

## SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

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**REPORT TO:** Leader's Portfolio Holder Meeting

11 November 2010

**AUTHOR/S:** Chief Executive / Corporate Manager (Community and Customer Services)

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### PARTNERSHIP TOOLKIT

#### Purpose

1. To outline and approve revisions to the South Cambridgeshire District Council Partnership Toolkit.
2. This not a key decision, however, the Leader is the Portfolio Holder responsible for partnership working and has also agreed to maintain an overview of progress against targets in the action plan developed by the Scrutiny and Overview Committee Children and Young People Task and Finish Group agreed by Cabinet on 8 July 2010. It was first published in the September 2010 Part 2 Forward Plan.

#### Recommendation

3. That the Leader agrees to the revisions to the Partnership Toolkit as attached at **Appendix A**.

#### Reasons for Recommendation

4. The revisions attempt to reflect the recommendations and actions developed by the Scrutiny and Overview Committee Children and Young People Task and Finish Group, which were agreed by Cabinet on 8 July 2010.

#### Background

5. The Partnership Toolkit was developed out of the review of external partnerships that was carried out during 2007/8. It is based upon the Partnership Governance Standards that were agreed by the Corporate Governance Committee on the 9 April 2008 and draws upon good practice from around the country.
6. On 8 July 2010 the Scrutiny and Overview Committee Children and Young People Task and Finish Group reported its recommendations and action plan to Cabinet. The action plan contained a number of actions relating to the Partnership Toolkit.

#### Considerations

7. The recommendations and actions from the Scrutiny and Overview Committee Children and Young People Task and Finish Group that relate to revising the Partnership Toolkit are set out below alongside a reference showing where it has been added to the Toolkit:

| <b>Recommendation</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | <b>Actions</b>                            | <b>Toolkit Reference</b>                                                                                                                                    |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 2: That SCDC representatives ensure that partnerships adequately and robustly consult children and young people whenever designing or evaluating services that are wholly or partly aimed at them; this should include issues such as climate change and the growth agenda.                                                                                      | Add to partnerships toolkit and publicise | Page 7 – Information Sharing and Public Engagement Arrangements checklist<br><br>Page 18 – reference to the Community Engagement Toolkit                    |
| 3: That SCDC representatives work with the chairman of their partnership to influence the agenda and seek officer support in doing so.                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | Add to partnerships toolkit and publicise | Page 9 – 4 <sup>th</sup> bullet point under ‘Your Role as Lead Officer or Elected Member’                                                                   |
| 7: That active consideration is given to deciding the most appropriate officers and members to attend each partnership, and each meeting, according to the agenda and the expertise required. Where a representative is unable to attend, a high priority should be placed on sending a well-briefed substitute, to ensure maximum input, influence and benefit. | Add to partnerships toolkit and publicity | Page 9 – 2 <sup>nd</sup> bullet point under ‘Your Role as Lead Officer or Elected Member’                                                                   |
| 8: That all partnership representatives ensure that there is an effective mechanism for briefing and debriefing relevant officers and elected members, and that all action notes or minutes are electronically available.                                                                                                                                        | Add to partnerships toolkit and publicity | Page 6 – Robust management and appropriate decision making checklist<br><br>Page 9 – final bullet point under ‘Your Role as Lead Officer or Elected Member’ |

8. In addition, two recommendations from the Scrutiny and Overview Committee Children and Young People Task and Finish Group relate to the communication and use of the Toolkit. These actions will be addressed once the revisions to the Toolkit have been approved.

| <b>Recommendation</b>                                                                                                                                                               | <b>Actions</b>                                                                          |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 4: That SCDC representatives use the Partnership Toolkit to regularly assess whether they need to attend each partnership, and whether any could merge or close or meet less often. | Message to all members on partnerships<br><br>Message to all officers on partnerships   |
| 5: That the Partnership Toolkit is amended to be more easy to read, and to reflect the recommendations in this report,                                                              | Revise and re-issue partnerships toolkit<br><br>Support re-launch with publicity to all |

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| especially representatives' obligations to attend, participate and communicate fully. The Toolkit should then be re-issued to all of SCDC's current and future partnership representatives. | representatives |
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9. Further minor revisions have also been made to the Toolkit, however, these do not change the emphasis of the document and have only been made to ensure that it remains current.

### Options

10. That the Portfolio Holder:
- (a) agrees the revisions to the Partnership Toolkit as attached at Appendix A; or
  - (b) makes further/alternative revisions to the Toolkit; or
  - (c) requests that the Toolkit remains as at present.

### Implications

|                                      |                                                                                                                                  |
|--------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 11. Financial                        | The Toolkit assists the council in ensuring that its partnerships are following financial regulations and schemes of delegation. |
| Legal                                | The Toolkit covers topics such as the legal framework of partnerships, information sharing and financial regulations.            |
| Staffing                             | The Toolkit assists staff that represent the council on partnerships.                                                            |
| Risk Management                      | The checklist helps officers and members to identify where a partnership is weak and helps them to rectify the situation.        |
| Equality and Diversity               | Equalities is covered under the code of conduct section.                                                                         |
| Equality Impact Assessment completed | No.<br>The Toolkit is not a policy or strategy.                                                                                  |
| Climate Change                       | None.                                                                                                                            |

### Consultations

12. Cllr Bridget Smith, the Chair of the Scrutiny and Overview Committee Children and Young People Task and Finish Group, has been consulted on the revisions and is satisfied that they reflect the action plan as agreed by Cabinet on 8 July 2010.

### Effect on Strategic Aims

13. Partnership working is essential to the effective delivery of services in South Cambridgeshire and assists the Council in meeting its objectives. Councillors and staff belong to various strategic and operational partnerships and task and finish groups plus many more that steer projects, provide networking opportunities or promote best practice. As well as offering many benefits, partnership working can also present risks. The council needs to be confident that its partnership arrangements are sufficiently rigorous to achieve the Council's objectives in an efficient and transparent way. This Toolkit has been put in place to help us govern these working relationships and effectively manage potential risks.

## **Conclusions / Summary**

14. A number of revisions to the Partnership Toolkit were recommended by the Scrutiny and Overview Committee Children and Young People Task and Finish Group and agreed by Cabinet on 8 July 2010. The revisions have been applied to the Toolkit and an amended Toolkit can be found at Appendix A.

**Background Papers:** the following background papers were used in the preparation of this report:

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