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**ANNUAL REVIEW OF SIGNIFICANT PARTNERSHIPS 2009 - 2010**

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**Responsible Cabinet Member - Councillor Chris McEwan**  
**Efficiency and Resources Portfolio**

**Responsible Directors – Chris Sivers, Assistant Chief Executive**

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**SUMMARY REPORT**

**Purpose of the Report**

1. To present the outcome of the fourth annual review of significant partnerships led by the Director of Darlington Partnership and based upon partnership toolkit questionnaires completed by the Council's partnership lead officers.

**Summary**

2. Through the 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 is levels of resourcing.

**Recommendation**

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

**Reasons**

4. The recommendations are supported by the following reasons :-
  - (a) to enhance corporate governance arrangements in significant partnerships;
  - (b) to enhance the relevance and performance of partnerships in Darlington.

**Chris Sivers**  
**Assistant Chief Executive**

**Background Papers**

- (i) Audit Commission Report – Governing Partnerships – Bridging the Accountability Gap
- (ii) Use of Resources KLOE
- (iii) Completed Partnership Toolkit Questionnaires
- (iv) Partnership Working Toolkit Report to Cabinet 20 March 2007
- (v) Partnership Annual Review Forms – Year Ended 31 March 2010

S17 Crime and Disorder	The LSP and CDRP 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.
Sustainability	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

5. 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.
6. 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 the Comprehensive Area Assessment has now been abolished by the new Coalition Government, it remains important that the council can demonstrate it is discharging its responsibilities with respect to value for money within partnerships.
7. 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.
8. 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.

### Performance and Governance of Partnerships 2009-10

9. 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, is being used to support the partnerships. These are readily available and published on the intranet at:  
<http://intranet/Corporate+Services/corporateassurance/riskinsurance/riskmanagement/Partnerships.htm>

## **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) Crime & Disorder Reduction 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) Mental Health Partnership Board
  - (o) 14 - 19 Partnership
  - (p) Community Advice Partnership (LAND)
  - (q) Integration of Health and Social Care
  - (r) Community Sports Network
  - (s) Youth Offending Service
12. An annual review has been completed for all the partnerships listed above. All partnerships have outlined their function and confirmed their intention to continue with the exception of Mental Health Partnership Board. This was a fixed ten year project which came to an end in April 2010. The work of the Partnership will continue and discussion is currently ongoing in relation to format and structure. In addition, since the annual review form was completed Tees Valley Unlimited is the subject of a fundamental review which will be reported to Cabinet in due course.
13. All the partnerships have evidenced good performance towards identified objectives for 2009/10 and have established revised objectives for 2010/11.
14. 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 Darlington Safeguarding Children's Board

outstanding actions relate to compliance requirements laid down by the toolkit for a constitution, terms of reference and register of risk. It is recognised that Darlington Safeguarding Children's Board has a robust process of external regulation together with an internal Memorandum of Understanding. These address the issues raised by the outstanding actions and work is underway to confirm compliance. The Healthy Darlington theme group had outstanding actions relating to risk management. A risk register has now been developed through the Healthy Darlington Business Group and the toolkit will be updated to reflect this.

15. In terms of issues raised:

- (a) eight of the partnerships have raised concerns regarding future funding or levels of resourcing (Crime & Disorder Reduction Partnership, Drug and Alcohol Action Team, Supporting People Commissioning Body, Darlington Partnership Board (the LSP), Prosperous Darlington, Safeguarding Adults Board, Older Persons Partnership Board, Integration of Health and Social Care).
- (b) The Drug and Alcohol Action Team has noted concern regarding areas of service delivery for particular client groups and has outlined actions proposed to address them.
- (c) Healthy Darlington has identified that agreed standards of data quality and verification are required for data from across a variety of different organisations and action is proposed to resolve the issue.
- (d) Community Advice Partnership (LAND) has noted high levels of service demand amongst its members and is examining ways to increase capacity.

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

### **Outcome of Consultation**

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