

**A PROTOCOL BETWEEN
SHEFFIELD FIRST PARTNERSHIP AND OFFER**



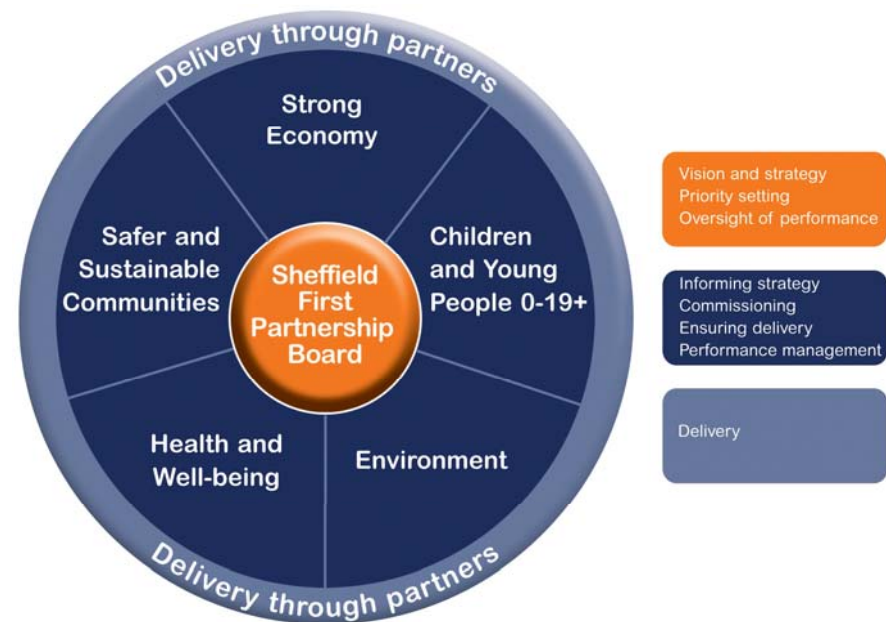
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The Structure of Sheffield First Partnership



Purpose and Context

This protocol describes the relationship between the partnerships which make up Sheffield First Partnership (SFP) and the Open Forum for Economic Regeneration (OFFER). It is based on the original guide "Negotiating CEN-LSP Protocols" (Neighbourhood Renewal Unit September 2003). The Sheffield First Partnership Board first agreed this protocol on Wednesday 11 February 2004 and the OFFER Board agreed it on 24 February 2004. From its outset, the Protocol has been very much a living document and has therefore been revised and updated a number of times reflecting the developments of the Sheffield First Partnership and the growing relationship with OFFER.

The Sheffield First Partnership is the overarching partnership for the city's regeneration. It brings together the public, private, and voluntary community and faith sectors to work together to make Sheffield a successful city. It sets the overall strategy for the city which is translated into delivery through its thematic partnerships which collectively comprise the Sheffield First Partnership (SFP). SFP seeks to connect high-level strategic decision making with local priority-setting and direct involvement of residents that takes place in Sheffield's 7 Community Assemblies¹.

This protocol applies to the main SFP board and its thematic partnerships. Any other sub-boards or groups falling within the wider SFP are expected to keep within the spirit of the document.

¹ Community Assemblies are due to be established, by Sheffield City Council, from May 2009 and will form an important aspect of the connection between SFP and communities.

The Open Forum for Economic Regeneration (OFFER) is the Community Empowerment Network (CEN) for Sheffield's voluntary, community and faith (VCF) sector. It exists to support VCF organisations and networks to work in partnership to strategically influence the creation of successful, inclusive communities in Sheffield. It seeks to serve the widest possible range of organisations in the sector, in many cases through interest networks. Some of this activity is delivered through the work of Voluntary Action Sheffield (VAS).

The relationship between OFFER and SFP is very good and the envy of many LSPs and CENs. We have developed an open way of working where the assumption is that we will involve each other in activities that span our remits. This protocol consolidates the good practice we have introduced without losing our flexibility to expand the boundaries of this relationship in the future.

Both organisations believe that this is beneficial to the success of the city's partnership working and ultimately the experiences of Sheffield citizens. This protocol helps us agree the practices that are important to our success and which we do not wish to give up.

The Voluntary Community and Faith Sector's Role and Status within the Partnership

SFP recognises the Voluntary Community and Faith sector as an equal partner alongside the Public and Private sectors, and strives to ensure that its representatives have the same status as every other member. It recognises that to do so involves appropriate arrangements for agenda setting, distribution of papers and other matters treated elsewhere in this protocol.

SFP welcomes the participation of the VCF sector as a means of giving a voice to the sector which contributes significantly in the provision of services and building up community life in the city.

SFP welcomes OFFER as the Community Empowerment Network and the support which it gives to the participation of the VCF sector.

Expectations of Members of Sheffield First Partnership

The expectations, duties and skills required from all members of the Sheffield First Partnership are set out in the attached appendix.

In addition, there will be specific requirements for thematic partnerships relating to their area of work and there are specific requirements of each sector.

Declarations of Interest

Sheffield First Partnership Board has an agreed procedure for declaring potential interest.

Determining Membership

Having the right membership of partnership boards is a critical success factor. Each thematic partnership decides its own membership, within set parameters, on the basis of its defined role and responsibilities. This is then reported back to the main Board which may influence membership if there are concerns.

The SFP Board expects that each of the thematic partnerships will adhere to the following requirements, in determining their membership:

- Involvement of each of the public, private and voluntary, community and faith sectors in ways that meet the needs of the responsibilities of the specific Partnership.
- Adherence to the protocol between SFP and OFFER, the Community Empowerment Network.
- Consideration of partners' potential contributions in the round, rather than 'type-casting'.
- Definition of the skills, expertise and interests required to meet the objectives of each partnership.
- Active involvement of elected members, including at the very least the Cabinet Member for the relevant portfolio, and consideration of cross-party membership.
- Consideration of the diversity of the membership and take proactive steps to widen this.

How Members are Selected

A standard appointment procedure operates across SFP with variations to take into account the different nature of each part of the Partnership. Sheffield First Partnership welcomes the fact that some Boards have taken this appointments procedure further and adopted it for the recruitment of their sub-Boards e.g. the Older People's Partnership Board, a sub-board of Health & Wellbeing, the three sub-Boards of Children & Young People's Partnership, and Work & Skills, a sub-Board of the Strong Economy Board.

A process of open advertising followed by an appointment panel ensures the best combination of effective Board membership with adequate representation of the diversity of the sector. This deals with some difficulties raised in the

Government guidance for LSPs and Principles of Third sector representation. Sheffield First Partnership and OFFER believe this to be better than direct elections or nomination by selected organisations. Ensuring all VCF places go through this process means the sector is strengthened by being encouraged to work as a network and VCF sector members work as a team.

The vacancies are advertised, followed by short listing and interviews. The standard process is:

1. The relevant Sheffield First Partnership board clarifies the purpose of the Board – what it is trying to achieve and what skills it needs from its members. It negotiates the number of places for VCF sector members with OFFER Liaison Officer using the system outlined below. It produces, a Job Description, Person Specification and Behaviour rules in line with the information outlined at Appendix 1 below.
2. Adverts are placed in the local press and distributed through appropriate networks, including OFFER's mailing list. An application pack is prepared and distributed to those requesting them. This distribution is managed by the SFP office or appropriate administrators.
3. A panel, involving the 3 sectors, is identified to short list, interview and recommend appointment to the board itself. OFFER Liaison Officer and the relevant part of the Sheffield First Partnership agree on the VCF members on the panel
4. If time permits a group of just VCF members may be used prior to the formal short listing to advise the panel on short listing from the sector.
5. Where necessary such as the creation of a completely new Board, OFFER will organise a conference for sector members to discuss issues to be taken up by

representatives, and how the limited number of representatives can reflect the views of the whole sector.

6. OFFER will arrange support for those appointed, including preparation, feedback and consultation systems.
7. The induction process is arranged with the relevant Partnership Manager and OFFER Liaison Officer; VCF pre-meetings are then set up; and report back mechanisms established, including the OFFER web site.

When the Partnership Board and OFFER negotiate the number of VCF places available, the following considerations will be taken into account:

- The contribution and expertise the VCF sector will need to make in order for the Board to be successful.
- The huge variety of groups that constitute the VCF sector. This means a number of places are needed if the Board requires representation of expertise from across a broad spectrum of the sector.
- The need to achieve a balanced team of representatives that will collectively cover a number of areas of expertise and experience
- The need to achieve a balance between the various sectors on the Board to create a spirit of equitable partnership.
- The need to keep Board numbers to manageable proportions.

Replacement of VCF Members

The normal term of office is 3 years. When a new Board is created or full membership changed, membership terms will be staggered (usually from 2 – 3 years) to ensure that boards can continue to function effectively. A rolling programme of replacement will be implemented. Members will either

complete their term or may resign before the term is ended. Existing members can re-apply, for a full 3 year term or a shorter period, though membership of the boards should not be allowed to stagnate.

Recognising that this role is important to the sector and our communities, if a VCF sector representative feels unable to fulfil this role, she/he must ask for help and support will be offered. Ultimately, if the situation cannot be resolved, the representative may be asked to step down to enable someone else to fulfil this vital role.

Current Arrangements for VCF Membership of Boards (Accurate as of May 2009)

Board	No. of Places	Notes
Sheffield First Partnership Board	7	1 place reserved for Voluntary Action Sheffield [equivalent to the private sector place reserved for the Chamber of Commerce]
Sheffield First Environment	5	
Sheffield First Health and Wellbeing	5	
Sheffield First Children and Young People 0-19+ Partnership	4	3 further places on 3 sub- Boards
Sheffield First Safer and Sustainable Communities	3 (see note)	6 places out of which 3 will attend any one meeting
Sheffield First Strong Economy	2	There are 5 Private sector places which could include social enterprise

SFP and OFFER expect that thematic partnerships would use the recruitment and selection approach outlined above when creating sub-groups, particularly where these sub-groups are likely to be long-lasting. For task and finish groups it is

recognised that timeliness may require places to be filled by nominations and invitation.

SFP and OFFER are committed to supporting the appointment of representatives so as to include the widest possible range of interests and groups. In particular they will monitor the participation of groups considered to be the most disadvantaged or excluded. OFFER will also strive to extend its membership to include such groups.

The diversity of boards will be monitored annually by SFP.

The processes of appointment and support, and the diversity amongst representatives will be monitored by OFFER's Board and reported to its members.

How Agendas are Set and How They Can be Influenced

The forward agenda of each Board is set periodically in advance and reviewed at each meeting, when any member may request further items.

Issues proposed by Board members at other times, by other Partnerships or any other organisation or individual must be raised with the Director/Partnership Manager, who will assess if it is appropriate for the Board to consider it (in which case he/she will bring the suggestion to the Board that it should be on a future agenda), whether it should be referred to a more appropriate body or rejected. Any appeal against these decisions will be handled by the Board Chair or Vice Chair, whose decision is final.

How Papers are Distributed and Briefings Handled

Main agenda items are normally decided two or three months in advance. The Board officers will circulate by e-mail and post agendas and papers at least five working days before each meeting.

The Board officers will provide briefing meetings open to all Board members when requested. For OFFER's support for VCF sector representatives see the next section.

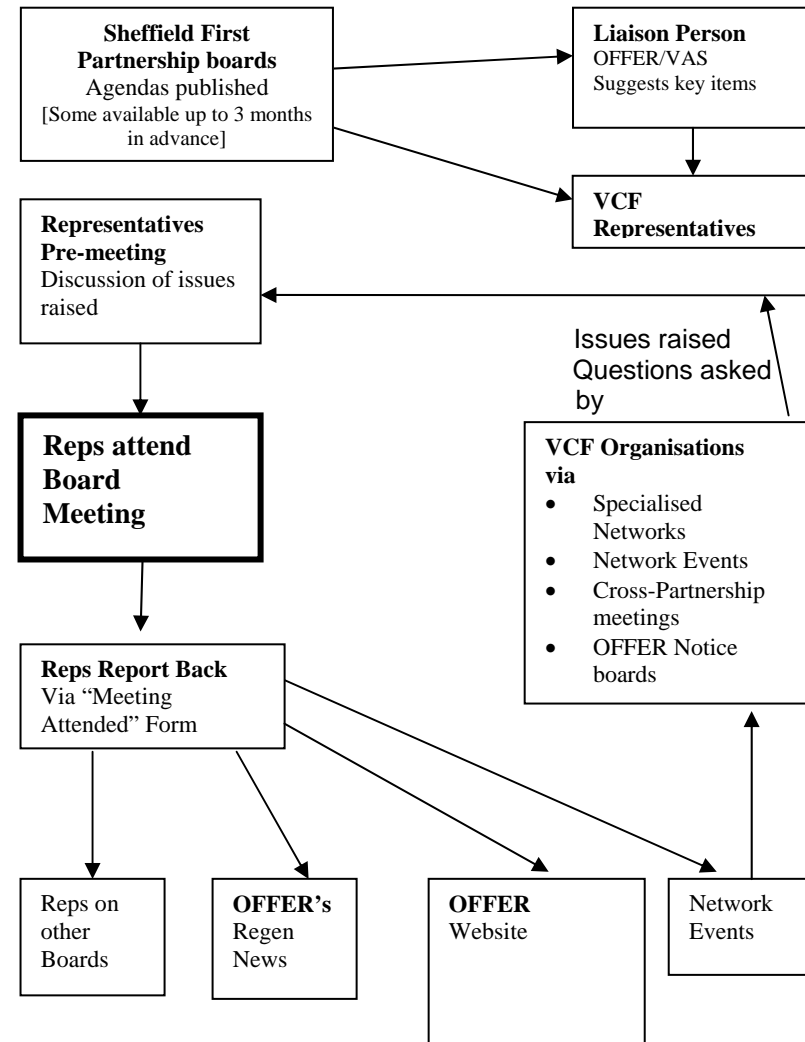
How OFFER Will Support VCF Representatives

OFFER will nominate a staff member from either OFFER or Voluntary Action Sheffield to be the Liaison Person for the group of VCF representatives. He/she will:

- Suggest agenda items for particular attention by the representatives
- Convene a representatives' meeting at a convenient time before the Board meeting to help them work as a team, identify key issues, share ideas, work towards a common approach and agree how best to present the sector's views at the Board meeting.
- Be able to attend Board meetings through being granted Observer status so that they are available to answer queries on VCF support and help the VCF representatives to evaluate how effective they are being.
- Ensure VCF representatives are committed to, and are supported in, reporting back to the sector; are able to make links with VCF representatives on other Boards; and are able to claim expenses.
- Support representatives in between Board meetings as appropriate.

- Depending on the level of resource available, organisations may be able to seek re-imbusement for some of the time staff spend as representatives.

How OFFER will support Representatives to reflect sector views and be accountable



OFFER will organise open meetings and commission studies on issues of concern to the sector, to inform representatives. OFFER will :

- Arrange opportunities for VCF representatives to network and to discuss cross-partnership issues
- Provide and organise training and support for VCF representatives to understand policy, contribute to performance management
- Facilitate planning ahead and workshops/focus groups on issues coming up at the SFP Boards
- Enable the development of leadership within the VCF sector
- Facilitate relationships between representatives and organisations with interest/expertise in issues coming onto the agendas of the Boards;
- Gather sector views on partnership forward agendas

How We Create the Representatives of the Future

OFFER will collaborate with VCF sector training providers to run courses and events providing people with the skills and experiences to become sector representatives. It will continue to develop its How Your City Works programme and other related courses. In addition OFFER will work with individual Boards to provide “shadowing” opportunities for potential representatives.

The Partnership is keen to ensure the value of diversity is recognised and celebrated, and is eager to have a Partnership reflective of the diversity of the city. As a result, our work to develop the representatives of the future will ensure we reach more diverse communities, encouraging them to come through and make successful applications to the Board for the private sector and voluntary, community and faith sector places.

How Partnership Managers and OFFER Staff will work together

- OFFER staff will regularly attend the SFP ‘team’ meetings, involving the Director, Deputy Director and Partnership Managers.
- Partnership Managers and OFFER staff will collaborate to deliver an induction programme for all new Board members.
- Partnership Managers will explain OFFER’s role to Board Chairs and officers.
- When either body plans a major consultation on its strategies or structures, it will make the other aware and invite its participation.

How We Evaluate Sheffield First Partnership and OFFER

Both SFP and OFFER have in place their own Performance Management Framework. That of SFP focuses on the achievement of agreed city outcomes. In addition other mechanisms are in place to review how the Partnership operates and how different sectors contribute to the work of the Partnership.

OFFER and SFP maintain a regular and fruitful dialogue. The Directors of OFFER and SFP meet quarterly to review joint working and the Director of SFP attends the OFFER Trustees meeting at least annually.

How We Will Manage Conflict Should It Arise

In the unlikely event of a failure to resolve the implementation or interpretation of this protocol either party may approach the Director of Government Office for Yorkshire and the Humber who will consider what support or action might be appropriate.

APPENDIX 1: COMMON ROLE DESCRIPTION FOR MEMBERS OF THE MAIN SFP BOARD OR THEMATIC PARTNERSHIPS

Strategic roles and responsibilities of boards and partners across Sheffield First Partnership

SFP BOARD	Vision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Setting a shared vision for Sheffield’s economic, environmental and social well-being, and agreeing city ambitions and outcomes
	Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing the strategic framework for thematic partnerships - holistic strategies to deliver the vision
	Priority setting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessing risks and defining priorities from within the vision and strategy
	Accountability for performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overseeing the performance of the thematic partnerships and the city • Holding partnerships and partners to account for performance against shared city outcomes
	Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overseeing the governance of the partnership and ways of working, ensuring accountability to local people and democratic structures
THEMATIC PARTNERSHIPS	Informing strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contributing to the development of, and informing, strategy commissioned by the SFP board
	Commissioning²	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commissioning actions from partners to achieve the defined vision, strategy and city outcomes, relevant to each delivery partnership
	Ensuring delivery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning for delivery and ensuring that agreed actions are delivered successfully • Engaging partners and other stakeholders in delivery
	Performance management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pro-actively managing performance to ensure achievement of the agreed outcomes, defining corrective action as necessary, monitoring external influences and risks to performance
PARTNERS	Delivery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Actual delivery of agreed actions and operational performance management

² Partnerships are about shared vision and objectives, joint priority setting and planning, leading to collective or individual partner action to achieve agreed outcomes and improve performance. In this setting the term commissioning refers to the process of defining what needs to be done to achieve shared outcomes then agreeing who will deliver the required action. In most instances, it differs from traditional commissioning in that it will not involve funding the activity; though in some instances it may do so.

Role of Board Members

The core functions of the **Sheffield First Partnership Board**, during meetings, are:

- a) Setting strategy and ensuring a coordinated vision and approach to the economic, environmental and social well-being of the city.
- b) Shaping and influencing policy and the use of resources.
- c) Setting priorities and driving performance improvement.
- d) Ensuring a range of voices and views are heard and considered.

The core functions of **Sheffield First Partnership thematic partnerships**, during meetings, are:

- a) Ensuring effective strategy and leading implementation
- b) Focussing on delivery and commissioning actions to achieve shared outcomes
- c) Pro-actively managing performance and driving improvement
- d) Ensuring a range of voices and views are heard and the active involvement of partners in delivery

In partnership meetings and when working on behalf of the Partnership members will:

- a) Contribute positively and work with other members to take important decisions regarding the strategic development of Sheffield and its communities.
- b) Work with other members to achieve consensus on key issues and priorities for action in respect of the city's strategic ambitions.
- c) Always consider what is in the best interests of the common good of Sheffield and to weigh this along with the interests of your organisation and/or sector.
- d) Raise areas of concern and contribute your experience and expertise to Partnership discussions in order to achieve good, workable solutions that are likely to receive widespread support.
- e) Actively work with the Sheffield First Partnership team and other advisors and support, including OFFER and Sheffield Chamber of Commerce and Industry, in order effectively to reflect the interests of your sector in Partnership discussions and decisions.
- f) Be willing to attend all Partnership board meetings, having come prepared for active participation.
- g) Be committed to equality of opportunity.

Behaviour

By becoming a member of Sheffield First Partnership, when in Partnership meetings or working on behalf of the Partnership, you will commit to:

- a) Displaying consistency and honesty in achieving consensus through debate.
- b) Respecting the confidentiality of information provided to support Partnership decision-making.
- c) Respecting the views of other members.
- d) Challenging the opinions or actions of other members or contributors where this will lead to an improvement for the city and supporting other members in the process of change.
- e) Remaining focused on performance and delivery, at the level appropriate to the board's function.
- f) Being prepared to learn from others and from good practice elsewhere.

Specific Requirements

We have certain expectations of our members, some of which relate specifically to the capacity in which they sit on the Board. Please refer to the sections relevant to your application.

All members must:

- a) Be prepared to undertake the duties and display the behaviours described in the description of the Role of Partnership Members.
- b) Have demonstrated their commitment to the interests of Sheffield when considering the interests of their organisation, their sector or themselves.
- c) Be able to demonstrate a clear understanding of collaborative working – ideally between sectors - and demonstrate that they have the skills and attitudes to meet the requirements of the description of the Role of Partnership Members.
- d) Be prepared to serve as a Partnership member for up to three years.

Organisational members must also:

- e) Be at Chief Executive/Director level, or equivalent, and able to speak for their organisation without constantly having to report back or seek guidance.
- f) Be strategic leaders of their organisations.

Private sector members must also:

- g) Be at Managing Director level or equivalent and be able to command respect within the business community.

Voluntary, community and faith (VCF) sector members must also:

- h) Be well-connected and experienced within the voluntary, community and faith sector and be able to demonstrate commitment to and understanding of contributions by the sector.
- i) Commit to working with OFFER, within the framework agreed in the Protocol between OFFER and Sheffield First Partnership, to facilitate open communication between the Board and the VCF sector.

For the [INSERT NAME OF THE SPECIFIC THEMATIC PARTNERSHIP] the specific skills and expertise we are looking for in applicants are:

- [INSERT DETAILS OF UP TO 5 SPECIFIC AREAS]

Selection Criteria

Private sector and voluntary, community and faith sector members will be recruited by assessing their suitability against the specific requirements and the following criteria:

Sheffield First Partnership board

- Evidence of passion for the city and a willingness to engage in its management more broadly than their immediate job might otherwise entail.

- Evidence of the ability to contribute to the development and delivery of the City Strategy.
- Evidence of strategic thinking.
- Evidence of access to networks within the city that will enable them to draw on a wider range of views in making their contributions.

Sheffield First Partnership thematic partnership(s)

- Evidence of passion for the city and a willingness to engage in its management more broadly than their immediate job might otherwise entail.
- Evidence of the ability to contribute to the development and delivery of the City Strategy and the specific remit of the thematic partnership concerned.
- Evidence of creative thinking and the ability to find solutions to complex issues.
- Evidence of access to networks within the city that will enable them to draw on a wider range of views in making their contributions.

The criteria for determining membership for organisations is:

Sheffield First Partnership board

- The extent to which the organisation is critical to delivery of the City Strategy during the period of membership
- The contribution of the organisation to the most difficult cross-cutting challenges within the City Strategy
- The extent to which the organisation is a city leader, a strategic commissioner and influential in the transformation of the city
- The extent to which the organisation may be seen to represent or connect to a wide set of interests appropriate to the City Strategy
- The organisation's commitment and willingness to engage actively in the work of SFP and to enable SFP to shape the activity of the organisation
- The need to balance the skills, expertise and diversity of the Board

Sheffield First Partnership thematic partnership(s)

- The extent to which the organisation is a commissioner and delivery agency, in respect of the main responsibilities of the thematic partnership, and critical to delivery of the City Strategy during the period of membership
- The contribution of the organisation to the most difficult cross-cutting challenges for the thematic partnership within the City Strategy
- The extent to which the organisation may be seen to represent or connect to a wide set of interests appropriate to the work of the thematic partnership
- The organisation's commitment and willingness to engage actively in the work of SFP and to enable SFP to shape the activity of the organisation
- The need to balance the skills, expertise and diversity of the Board

Decisions on organisational membership will not simply be taken on the basis of the number of employees or the size of the budget of the organisation, nor will organisations be 'type-cast'.