

CABINET ITEM COVERING SHEET PROFORMA

AGENDA ITEM

REPORT TO CABINET

DATE 14 January 2010

**REPORT OF CORPORATE
MANAGEMENT TEAM**

CABINET DECISION

Portfolio Access and Communities– Lead Cabinet Member – Councillor Coleman

REVIEW OF THE STOCKTON RENAISSANCE PARTNERSHIP BOARD

1. Summary

This report provides details on the outcome of the review of the Stockton Renaissance Partnership Board (partnership diagram attached at Appendix 1) and proposals for the future working of the Board.

2. Recommendations

1. That the report and its content are noted by Cabinet.
2. That the future way of working outlined in the report and the improvement plan attached at Appendix 4 and endorsed by Renaissance are considered by Cabinet.

3. Reasons for the Recommendations/Decision(s)

The purpose of the review of the Stockton Renaissance Partnership Board was to strengthen and rationalise partnership arrangements including engagement and culture; further improve the partnership approach to delivering better outcomes for local communities and support the Comprehensive Area Assessment.

4. Members' Interests

Members (including co-opted Members with voting rights) should consider whether they have a personal interest in the item as defined in the Council's code of conduct (**paragraph 8**) and, if so, declare the existence and nature of that interest in accordance with paragraph 9 of the code.

Where a Member regards him/herself as having a personal interest in the item, he/she must then consider whether that interest is one which a member of the public, with knowledge of the relevant facts, would reasonably regard as so significant that it is likely to prejudice the Member's judgement of the public interest (**paragraphs 10 and 11 of the code of conduct**).

A Member with a prejudicial interest in any matter must withdraw from the room where the meeting considering the business is being held -

- in a case where the Member is attending a meeting (including a meeting of a select committee) but only for the purpose of making representations, answering questions or giving evidence, provided the public are also allowed to attend the meeting for the same purpose whether under statutory right or otherwise, immediately after making representations, answering questions or giving evidence as the case may be;
- in any other case, whenever it becomes apparent that the business is being considered at the meeting;

and must not exercise executive functions in relation to the matter and not seek improperly to influence the decision about the matter (**paragraph 12 of the Code**).

Further to the above, it should be noted that any Member attending a meeting of Cabinet, Select Committee etc; whether or not they are a Member of the Cabinet or Select Committee concerned, must declare any personal interest which they have in the business being considered at the meeting (unless the interest arises solely from the Member's membership of, or position of control or management on any other body to which the Member was appointed or nominated by the Council, or on any other body exercising functions of a public nature, when the interest only needs to be declared if and when the Member speaks on the matter), and if their interest is prejudicial, they must also leave the meeting room, subject to and in accordance with the provisions referred to above.

**NOT FOR PUBLICATION BY VIRTUE OF
PARAGRAPH(S)? OF SCHEDULE 12A
LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972**

AGENDA ITEM

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CABINET DECISION

REVIEW OF THE STOCKTON RENAISSANCE PARTNERSHIP BOARD

SUMMARY

This report provides details on the outcome of the review of the Stockton Renaissance Partnership Board (partnership diagram attached at Appendix 1) and proposals for the future working of the Board.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That the report and its content is noted by Cabinet.
2. That the future way of working outlined in the report and the improvement plan attached at Appendix 4 and endorsed by Renaissance are considered by Cabinet.

DETAIL

1. The purpose of the review of the Stockton Renaissance Partnership Board was to strengthen and rationalise partnership arrangements including engagement and culture; further improve the partnership approach to delivering better outcomes for local communities and support the Comprehensive Area Assessment.
2. A report was presented to Stockton Renaissance at its April 2009 meeting proposing that the review would focus on;
 - Improved focus and alignment of plans across all sectors to achieve cross cutting Stockton Renaissance priorities;
 - Improved identification and alignment of resources to deliver shared priorities;
 - Support achievement of the cross cutting Local Area Agreement/Sustainable Community Strategy targets prioritised by Renaissance for 2009/10;
 - Better business sector engagement in Stockton Renaissance;
 - Better children and young people engagement in Stockton Renaissance; and
 - Support a positive judgement from Comprehensive Area Assessment;

Methodology

3. The review focussed on a combination of methods including researching good practice, identifying toolkits and government guidance, reviewing outcomes from analytical activity to date and piloting a themed priority task based approach to cross cutting issues. This was followed up by a series of workshops/discussion groups with stakeholders.

Toolkits

4. Various toolkits were identified and considered including Working Better Together: Audit Commission.
 - This framework included a self assessment tool which highlighted in particular some questions/improvement areas around how performance monitoring is reported currently at Renaissance; how meetings should ensure there is sufficient time for discussion and direction setting and some cultural issues. Some of these issues were explored further in the workshop and survey of Renaissance Members and the survey of visitors to the LSP Board.
 - The Audit Commission work also included examples of Delivery Chain Analysis being used to remove obstacles to joint local working. The thematic lead on the Housing and Neighbourhood Partnership has suggested piloting this approach at a future meeting of their partnership and interest in taking part has been expressed by another partner organisation.

Review of other Local Strategic Partnerships

5. A number of local, regional and national partnership models were identified to explore similarities with the Stockton Renaissance Partnership Board and other methods of working to see if a different model could be adopted and adapted to meet the needs of the Board.
 - Cumbria and Sheffield First were considered along with LSP partnerships in the Tees Valley, in the region-Sunderland, Newcastle, Gateshead and a number nationally were selected which had Beacon status related to partnership working.

Consultation with stakeholders

6. Consultation was also undertaken through invites to attend workshop groups/discussion groups with stakeholders, including the partnership board and thematic partnership leads. Unfortunately there was a low response rate for the workshop sessions, therefore a questionnaire was also posted out, based on the questions posed at the workshop sessions. This was followed up by a telephone survey of the partnership members that had not responded.

Telephone Survey

7. A telephone survey was also conducted with individuals, from outside the local authority, who had attended Stockton Renaissance Partnership Board meetings within the last 12 months, to feedback on their experiences of behaviour and culture of the Partnership. There was a response rate of 72%, with thirteen individuals interviewed representing a broad range of sectors and organisations. The survey covered the following areas:
 - Culture and behaviour of the partnership
 - Contribution to the meeting
 - Environment
 - Experience

8. The notes from the June 2008 'Creating a Shared Culture' training exercise conducted with Renaissance members also informed the review.

Piloting different ways of working

9. Part of the review included the piloting of a task based problem solving approach at meetings, building upon the experience from the 'trial run' pilot which took place at the February 2009 Renaissance meeting, which focussed on the 'Credit Crunch'. This had been the topic most requested for a Renaissance focussed discussion by delegates at the Annual Public Renaissance Event in January, 2009. Following this, themed sessions have also taken place during the April, May and June meetings, focussing on:-
 - Housing
 - Momentum-New hospital and Primary Care Services
 - Crime and Community Safety Issues.

Other Review Linked Activity

Efficiency, Improvement and Transformation Review

10. An Efficiency Improvement Transformation (EIT) review is looking at the Communication, Consultation and Engagement functions of the Council. This EIT review will pick up consultation and engagement, looking at who provides the service and the financial/resource implications and will make recommendations on the Council's internal organisation of resources and the potential to link consultation and engagement activity with key partners.

Thematic Partnerships

11. There are seven thematic partnerships within the Renaissance structure and each of them has or is scheduled to complete a partnership health check and audit as part of the council's partnership register work. Three of these partnerships have a statutory function- the Health & Wellbeing Partnership, Safer Stockton Partnership and the Children's Trust Board. The Safer Stockton Partnership and the Arts and Culture Partnership have also been the subject of separate reviews and development.

Area Partnerships

12. The four geographical Area Partnerships have been reviewed within the last year and the agreed improvement plans are being implemented and monitored by the partnerships. Discussions are underway to provide secretariat support for the Northern Area Partnership in line with provision for the other three, as part of the recommendations from the voluntary sector support fund review approved by Cabinet.

Other activity

13. The feedback from the Stockton Renaissance Annual Event, the completed Partnership Healthchecks for Renaissance, which addressed governance and risk management issues and the problem solving/task workshop activity which took place at the February 2009 Renaissance Meeting, were also taken into account in the Renaissance Partnership Review.

Summary

14. Overall the review of the Renaissance Partnership Board has indicated that it is valued as a vehicle for partnership working in the borough and compares favourably with the meeting attendees' experience of other LSP's in the Tees Valley. This view is supported by the independent Comprehensive Area Assessment emerging initial findings which indicated that *LSP priorities and arrangements are strong and flexible enough to respond to key issues*.
15. Those areas that were highlighted for improvement throughout the review work are set out below, planned improvements to address the issues are presented at Appendix 4.

Governance

- More time for qualitative debate is needed.
Action - Adopting a more focussed approach to what is reported to Renaissance Partnership Board, particularly performance reporting should free up meetings for more qualitative debate.
 - Learning from the pilot approach to themed debates indicated that strengthened arrangements for feedback and follow up from the thematic partnerships on actions would be beneficial.
Action - Produce a guidance note.
 - More understanding of the respective roles of partners/partnerships required.
Action - A draft guidance note has been developed, at Appendix 3, which illustrates the relationships between the partnerships and their respective functions.
16. In addition to the review work has also been undertaken with Legal and Democratic Services to strengthen governance and support around declarations of interest, to adapt the guidance that is issued to councillors, to support partnership board members. These tailored arrangements have been implemented from September 2009 for the Renaissance Partnership Board, the Area Partnerships and the Local Transportation Steering Group meetings.

Performance Reporting- A more focussed approach

- A paper is being developed on current performance reporting arrangements and exploring options for future streamlining and tailoring of reporting to the different audiences both within the partnerships and to our other stakeholders. This paper will explore best practice elsewhere and current guidance.
- The Housing and Neighbourhoods Partnership has offered to pilot Delivery Chain Analysis.

Inclusivity

17. Better involvement from the private sector and young people in the Renaissance partnership
 - Moving to more focussed meetings and themed debates may encourage better private sector engagement. This would seem to be supported by the recent experience of the Economic and Regeneration Partnership which moved to themed discussions.

The involvement of young people in partnership working had been raised previously and a report was presented to the Central Area Partnership Board at its May 2009 meeting, providing members with a number of options for a way forward for the young people's pilot. The Board agreed to look into a mixture of options and the proposal has been discussed with the Youth Assembly. Consultation is also ongoing with the 6 secondary schools in the Central Area and arrangements are in place to visit the schools this school term. Progress is regularly updated to the Central Area Partnership Board. The outcomes from implementation of the EIT Review recommendations are likely to positively impact on this area of work.

Communication

18. Communication could be linked with more focussed and tailored performance reporting.
 - Work is currently planned to review and re-launch the Stockton Renaissance Partnership Board Web pages to better communicate key performance and planned improvements for the borough. This should respond to the issues raised around communication during the review. Views were also fed in from the Youth Forum, including feedback from the pilot work on a "young people's area partnership board" being run with the Central Area Partnership Board.

PROPOSED WAY FORWARD

19. Incorporating the results from the discussions with the Renaissance Partnership Board members, other key stakeholders and the desk top analysis, it is proposed to –
Governance
 - a. Reduce the number of meetings from monthly to bi monthly:-
 - Hold 3 housekeeping meetings for standard LSP business items i.e. Local Area Agreement/Sustainable Community Strategy endorsement and review, Comprehensive Assessment Area reporting and dialogue and 3 pre-scheduled debate meetings, where expert speakers could be invited and relevant stakeholders. This would be more like an event format rather than a board meeting
 - This would force a more streamlined focussed approach, cutting out those items which are for information rather than a decision/input/action. Having more focussed agendas and less meetings would justify more qualitative and lengthier debate and respond to the feedback about short meetings curtailing discussion
 - A reduced number of meetings will mean less of a time commitment for partners which may be more attractive to the private sector, although we may have to hold 'special meetings' to be responsive to emerging priorities.
 - b. Actions arising from the themed debates and feed back on progress to be directed through appropriate thematic partnerships for action and reporting arrangements back to renaissance partnership board to be strengthened through development of a guidance note. The attached (at Appendix3) guidance note which illustrates the respective role of the Renaissance Partnership Board, the thematic partnerships and the area partnerships should also assist
 - c. Add Renaissance Board, thematic and area partnerships agendas and minutes to the agenda system.

Performance Reporting and Communication:-

- d Streamline and tailor performance reporting to our different audiences, using a revamped website to highlight a “you said we did approach”
- e Revamp the Renaissance Website

20. An improvement plan which details timescales for implementing these proposals is attached at appendix 4.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

None.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

None.

RISK ASSESSMENT

“This item is categorised as low to medium risk. Existing management systems and daily routine activities are sufficient to control and reduce risk.”

SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY STRATEGY IMPLICATIONS

The review and implementation plan will support all of the key policy platform areas of the **Sustainable Community Strategy:-**

**Economic Regeneration and Transport
Safer Communities
Children and Young People
Health and Wellbeing
Environment and Housing**

Supporting Themes:-

**Stronger Communities
Older Adults
Arts Leisure and Culture**

EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT

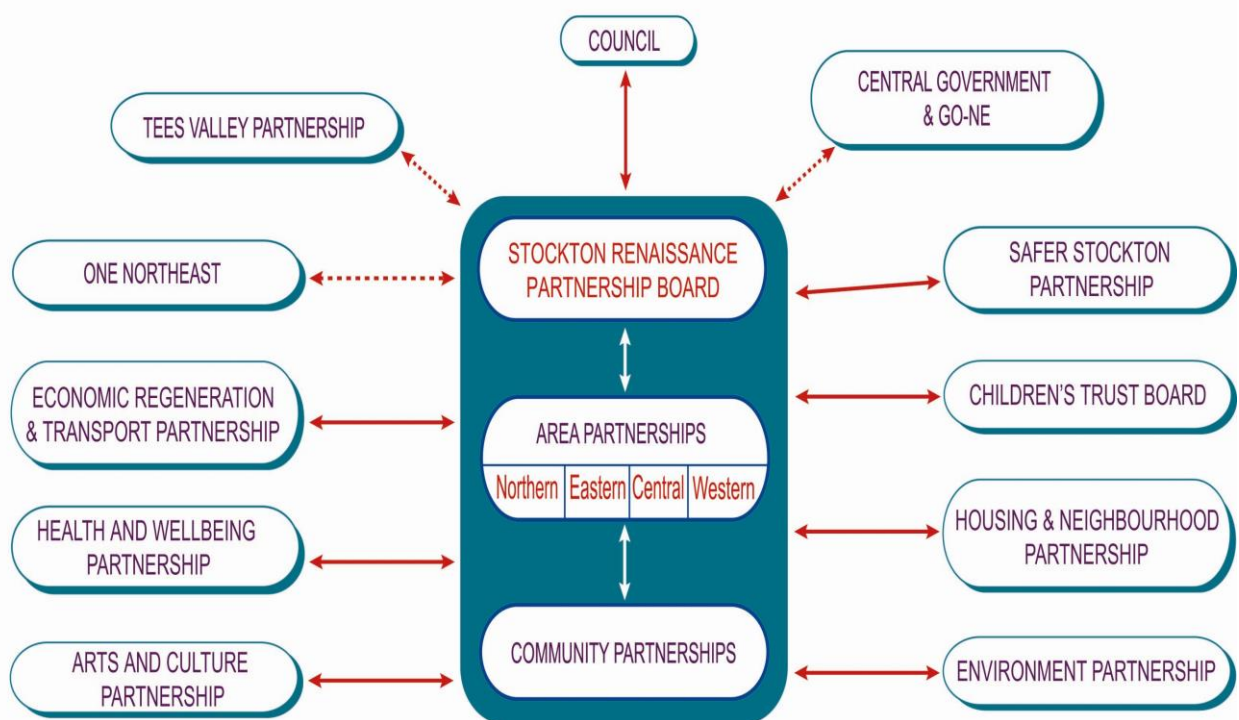
- This report is not subject to an Equality Impact Assessment because there are unlikely to be any significant policy changes as a result of the review.

CONSULTATION INCLUDING WARD/COUNCILLORS (link to Consultation Strategy will be available when approved) (Concordat for Communication and Consultation with Members)

Consultation has been carried out with Renaissance Board Members, meeting visitors and advisors.

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Local Strategic Partnership - Structure



Stockton Renaissance Partnership Board Review Findings

Review of other Local Strategic Partnerships

1. The structure and governance arrangements of local strategic partnerships varies greatly across the country, clearly a no one size fits all approach has been adopted. In general there was some differentiation between governance at a strategic level and at a delivery and implementation level. The size and range of the partnership varied widely. A number were currently going through a review process and had recognised a need to look again at their performance reporting arrangements to their respective partnerships.

Consultation with Stakeholders

2. The consultation included workshops with stakeholders including the partnership board and thematic leads and an on-line questionnaire with telephone follow ups to boost response levels. The key feedback is set out below-
 - The main achievements of the Board include-
 - the Stockton Renaissance Partnership Board: “has helped to hone and develop the Sustainable Community Strategy”; “things do happen”; “additional funding and resources have been sourced”; and “there is a good monitoring process”.
 - Better private sector involvement is needed.
 - Actions from the pilot workshops need to be followed up and notes from the workshops to be circulated.
 - More information on outcomes and feedback, however felt that the process works.
 - Networking between partners works reasonably well as there is an opportunity to network before and after meetings.
 - It was suggested that a ‘Speed Dating’ event could be held to give members the opportunity to raise awareness of their particular role within the partnership.
 - It was felt that faith groups and disadvantaged groups should be encouraged to actively take part. However, it should be noted that a Faith Network has recently been established for the Borough and the Stockton Renaissance Partnership Board has strong links with the Disability Advisory Group, BME Network, Over 50’s Assembly and Youth Forum.
 - Reports to the Partnership Board need to be more focussed and less frequent.

Telephone Survey

3. A telephone survey was also conducted with individuals, from outside the local authority, who had attended Stockton Renaissance Partnership Board meetings within the last 12 months, to feedback on their experiences of behaviour and culture of the Partnership. There was a response rate of 72%, with thirteen individuals interviewed representing a broad range of sectors and organisations. The survey covered the following areas-
 - Culture and behaviour of the partnership
 - Contribution to the meeting
 - Environment
 - Experience

People were also encouraged to add any further comments to the survey. In summary the survey indicated that-

- The majority felt that the meetings allow for open debate.
- All of those surveyed felt that they had the chance to speak at meetings.
- Some concerns around the opportunity to discuss issues in detail due to time constraints.

- That the experience of attending our partnership board was comparable or favourable with their experience of LSP Board's elsewhere.
- Culture/Behaviour the meetings
 - 69% felt that the meetings allow for open debate
 - 23% felt that the debate could be more open through a shared understanding of roles and clarity on what is being challenged.
- Contribution to the meeting
 - 100% felt happy /had chance to speak at meetings, although 15% felt that sometimes questions could be articulated in a more constructive way.
 - 30% feel that due to tight agendas and time constraints, there is not always the opportunity to discuss certain issues in detail
- Environment
 - 100% of those interviewed said that they would be happy to attend a future meeting of the Stockton Renaissance Partnership Board. However there was a comment that the meeting was very adult orientated which could inhibit discussion.
- Experience
 - 46% of those interviewed had not attended an LSP meeting elsewhere
 - 15% of those who attended LSP meetings elsewhere found the Stockton Renaissance Partnership Board favourable
 - 23% of those who attended LSP meetings elsewhere found the Stockton Renaissance Partnership Board comparable
 - 7% found that the Stockton Renaissance Partnership Board is the shortest LSP meeting they attend which can at times stifle debate
 - 15% found the meetings to be larger and more formal than other LSP meetings attended
- Governance
 - Some work needs to be done to improve the understanding of each others roles
 - Stockton Renaissance has strong governance arrangements
 - A few comments requested further time to be allowed for discussion in meetings
- Behaviour
 - An individual who attended a meeting felt that some of the comments could have been made in a more respectful manner. It was felt that good meeting housekeeping should be observed with people reminded to turn off or silence mobile phones or blackberry's during meetings
- Strategic Links
 - The Stockton Renaissance Partnership Board achieves what it sets out to do
 - Stockton Renaissance Partnership Board is a positive concept and forum
 - Stockton Renaissance is a mature partnership, which is well structured and links in well with the Sustainable Community Strategy objectives

'Creating a Shared Culture' training exercise

The key headline issues emerging from this training exercise, held in June 2008, with Renaissance Board members were:

- General public awareness of the LSP needs to be promoted
 - Need for better private sector representation on the Board
 - Ensure that representatives are the right people and are feeding back to relevant organisations/groups
 - Board allows people to have contact with others which they only get in an LSP partnership setting
 - Review of the partnership; and the need for greater challenge at meetings.
4. These issues were considered throughout the process of the review and informed the proposals for the Partnership Board.

Piloting Different Ways of Working

5. Initial feedback from the themed debates at the Renaissance Board meetings has been positive. The Economic Regeneration and Transport Partnership stated that they found the workshops very useful and confirmed many of the actions the partnership were already addressing or were planning to develop. Feedback from the review workshops/questionnaire has highlighted a desire for a more formal feedback loop to report back on the impact of the debate on the thematic partnerships planning and activity going forward.
6. Along with the Credit Crunch, Housing, Momentum and Community Safety, the following Sustainable Community Strategy cross cutting priority areas were also proposed by the Board members, for Stockton Renaissance to focus on:

Economic Regeneration and Transport

- Transport
- Regeneration Strategy

Environment and Housing

- Green Infrastructure/Green Agenda

Healthier Communities and Adults

- Alcohol- Discussed at Renaissance in November 2009. Monitoring reports to be submitted to Renaissance 6 monthly.

Safer Communities

- Promotion of community cohesion
- Domestic violence

Children and Young People

- Children and Young People

Stronger Communities (Sustainable Community Strategy Supporting Theme)

- Volunteering
- Communications

7. Work is currently underway to determine the priority discussion topics from the above, assessing timeliness, identifying key dates and decision making cycles plotted up to three years in advance, aligning work programmes, performance and other review activity to inform how it will best fit within the Renaissance family of partnerships work programme.

Partnerships Guidance Note

Stockton Renaissance Partnership Board

Role

- Has a developing/endorsement /challenge/monitoring role for the Sustainable Community Strategy and Local Area Agreement.
- Responding to the Comprehensive Area Assessment
- Delegated Powers-Cabinet delegated development of the Communities Fund Programme to Stockton Renaissance Partnership Board which agreed the over arching programme and delegated the delivery to the Economic Regeneration and Transport Partnership.

Thematic Partnerships

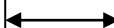
Role and Delivery

- Has ownership of delivery of the key ambitions under their theme as set out in the Sustainable Community Strategy and the targets within the Local Area Agreement.
- To bring together key decision makers, key agencies and third sector representatives to work together to address issues, barriers and to exploit joint working opportunities within their thematic area.
- To take a lead on developing actions and reporting progress back on priorities identified by the Renaissance Partnership Board.
- To consult and engage the Area Partnerships in developing policy and action planning to be informed by spatial considerations and community priorities.
- The Safer Stockton Partnership, the Children’s Trust Board, the Health & Well Being Partnership also have statutory responsibilities under their respective themes.
- To report to the Area Partnership Boards on their chosen Local Area Agreement/Sustainable Community Strategy priorities, as far as possible on a spatial level.

Area Partnership Boards

Role

- Provide a mechanism for consultation and engagement on the community priorities /spatial element of the Sustainable Community Strategy and Local Area Agreement. The information provide, where possible, should be drilled down to the specific Area Partnership Board geographical area or lower.
- Provide a mechanism to engage resident groups in their geographical area.
- Feed resident views into the partnership board and feed information/consultation back into their constituent resident groups.
- Provide a mechanism for the community to challenge public sector, third sector and private sector performance/activity.
- Provide a mechanism for the community to influence policy development and action planning for their spatial areas.
- Responsible for allocating some of the Local Transport Plan Funding and the area based part of the Communities Fund.
- The Area Partnership Boards provide a mechanism for awareness raising of external funding opportunities and as a partnership, to potentially bid for funding or support an organisation to run a project on behalf of the partnership.



Stockton Renaissance Partnership Board Improvement Plan

Action	Lead	Timescale
Governance		
Meetings- move to bi-monthly meetings 3 of which will be business meetings and the remaining themed debates	Partnerships & Engagement Manager	March 2010
Strengthen arrangements for feedback and follow up from the thematic partnerships from themed debates – produce a guidance note	Partnerships & Engagement Manager	April 2010
Produce a guidance note/diagram which illustrates the relationships between the partnerships and their respective functions – draft attached	Partnerships & Engagement Manager	October 2009
Strengthen support for partnership board members around declarations of interest	Partnerships & Engagement Manager and Director of Legal and Democratic Services	Sept to Dec 2009
Add the Renaissance, thematic and area partnership agendas/minutes to the Council's agenda system.	Partnerships & Engagement Manager and Democratic Services Team	April 2010
Performance Reporting		
Explore options for streamlining performance reporting arrangement and tailoring of reporting to the different audiences amongst our stakeholders	Head of Policy, Performance and Partnerships	tbc
Pilot Delivery Chain Analysis with the Housing & Neighbourhood Partnership	Head of Housing and Partnerships and Engagement Manager	April 2010
Inclusivity		
Better involvement from young people in the partnership/s A pilot project is being run with the Central Area Partnership	Integrated Services Manager and Partnerships & Engagement Manager (N.B. Link to implementing outcome of EIT Review)	March 2010

Better involvement from the private sector	Partnerships & Engagement Manager	June 2010
Move to themed debates that will allow greater flexibility for the wider private sector to engage		
Communication		
Re-launch the Renaissance Webpages	Council's Communications Team and Partnerships & Engagement Manager	Summer 2010