitigation: data sharing protocol to be agreed as part of every partnership agreement. Privacy Statement, Information Security Policy and Document Retention Policy to be adhered to.

Conflicting interest of agencies involved

Responsible for risk: Partnership owner and Salix Homes lead officer

Mitigation: one brief to be created for the whole partnership that each agency signs up to deliver. Each agency will also have an agreed role within the partnership regarding delivery with their own outputs.

Risk register to be created that includes this risk.

Customers receive a poor standard of service as a result of the partnership

Responsible for risk: Partnership owner and Salix Homes lead officer

Mitigation: Delivery outcomes to be agreed as part of the partnership agreement that support our own corporate objectives.

The partnership devalues our corporate reputation

Responsible for risk: Partnership owner and Salix Homes lead officer

Mitigation: Partnership delivery to reviewed at regular intervals. Before the partnership is entered into the Head of Service will assess the other partners involved and decide if any present a risk to our corporate reputation.

Partnership does not provide value for money

Responsible for risk: Partnership owner and Salix Homes lead officer

Management and mitigation of risk: Return On Investment outcomes to be included in partnership agreement and monitored at quarterly intervals. Reports to be provided every quarter to Places Panel to costs to date.

The partnership fails to deliver agreed outcomes

Responsible for risk: Partnership owner and Salix Homes lead officer

Management and mitigation of risk: A formal agreement is made by all partners to work together for specific outcomes and these outcomes adhere to the SMART methodology. Reports to be provided every quarter to Places Panel on success of delivering output. Annual report to Senate showing outcomes.

Working in Partnership policy is not adequately embedded into the business

Responsible for risk: Head of Neighbourhood Services

Management and mitigation for risk: Full briefings with staff and customers will be carried out. Each partnership will be signed off by Heads of Service before they are established to ensure they are followed.

6. Related Procedures & Documents

Better Places and Better Life Chances Strategy

Green Strategy

Tenancy management policy

ASB policy

Empowerment and Engagement Strategy

Privacy Statement

Information Security Policy

Document Retention Policy

7. Responsibilities

Customer and Neighbourhoods Directorate/Head of neighbourhood Services: Policy owner and responsible for ensuring the policy is implemented across the whole business.

Document name : [title of policy]
Issue No -- Author: x – [name]
Owner: [name of author's post]
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8. Related Legislation

Localism Act

Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011