

DUDLEY METROPOLITAN BOROUGH

MEETING OF THE CABINET

16th March 2005

PARTNERSHIP STRATEGY

REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE AND THE DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL SERVICES

1.0 PURPOSE

1.1 To provide the Cabinet with information on progress made with partnership working improvement in the Local Authority.

2.0 BACKGROUND

2.1 The changing pattern of working relationships between public sector, business, and our communities has served to increase the importance of our partnership working arrangements, and the Audit Commission inspection highlighted some areas for improvement in our partnership working as a council. These factors led to the establishment of the corporate Partnership Working Improvement Group. Subsequently a comprehensive evaluation of partnership working and a programme of improvement has been developed and attached, some of the key proposals being:

2.1.1 Adoption of a Members' and Officers' Protocol

This is being developed to ensure that both elected members and officers are aware of their rights and responsibilities when representing the Local Authority in partnerships.

2.1.2 Provision of Training

The development of a programme of training for elected members and officers to ensure that all are fully prepared to engage effectively in partnership working.

2.1.3 Maintenance of a Partnership Database

This will be developed on our Intranet so that in time basic information about the full extent of our partnership working will be available to members and officers throughout the council. The intention is to reduce incidences of duplication and to provide enquirers with a repository of information enabling them to access information about best practice.

2.1.4 Development and use of Partnership Evaluation Tool

This takes the form of a self assessment questionnaire with the key purpose of identifying and developing areas where we can improve our work in specific partnerships. The draft model was developed in January

2005, and is currently being piloted prior to being made available for use across the Council.

3.0 PROPOSAL

3.1 3.1 That members of the Cabinet:

- (a) Approve the key principles of the draft Partnership Strategy outlined in Appendix 2.
- (b) Adopt the protocol for Members and Officers outlined in Appendix 3.
- (c) Endorse the Partnership Evaluation Tool at Appendix 4.
- (d) Note the progress against the audit commission improvement plan at Appendix 1.
- (e) Approve the commitment to Elected Member and officer training.

4.0 FINANCE

4.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report.

5.0 LAW

5.1 The Council may do anything which is incidental to, conducive to or which facilitates the discharge of its functions under Section 111 of the Local Government Act 1972, which in the case of partnership working could relate to a number of the Council's functions across all directorates.

6.0 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

6.1 The proposals and documentation contained herein comply fully with the Council's policies on equal opportunities.

7.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 That the Executive endorse the proposals in 3.0.

8.0 BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

8.1 Copies of the Improvement Plan, Partnership Strategy, Protocol, and Partnership Evaluation Tool are appended.



Linda Sanders
Director of Social Services