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**ANNUAL REVIEW OF SIGNIFICANT PARTNERSHIPS 2010 - 2011**

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**Responsible Cabinet Member - Councillor Steve Harker  
Efficiency and Resources Portfolio**

**Responsible Directors – Murray Rose, Director of People**

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**SUMMARY REPORT**

**Purpose of the Report**

1. To present the outcome of the annual review of significant partnerships to enable cabinet to consider the partnerships that the Council is involved with and to ensure that they have adequate governance arrangements in place.

**Summary**

2. Through the partnership toolkit, Darlington Borough Council (DBC) has an award winning approach to monitoring the significant partnerships it is involved with. As a result there are good governance arrangements in place for these partnerships. The partnerships are delivering well against their objectives. The toolkit has been effective in identifying high level concerns of the significant partnerships, the most common of which are levels of resourcing, uncertainty as a result of emerging policy and fundamental changes in operating landscape.
3. Over the coming year, there will be many changes to the context for partnerships such as this, not least the review of the Darlington Partnership. The review is likely to propose a more streamlined set of arrangements for partnership working, reflecting the reduction in resource faced by public agencies into the future.

**Recommendation**

4. It is recommended that Cabinet endorse the review of significant partnerships and note the actions being taken to address outstanding issues.

**Reasons**

5. The recommendations is supported
  - (a) to enhance corporate governance arrangements in significant partnerships; and
  - (b) to enhance the relevance and performance of partnerships in Darlington.

**Murray Rose  
Director of People**

**Background Papers**

- (i) Audit Commission Report – Governing Partnerships – Bridging the Accountability Gap
- (ii) Completed Partnership Toolkit Questionnaires
- (iii) Partnership Working Toolkit Report to Cabinet 20 March 2007
- (iv) Partnership Annual Review Forms – Year Ended 31 March 2011

S17 Crime and Disorder	The LSP and Community Safety Partnership are key partnerships in ensuring that Safer Darlington is delivered which includes reduction of crime and disorder as a main priority
Health and Well Being	The LSP, Healthy Darlington and Children's Trust are key partnerships in ensuring that Healthy Darlington is delivered to improve all aspects of the health and well-being of people in Darlington.
Carbon Impact	The LSP, Greener Darlington and Prosperous Darlington are key partnerships in ensuring the environmental and economic sustainability of Darlington are assured.
Diversity	The LSP and all of its component themed groups have One Darlington as a key priority which includes ensuring diversity is accepted as a priority inherent in all planning and delivery.
Wards Affected	All wards
Groups Affected	All groups
Budget and Policy Framework	This report does not recommend a change to the Council's budget or policy framework.
Key Decision	This is not a key decision.
Urgent Decision	This is not an urgent decision.
One Darlington: Perfectly Placed	The LSP and its delivery themes have highest level responsibility for ensuring the delivery of One Darlington : Perfectly Placed
Efficiency	Partnerships that the Council is involved in are reviewed annually to consider outcomes delivered and resources expended

## MAIN REPORT

### Information and Analysis

6. In October 2005 the Audit Commission published a report entitled Governing Partnerships: Bridging the Accountability Gap. The Audit Commission were unequivocal about the responsibilities of public bodies in respect of their partnership arrangements in that they should for example:
  - (a) know the partnership they are involved in and how much money and other resources they invest in them;
  - (b) take hard decisions to scale down their involvement in partnerships if the costs outweigh the benefits, or if the added risks cannot be managed properly, and;
  - (c) agree and regularly review protocols and governing documents with all partners.
  
7. These are responsibilities that had been tested through Comprehensive Area Assessment with a number of relevant Key Lines of Enquiry under the 'Use of Resources' assessment. Though this inspection regime has now been abolished by the Coalition Government, it remains important that the Council can demonstrate it is discharging its responsibilities with respect to value for money within partnerships.

8. In order to better demonstrate fulfilment of responsibilities, Cabinet adopted a partnership toolkit in March 2007 (Min C174/March/07 refers). The toolkit has been recognised by ALARM, the Public Risk Management Association, as innovative best practice and more recently the toolkit won an award for Strategic Risk Management from PRIMO (Public Risk Management Organisation - Europe ). The toolkit provides a means to record that the performance of each partnership is monitored and that adequate governance arrangements are in place. The toolkit identifies partnerships currently classed as 'significant' in accordance with the definition reported to Cabinet in March 2007.
9. The methodology adopted in Darlington involves the application of the Partnership Toolkit Questionnaire which then automatically prepares an action plan to address areas for improvement in governance arrangements. The results of this process form the basis of this report. The lead officers play a key and continuing role in ensuring the good governance of the partnerships. Outstanding actions from last years review have been addressed or are in hand.

**Criteria For A Partnership To Be Classed As 'Significant':**

10. A partnership is determined to be significant if:
  - (a) DBC has a statutory duty or other government requirement to enter into the partnership; or
  - (b) It is a major contributor towards achieving the (Sustainable) Community Strategy objectives; or
  - (c) It is a major contributor towards improving the lives of children and young people or older people; or
  - (d) Takes a lead on setting the Council's policy framework; or
  - (e) DBC has the role of accountable body/lead agency and the annual expenditure of the partnership is more than £100,000; or
  - (f) DBC funds the partnership by more than £100,000 annually.
11. The partnerships identified as significant in accordance with this definition are as follows:
  - (a) Community Safety Partnership
  - (b) Children's Trust
  - (c) Drug and Alcohol Action Team
  - (d) Greener Darlington
  - (e) Supporting People Commissioning Body
  - (f) Darlington Safeguarding Children Board
  - (g) Healthy Darlington
  - (h) Tees Valley Unlimited
  - (i) Darlington Partnership Board (the LSP)
  - (j) Prosperous Darlington
  - (k) Safeguarding Adults Board
  - (l) Older Persons Partnership Board
  - (m) Learning Disability Partnership Board
  - (n) 14 - 19 Partnership
  - (o) Community Advice Partnership
  - (p) Integration of Health and Social Care
  - (q) Community Sports Network
  - (r) Youth Offending Service

## Performance and Governance of Partnerships 2010-11

12. An Annual Review proforma is completed by the relevant officer for each partnership. These are used to identify any areas for improvement or risk. The report gives a summary of specific remedial actions required by each significant partnership to achieve full compliance with the Council's governance requirements. In addition, the reports identify what Council resources, if any, are being used to support the partnerships. These are readily available and published on the intranet at:  
<http://intranet/Resources/Finance/CorporateAssurance/Risk/riskmanagement/Partnerships.htm>
13. All partnerships have outlined their function and confirmed their intention to continue with the exception of Supporting People Commissioning Body and Integration of Health and Social Care which are to be managed within other partnership arrangements referred to in paragraph 15b. Tees Valley Unlimited is subject to a fundamental review of governance, roles and responsibilities. The Partnership Toolkit will be refreshed during 2011/12 following the TVU Review.
14. All the partnerships have evidenced good performance towards identified objectives for 2010/11 and have established revised objectives for 2011/12.
15. Generally, all partnerships are complying with the governance requirements covered by the toolkit and where improvement actions are required they are to be addressed by responsible officers within agreed timescales. The Community Advice Partnership, the Older Persons Partnership Board and Prosperous Darlington have outstanding actions related to reviewing their terms of reference. The Community Advice Partnership, Greener Darlington, the Older Persons Partnership Board, Prosperous Darlington, Darlington Safeguarding Children Board, Safeguarding Adults Board have actions outstanding related to reviewing their risk registers. The Community Advice Partnership has actions scheduled to address outstanding issues related to their terms of reference and risk before the date of this cabinet meeting.
16. Issues identified that have potential implications for the operation of the partnerships are as follows:
  - (a) Following significant changes in operating landscape due to policy introduced by the Coalition Government Darlington Partnership needs to reconsider its core purpose and ways of operating. The Review of the Darlington Partnership will be proposing some new ways of working from September 2011, which is likely to include a reduction in the number of partnerships operating. This potentially has implications for Greener Darlington, Prosperous Darlington, Healthy Darlington, the Children's Trust the Community Safety Partnership and other partnerships related to them.
  - (b) Healthy Darlington have highlighted the potential impact of NHS and Public Health White Papers and the development of a future Statutory Health and Wellbeing Partnership Board in Darlington and the impact of proposed new NHS, Public Health and Adult Social Care outcome frameworks.
  - (c) Similarly the 14 – 19 Partnership has concerns related to clarity going forward on central government policy regarding 14-19 learning and the role of local authorities. Much of the policy has not yet been finalised. The 14-19 Partnership has recently considered its strategy, partnership plan and partnership agreement and agreed that the current documents should stand until there is more clarity.
  - (d) The Drug and Alcohol Action Team, Prosperous Darlington, Darlington Safeguarding Children Board and Youth Offending Service have raised concerns relating to funding/

resources.

- (e) Safeguarding Adults Board is introducing and implementing a new structure and method of working which potentially could effect its operations in the short term. This review is being undertaken as a project overseen by the Transformation Board.

17. The position on the issues raised will continue to be monitored by the relevant partnership lead officers.

## **Outcome of Consultation**

18. Consultation with the chairs and lead officers of the key partnerships was undertaken in the production of this report.