

## Inside the Partnership.

By Cllr. Sue Adeney, Vice Chair of the Partnership and Chair of the Strategic Board.



Perhaps the most visible achievement of the Partnership to partner organisations was the conference in December 2003 at QinetiQ. It was a highly professional event set in an excellent venue, and much was achieved in the day. It rekindled the Partnership and introduced new members and old alike.

The Vision 21 Conference was an opportunity for the Partnership to evaluate itself and make positive suggestions for better working together and therefore improved delivery and achievement. The then 'working group' listened and responded. The main areas of development centred on the following points.

- Partners felt they were uninformed.
- Partners felt they lacked a sense of purpose.
- Partners did not always feel part of the process.

Addressing these issues became a priority in the Strategic Board and this was supported through the ongoing work of the Communication and Consultation Task Group.

It was agreed that regular communication should be immediately established on the back of a successful conference with a monthly newsletter. This would inform partners of work that was undertaken, news items, consult on issues, and introduce different individuals and organisations to the wider partnership. Several copies are sent out to each partner so that the Partnership can become a recognised feature across the District.

The web site was moved to a more accessible site and improvements made so that this could be a useful and essential tool in awareness raising to the community at large, and in the smooth functioning of the Partnership itself. Agenda and notes of all meetings are also displayed on the website in addition to being summarised in the newsletter to keep partners informed of the Partnership's activities.



Partners who had expressed a desire to be more directly involved in the process were invited to join the 'Strategic Board' and from this group a second Vice Chair was elected to support the existing Vice Chair and Chair, and to build continuity into the leadership of the Partnership.

It was felt that the terms of reference no longer addressed the needs of the Partnership. A comprehensive review of these together with a greater sense of purpose meant that the structure of the Strategic Board needed to be developed to meet in particular the members sense of ownership and involvement. Hence, the structure as set out (see diagram) was adopted. This devolves process and tasks to a much wider membership, whilst the Strategic Board, as it rightly suggests has purpose and objectives at the strategic level. There is opportunity for cross cutting issues to be addressed, and task groups can be set up to respond to issues as they arise if necessary.

As chair of the Strategic Board I am grateful to the work of the Communication and Consultation group for this intense piece of work which through the strategic board as been rigorously assessed and amended before being adopted.

I am confident that we have addressed the important issues raised by partners at the conference, which means that, they have a sense of purpose and ownership and that regular communication is established through with the wider Partnership through the website, newsletter and annual conference.

