



# **SE DUNBARTONSHIRE** **EVALUATION OF** **PARTNERSHIP BY DESIGN**

**FINAL REPORT**

**March 2005**



# **SCOTTISH ENTERPRISE DUNBARTONSHIRE**

EVALUATION OF PARTNERSHIP BY DESIGN

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# SCOTTISH ENTERPRISE DUNBARTONSHIRE EVALUATION OF PARTNERSHIP BY DESIGN

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## Executive Summary

In 2000 Scottish Enterprise Dunbartonshire embarked on a thorough approach to its role as a partner which was called Partnership by Design. We were commissioned to evaluate this approach and in particular the Partnership by Design toolkit and review process.

This report covers the different aspects of Partnership by Design:

- The Partnership by Design **process** (the development process by which the toolkit was designed and staff and partners were consulted about and introduced to some of the key concepts underpinning successful partnership behaviour, the development of know-how about partnership working in SED, a review of the number and kind of partnerships SED were engaged in, and the partnership database)
- The Partnership by Design **toolkit** (the products that was developed during this process, which include a 'clipboard' for interviews and other tools such as an assessment of new partnerships)
- The Partnership by Design **review process** (the process which involved the application of the toolkit to a specific partnership)

To evaluate the Partnership by Design **toolkit and its use** we have assessed the Partnership by Design toolkit, the review process and its development and interviewed people involved in Partnership by Design reviews. To make recommendations about **future tools**, we have interviewed wider stakeholders and researched other partnership tools (many of which have only become available since Partnership by Design was introduced). (A caveat: many of the Partnership by Design reviews we were exploring took place more than three years ago so many interviewees found it difficult to remember the details of the process.)

This evaluation is timely. The 'refreshed' Smart Successful Scotland places a strong emphasis on partnership working by the Enterprise Networks and develops some significant themes – the significance of cities as drivers of their regional economies and the development of 'global connections' – that requires a strong and effective partnership response (between both public and private sector partners). SED is well placed to capitalise on its widely recognised and pioneering role in its partnership approach and will wish to build on its experience of and learning from Partnership by Design to ensure success in contributing to a Smart Successful Scotland.

## Evaluation of Partnership by Design

In this summary we present our conclusions on:

- The **objectives** of Partnership by Design and to what extent they were achieved
- The nature of Partnership by Design **toolkit** and the **development process** which produced it
- The Partnership by Design **review process** – how it was used and experienced
- The **outputs and outcomes** – the benefits that it brought to SED and its partners
- The **lessons** for future toolkits and processes

### **The objectives of Partnership by Design and the extent to which they were achieved**

The objectives of Partnership by Design were to:

- Promote effective partnerships to develop and implement economic development strategies
- Focus on common objectives and aspirations, building effective and efficient linkages and being prepared to assume leadership or step back as appropriate;
- Improve teamwork and partnership through performance review and the recognition of achievements

(Source: Commissioning Brief, evaluation of Partnership by Design, August 2004)

### ***To what extent were these objectives achieved?***

*Promoting effective partnerships:* A number of individual partnerships benefited from the Partnership by Design toolkit and review process. More importantly, the Partnership by Design process significantly heightened awareness within SED about the key features of successful partnership behaviour and helped to embed a more systematic and rigorous approach to partnership activity. In other words there was a 'passing wave' of a strong and active focus on partnership working and its effectiveness, supported by a thorough and systematic framework, and when it had passed SED was not the same.

Specifically, it left the organisation with enhanced partnership skills which have been applied to other partnerships and situations.

The key strength of Partnership by Design was the creation of a thorough and detailed structure for engaging one to one with other partnership members. This investment enhanced the quality of working relationships and this benefit appears to have spilled outside the specific partnerships to benefit relationships more generally.

*Focus on common objectives:* The Partnership by Design process was particularly good at clarifying roles and purposes of partnerships. The overall review process was more effective with some partnerships than with others; there was a 'right' time to do reviews. It is not clear to what extent the process lead SED to 'assume leadership or step back'., although there is evidence that in some cases SED staff spent less itme in partnership meetings.

## Evaluation of Partnership by Design

*Improving teamwork and partnership:* Partnership by Design was built into some people's performance appraisal (PERFORM) and there were continuous attempts to embed it within SED's structures. In the end this was not done systematically across SED. This reduced the impact of the process and the extent to which the approach became embedded in the organisation's routines.

The process of reviewing partnerships through the Partnership by Design process was not sustained after the initial round of reviews had been completed. No further reviews were initiated after 2002.

### The Partnership by Design toolkit

- Our review of available partnership toolkits shows the Partnership by Design toolkit to be **among the most sophisticated and thorough toolkits** for partnerships. Four years ago is a long time in partnership development, and at the time the approach was innovative and the commitment to it was imaginative, courageous and appropriate
- The fact that the toolkit is sophisticated and thorough also means that it **takes a lot of time and effort** and is not straightforward to pick up. There are three aspects to this:
  - The toolkit has proved in practice to be unappealing for some staff in terms of the demands that it places upon them – the time taken to carry out in-depth interviews and to produce a report based on this.
  - It is clear that successful partnerships – both in Dunbartonshire and elsewhere – have invested heavily in time – to understand each other and gain the trust and knowledge of each other to do real partnership working. The Partnership by Design review process created a well-thought out structure for the investment of a reasonable amount of time by each partnership that was reviewed.
  - There were some initial anxieties among partners about the scale of time required for the process but much of this anxiety disappeared as the value of the process became clear.
- The **support materials** explain the Partnership by Design review process well, and the guidelines are clear. The process compares well with other tools in its emphasis on getting to the right issues, before attempting to articulate actions
- The seven key characteristics that the Partnership by Design toolkit is built around are similar to other tools. The characteristics were identified during an **exemplary and inclusive development process** with staff and external partners.

## Evaluation of Partnership by Design

- The **key characteristics do not include leadership** – one of the key elements in *Five Vital Lessons* and some (but not all) other toolkits. It can be argued that leadership is subsumed in the key characteristic of ‘clear purpose and roles’, but some of those interviewed felt it should have a more prominent role in the toolkit. More recent toolkits have tended to stress the significant of leadership in successful partnerships.
- The toolkit allowed active SED partners to talk to other partners in a **structured way**, which would allow them to explore together how the partnership could be improved. This gave ownership to SED partners and allowed for lessons about partnership working to become embedded within their working practices and in the organisation.
- Partnership by Design is unique in the way it simultaneously **assesses the partnership as a whole and collects feedback on only one specific partner – SED**. Other toolkits assess partnerships as a whole with equal participation by participants – and 360° assessment of **all** the partners.
- The approach of reviewing the partnership and SED as a partner was taken because SED not only wanted to develop more effective partnerships, but also to **understand (and enhance) how they were doing as a partner**. The point was not to emphasise one partner, but to use the tool as a systematic way of developing SED’s organisational partnership capability. But some of the views we heard made it clear that this did produce an imbalanced approach which affected its image and its value to other partners.

### The Partnership by Design review process

- The toolkit was primarily created by and for SED – and **the main beneficiary has been SED**. This was clear to everyone at the time. SED was making the investment – and reaping most of the benefits of the process.
- Stakeholders in some of the partnerships reviewed appear to have gained from **improved relationships, clearer focus and clearer outcomes**
- There was a **significant drop off** from initiated review to the stage of an action plan – of 23 partnerships, only 12 reached the action plan stage. The drop off happened despite the support from the Director of Partnership Development and despite the support and management offered from the Partnership by Design Team

## Evaluation of Partnership by Design

- There are three major **reasons for the drop off** in the use of Partnership by Design review process:
  - The review process was not embedded in SED's structures and operational procedures – in other words the completion of the process was not required, recognised or rewarded
  - The time that the review process required – with each of the different steps (eg interviewing, reporting) requiring significant effort and thought. This meant that staff found it difficult to find the time to do the reviews and maintain the momentum through to implementation
  - The lack of commitment and ownership by other partners – which meant that if the process was not being driven by SED it was not being driven at all
- All SED staff felt **well briefed and supported** through the process
- It is clear that there is a **right time to evaluate a partnership** – in terms of the issues faced by a partnership, the stability of the context a partnership operates in and the openness and readiness within a partnership to embrace change. Partnership by Design was most effective when:
  - The partnership is facing issues – but they are neither too big nor too small
  - The context of the partnership is reasonably stable
  - The partnership is open and ready for change
- There are issues about **peer review**:
  - Some felt that it was difficult for one partner to collect open views from others about the partnership. They therefore believed that a review process needs to be carried out by an independent party to ensure complete openness and objectivity (and also to ensure that the time was available to carry out the process).
  - Others are strong advocates of peer review because it led to relationship building and internal learning within SED. The fact that a partnership member carried out the review meant that they had a prior understanding of the partnership's strengths and failings. Also, some find it unlikely that an objective evaluation will facilitate better partnership working.

### Outputs and outcomes of the overall process

- Partnership by Design was a **significant investment** for SED – we estimate that the total cost in terms of consultancy and staff time has been in excess of £150,000. Any process like this – to be done well – would require that kind of budget.
- Our assessment of how the outcomes of the process compared to the investment of time and resources is on three levels:
  - The outcomes for SED as an organisation in relation to SED investment
  - The outcomes for individual partnerships in relation to the staff time resources required by the Partnership by Design review process
  - The partnership database



***The outcomes for SED as an organisation***

- It is inevitably difficult to assess the outcomes from the Partnership by Design process for SED as an organisation and to attribute these directly to the process.
- It is clear that the process overall had a high profile and was ***viewed very positively*** by staff. It also went further than benefiting SED – partly because of the inclusive design process which involved partners and partly because of the partnership reviews themselves.
- The process lead to a number of ***intangible outcomes*** such as:
  - Heightened focus and awareness of partnerships in SED and for some of SED's partners
  - Increased staff understanding of effective partnership approaches, practices and behaviours
  - The creation of a valuable 'mental map' for those working in partnerships that has encouraged a more rigorous approach
  - Enhanced listening skills
  - SED staff 'walking the talk' in terms of partnership working in relation to partners and the effect this may have had

It is not possible to estimate the value of these intangible outcomes but we are clear that it is very important not to undervalue them.

- There were a number of tangible benefits to SED as outlined in the 'Capturing the Benefits' report produced by Par-X Limited (September 2002). These benefits included the fact that SED staff ***spent less time in partnership meetings***.
- There were a number of ***wider benefits*** to SED in terms of relationship building and partnership working. The fact that SED was the first LEC area where a single contract for the Business Gateway was created (between all three local authorities and SED) could be related to the relationship building done through Partnership by Design reviews. There are other good examples of partnership working. However, it is not possible to assess the extent to which the partnership working success is due to Partnership by Design.
- There was a ***missed opportunity to embed the process in SED's structures*** and operational management (for example in all individual appraisals in SED), which meant a drop off in use and consequently the potential of the Partnership by Design process was not exploited to the degree it could have been.

### ***The outcomes for individual partnerships***

- While some partnerships gained few or no benefits from the process, it is clear that others did benefit from the Partnership by Design review process
- The ***tangible benefits*** for individual partnerships included:
  - Increased clarity of purpose
  - Increased commitment
  - More effective and efficient organisation of the partnership
  - Stronger mutual understanding

The 'Capturing the Benefits' report sets out the extent to which SED saved money and/or time in a number of partnerships as a result of these benefits.

- In one case the process led to a ***re-organisation and refocusing*** of a partnership as the New Deal Strategic Partnership became the Employability Partnership (many other New Deal Strategic Partnerships across the UK were broadening their scope at about the same time but it is clear the Partnership by Design process was the key driver for this change in Dunbartonshire)
- Feedback from our scorecard (see table in section 3.4) from eight people was analysed to show that the tool was considered ***to have made the most difference in the areas of 'the right people being present in the partnership' and 'the partnerships' communication networks'***, and least difference in terms of a ***'commitment to continuous improvement'***.

### ***The partnership database***

The creation of the ***partnership database*** has not offered SED value for money. It was only used once or twice to put out information about partnerships and the information is now out of date. There is access to the database from the current intranet but there is no evidence of active use.

### **Lessons for future toolkits and processes**

- Tools such as Partnership by Design ***can make a significant difference to partnership working*** and to individual partnerships. Tools and structures can create good habits – which become working practices (***'mental maps'*** of good partnership working)
- Effective partnership behaviour and working practices ***must be embedded in the systems and processes of an organisation*** and these can be supported by a tool such as Partnership by Design. There is real scope to work closely with the ongoing review of the relationship management toolkit at Scottish Enterprise National

## Evaluation of Partnership by Design

- Great partnerships invest a considerable amount of **time** in deepening their understanding of each other and in regularly reviewing their focus, objectives and performance. In this context the amount of time required by the Partnership by Design process is modest. It was reasonable to expect this kind of investment, but in practice it has proved to be too much for many staff and the process has not proved to be as appealing or straightforward enough in its application as originally hoped.
- Such a **process needs to be driven at different levels**. It needs to be supported by management with an understanding that people need to set sufficient time aside – not just for attending partnership meetings but ensuring that between these meetings partnership action moves forward and SED make their full contribution.
- This is likely to be linked to a wider issue within SED about the way that tasks and responsibilities are linked to investments of time and **how this investment of time is recorded and managed**. Without this clear allocation of time to support an individual's contribution to a partnership, and the effective recording and management of these allocations it is unlikely that tasks such as partnership building will be seen as other than a low priority burden placed on top of more pressing day to day demands.
- A partnership tool with a focus on one partner – brought to the partnership table by one partner and analysing in detail the contribution by only one partner – **raises issues of review leadership and ownership**. Many partners clearly perceived the tool as an “SED thing” and expected SED to lead the review process.
- The Partners by Design review process needs to be **streamlined** and the review process should only be embarked upon with **‘the right partnerships at the right time’**.
- To fit with the changing context of partnership working and the new working practices that SED now face, the Partnership by Design toolkit should be **complemented by other tools** – some allowing objective and facilitated partnership reviews by an independent third party; others creating quick internal checklists or self assessments for SED staff and their partners. There need to be tools for individuals, organisations and partnerships.
- There is a need for an **‘induction tool’** which introduces new members of staff to existing partnerships



## 1 Introduction and background

### 1.1 Where Partnership by Design came from

The Partnership by Design toolkit and process was developed by Scottish Enterprise Dunbartonshire from 2000 onwards in response to the growing importance of partnership working. Scottish Enterprise Dunbartonshire recognised that many of their activities were delivered through partnerships and yet there was no systematic way of knowing what outputs and outcomes were produced through partnership working, whether the partnerships were performing to the best of their abilities or whether SED should be contributing.

The objectives of Partnership by Design were to:

- Promote **effective partnerships** to develop and **implement economic development strategies**
- Focus on common objectives and aspirations, building effective and efficient linkages and being prepared to **assume leadership or step back** as appropriate;
- **Improve teamwork and partnership through performance review** and the recognition of achievements

(Source: Commissioning brief, Evaluation of Partnership by Design, August 2004)

By producing a series of systems, processes and tools to examine individual partnerships and identify issues for actions, Scottish Enterprise Dunbartonshire were demonstrating to their partners that they were willing to invest in partnership working and 'walking the talk'. Partnership by Design was one way for Scottish Enterprise Dunbartonshire to start partnership working for real.

### 1.2 Extent and history of use

In the process of using Partnership by Design, Scottish Enterprise Dunbartonshire carried out audits of all the partnerships they were involved in. The definition of partnership was drawn quite widely and included key relationships, delivery partners, and actual partnerships. In total, 134 partnerships were identified. Of those 134 partnerships, 5 were identified to go through the Partnership by Design process in a pilot. Following that pilot, a further 21 partnerships were identified as likely to benefit from the Partnership by Design process.

## Evaluation of Partnership by Design

Of 26 partnerships identified for the Partnership by Design process, 23 partnerships embarked on it. In 21 cases, interviews were carried out with the members of the partnerships, and in 12 cases the process led to the production of an action plan (for a graphical representation of this, see appendix A4).

In our evaluation we focus on what actually happened – in terms of how the Partnership by Design review process was experienced, and in terms of the number of partnerships that embarked on the review process and the number of partnerships that produced an action plan. At that time it is clear that there were many other intentions and plans for what *should* happen with the Partnership by Design toolkit and review process. In this report, we can only comment on what actually *did* happen.

### 1.3 Why this evaluation?

Since 2002 the use of Partnership by Design has dropped off and no further reviews have been initiated.

Despite positive feedback about the benefits of the process and evidence of the process' benefits in the report 'Capturing the Benefits' by Par-X Limited (September 2002), people were not initiating reviews, and there were concerns about the demands that the Partnership by Design process made on people's time.

For this reason, Scottish Enterprise Dunbartonshire asked Rocket Science to review the Partnership by Design process in order to:

- Evaluate the effectiveness of the Partnership by Design process
- Identify benefits and drawbacks of the review process
- Consider how Partnership by Design fits with the current context that Scottish Enterprise Dunbartonshire works in (including changing partnership working, the refreshment of Smart Successful Scotland, the new Customer Relationship Management System, and the growing significance of Community Planning)
- Make recommendations on how the Partnership by Design toolkit could be developed in the future
- Incorporate elements of good practice from other partnership toolkits
- And implement those recommendations

This report represents the first part of this piece of work – namely the evaluation of the Partnership by Design toolkit. Its scope is broader than the toolkit in that it looks at the overall process, at the toolkit and at the review process (and how that was experienced by partners and staff).

### 1.4 What we have done

For the evaluation of the Partnership by Design toolkit we have interviewed SED staff carrying out reviews, other partners involved in Partnership by Design reviews, sent out scorecards to people involved in reviews and had a close look at the Partnership by Design process and its development.

## Evaluation of Partnership by Design

We interviewed the Scottish Enterprise Dunbartonshire staff who were responsible for seven different partnership reviews. These reviews were HRD Forum, New Deal Strategic Partnership, West Dunbartonshire Community Plan, East Dunbartonshire Community Plan, Dunbartonshire Export Partnership, Argyll and Bute Community Planning and the LIS Team Scotland. We interviewed some of the other partners involved in these partnerships and the review to gain an understanding of their experience of the process. To all of the people involved in Partnership by Design reviews, we also sent a scorecard designed to measure the difference made by the Partnership by Design tool. A list of these interviewees is in appendix A1.

To gain an understanding of the broader issues surrounding current and future partnership working we interviewed a number of Scottish Enterprise Dunbartonshire's strategic partners. These people were interviewed in order to inform the development of future tools and methods. A list of these interviewees is in appendix A2.

To understand how the Partnership by Design toolkit was developed we examined the SED documentation in detail and discussed with SED staff what was done, how it was done, and how information was used or not used. We used this process to capture strengths and weaknesses of the process, systems and materials, and produced a 'flow chart' setting out the Partnership by Design review process.

The benefits of Partnership were captured by Par-X limited in their September 2002 report 'Capturing the Benefits'. This report does not set out to repeat the work done by Par-X, but takes a more forward looking approach. This involves capturing the elements of the Partnership by Design toolkit and review process that people felt were most useful.



## 2 The design context

Partnership by Design was part of an overall framework for explicitly recognising effective partnership working as central to SED's activity. It was a direct response to the perception that Beyond 2000, the joint economic development strategy at the time, was failing to deliver because it was not investing in the process of 'working together'; one of the five goals of Beyond 2000.

SED was also involved in a very large number of partnerships. This made significant demands on staff time. Partnership by Design was partly about trying to use these resources more effectively.

Partnership by Design was introduced at a time when SED was involved in a wide range of partnerships, and was becoming increasingly **concerned about the relevance of these to its own objectives and more generally about their effectiveness and the return to SED** in terms of the time and effort expended by SED staff.

*"We behaved as though good partnership was always saying yes, but we began to realise that we needed to start saying no – and we needed some rigour behind this."*

*"SED staff were members of about 150 partnerships – often not at the right level and with no clear idea of why they were there."*

SED was therefore driven by internal issues about the effectiveness and efficiency of its business methods – there was a lot of activity taking place around partnership tables but there was little evidence of tangible benefit or of practical projects emerging.

The other key aspect of the situation into which Partnership by Design was introduced was the need to ensure **effective relationships with key partners** – notably the Local Authorities. In other words some of the drive to examine and rationalise partnerships came from an appreciation of the significance of bi-lateral relationships.

At the time the growing significance of Community Planning – and the need for stronger partnership action between key players to meet the needs of communities – was apparent. The Scottish Office/COSLA Working Group on Community Planning reported in 1996 and as a result Community Planning Pathfinder Projects were taken forward (though not in the SED area). Community Planning practices were much more widely spread and the principles were well established by 2000 (ie of community engagement in the identification of need and agencies working together to deliver in a joined up way).

## Evaluation of Partnership by Design

However, the real momentum behind Community Planning did not start to build until the publication of the Report and recommendations of the Community Planning Task Force in May 2003 and the subsequent publication of the Local Government Scotland Act later that year – and the publication of the Community Planning Guidance in 2004. Partnership by Design provided a valuable preparation for the legal framework for partnership action that was created by the Local Government Scotland Act 2003.

So the development of a way of looking rigorously and systematically at partnerships was in 2000 very timely:

- Many partnerships were struggling
- There was a lack of clarity about purpose and roles and responsibilities
- Partners welcomed an opportunity to be part of a process which asked demanding questions about focus and purpose – and about the way that each partnership contributed to the objectives of individual partners.

Partnership by Design was very much an SED initiative – and on the whole driven by SED – but it is clear that it faced little resistance from partners who were also anxious to ensure that partnership activity was focused and worthwhile.

At that time the commitment to the Partnership by Design process represented an early and significant attempt to get to grips with the growing scale and significance of partnership working. The scale of the commitment was courageous. The decision to design a thorough process from the ground up involving key partners in the design process showed a real commitment to partnership working and a solid understanding of the need to build wider ownership and relate it closely to the specific needs of this particular set of partners.





## 3 Evaluation of Partnership by Design: findings

### 3.1 Brief description of the tool

The Partnership by Design toolkit is a series of systems, processes and tools designed to examine individual partnerships and identify issues for action. Staff are provided with a number of templates along with associated, explanatory guidance which guide them through each stage of the process. This is backed up by support from the Team responsible for Partnership development.

The Partnership by Design toolkit was based on the identification of seven key characteristics of excellent partnerships (see section 3.2 – ‘Development process’ for information on how these were identified).

The **seven key characteristics** of excellent partnership working that form the basis for the Partnership by Design toolkit are:

<b>Characteristic</b>	<b>Description</b>
<b>Clear Purpose and Roles</b>	<i>Everyone knows why the partnership exists; its goals, targets and timescales are transparent. Everyone is clear on their own role and understands the roles of all the other participants</i>
<b>The Right People</b>	<i>All the organisations that need to be partners are represented. The individual participants are able to play their part effectively.</i>
<b>Effective Working Arrangements</b>	<i>The partnership has in place the systems and procedures to ensure that it conducts its business effectively and efficiently.</i>
<b>Strong Communications Networks</b>	<i>The partnership gets the information it needs to carry out its work effectively. Communications from the partnership to the wider world is continuous and consistent.</i>
<b>Sustained Customer Focus</b>	<i>The partnership knows who its customers are. It listens to them. It keeps the design and delivery of its services focused on them.</i>
<b>Commitment to Continuous Improvement</b>	<i>The partnership continually reviews itself. It scans the wider environment; it challenges what it is doing and the way it is doing it; it changes the partnership as a consequence</i>
<b>Partner Organisation Support</b>	<i>As stakeholders, the partner organisations are active in providing corporate support to the partnership. They honour their commitments to the partnership, support their individual representatives and promote the partnership in the course of their broader work.</i>

## Evaluation of Partnership by Design

One of the key strengths of the Partnership by Design toolkit is that it provides a comprehensive overview of partnership working tying together theory, principles, measurement and action in a systematic format. Each of the sections of the toolkit contains valuable insights in their own right, and the toolkit is a coherent entity and is designed for use as a process. The toolkit:

- Defines the partnership
- Assesses the value of the partnership
- Assesses SED as a partner
- Assesses the current status of the partnership
- Creates an action plan for improvement

These objectives are embedded in the seven key principles. These principles form the basis of the clipboard which asks partners to assess the partnership on each of these issues.

The Partnership by Design **review process** consists of the following stages:

Stage	Task/action	What happens during the Stage
0	<b>Decision to review</b>	<i>SED makes a <b>decision to review</b> a partnership</i>
1	<b>Internal review</b>	<i>The partnership goes through an internal review process via the <b>partnership appraisal form</b></i>
2	<b>Full review</b>	<i>The <b>process is introduced</b> to the partnership and SED attempts to get buy in from partners</i>
3	<b>Interviews</b>	<i>Selected members of the partnership are interviewed by the SED lead exec. Interviews are done using the <b>clipboard</b> and take approximately 2 hours.</i>
4	<b>Issues Report</b>	<i>An <b>issues report</b> is produced highlighting issues for the partnership</i>
5	<b>Interviewee feedback</b>	<i>The issues report is fed back to interviewees who get an <b>opportunity to comment</b></i>
6	<b>Partnership feedback and action plan</b>	<i>The issues report is fed back to the partnership. When the issues are agreed and owned, the partnership produces an <b>action plan</b></i>
7	<b>Action plan and implementation</b>	<i>The action plan is taken forward and recommendations are implemented.</i>

### The clipboard – what questions are asked?

The clipboard is the tool used at interviews. The clipboard questions are built around the seven key characteristics of an excellent partnership. For each of the characteristics, the interviewee is asked about:

- The effectiveness of the partnership as a whole, and
- The effectiveness of SED as a partner\*

The interviewee is asked for suggestions on how the partnership and SED could do better on each characteristic.

## Evaluation of Partnership by Design

First of all, however, the interviewee is asked whether they have any immediate views on the partnership – and what they consider to be its strengths and weaknesses.

At the end of the interview, interviewees are asked whether they wish to amend their views on the key strengths and weaknesses of the partnership.

Finally, the interviewer and the interviewee agree the main issues for action.

An overview diagram of the Partnership by Design process is shown in the appendix.

*\*NB: It was the intention that partners only would get asked about SED in the first review. Subsequent reviews of the same partnership would be done without this. In this evaluation we have looked at and asked questions about what actually happened, and none of the partnerships we looked at went through a second round of review.*

*It was also the intention that ‘the effectiveness of SED as a partner’ could be substituted by another organisation if this organisation chose to initiate a review.*

### **Resources required by the Partnership by Design review process**

A partnership review takes up approximately 5 days of staff time.

Setting up interviews	0.5 days
Interviews	2.5 days
Issues report and feedback	1 day
Action plan and ad hoc work	1 day

### 3.2 Development process

The development of the Partnership by Design toolkit was done by TeamSix – three members of staff from SED and three external consultants. The process was supported by senior management in SED.

**The process was exemplary** in the way it engaged staff and external partners; it was as much about engaging staff and partners in a discussion about what effective partnership is, as it was about developing an approach with the ‘right’ characteristics. This approach ensured a high degree of ownership and commitment to the process.

The process included:

- Interviews, workshops with SED staff and research to develop an approach
- SED staff sessions
- Development of database
- Attempts to embed the process in SED

#### Interviews, workshops and research

Interviews, workshops with SED staff and research were used to determine the seven key characteristics of excellent partnership working and to develop the Partnership by Design approach. This process also involved external stakeholders.

In this initial process SED identified all the partnerships and key relationships they were involved in, and then found their 25 priority partnerships through a scoring mechanism.

Also through this approach tools like the **clipboard**, the **issues report** and the **project appraisal form** were developed. The team also developed support materials and guidance, for example sample letters to interviewees.

The materials were continually reviewed and improved – through feedback from pilot reviews and the staff sessions (see below)

#### Staff sessions

In year two, a number of staff workshops were held to embed the process in SED. The workshops allowed SED staff to raise questions, share ‘war stories’ and tell success stories. It also gave the SED Partnership by Design team an opportunity to present new forms, the database and Partnership by Design processes and systems.

The kind of skills SED staff obtained through these workshops included:

- Understanding of partnership working
- Interview skills – listening skills required for the Partnership by Design interview process

There were ideas about reviewing SED staff skills gaps, but these were overtaken by developments within SE and SE initiatives about skills development.

### **Development of database**

A database holds the information collected through the Partnership by Design review process. The requirements and structure of the database was set out by TeamSix, while the actual technical development was given to an external company.

The database cost £11,750 to create (including costs for training and support).

The 'front end' of the Partnership by Design database allows users to search for partnership by:

- Name
- Area
- Organisation
- Lead executive

There is no evidence that this database is currently used by anyone in SED. Renewed input of information to the database would require additional investment as the 'back end' of the database is on a disused and outmoded computer.

The development or redevelopment of a stand alone database would not be supported by the current Scottish Enterprise Network policy.

### **Embedding the process in SED**

In order to embed the Partnership by Design process in SED's management structures, TeamSix made various suggestions. These included suggestions about monthly reports to the board, having Partnership by Design as an agenda item for CMT meetings and workshops with SED staff and managers.

Despite these attempts the process was not embedded in either SED's management structures or its organisational processes. The process was never fully converted from an add-on for staff to a central part of people's job and responsibilities.

## Evaluation of Partnership by Design

### 3.2.1 Timeline

The timeline of the development process and use of the Partnership by Design toolkit was as follows:

2000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SED embarks on the Partnership by Design process. The process is supported by managers and directors.</li> <li>• SED commissioned Simon Clark Associates to help create Partnership by Design.</li> <li>• SED staff and external partners involved in workshops to decide the key characteristics of good partnership working</li> </ul>
2001  Autumn	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SED identifies its key 25 partnerships</li> <li>• 5 pilot reviews are done (Lennox Castle Task Force, HRD Forum, SEP, Clydebank College and New Deal Strategic Partnership)</li> <li>• The process is reviewed to feature two stages: an initial internal review (<b>partnership appraisal</b> form) which may be followed by the full review (<b>clipboard process</b>).</li> <li>• Training sessions and staff briefings planned for autumn</li> <li>• There are a number of partnership reviews.</li> <li>• Staff briefings and workshops</li> </ul>
2002  Spring   Autumn	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Still a number of partnerships reviews</li> <li>• Staff briefings and workshops</li> <li>• The documentation for the Partnership by Design process is rewritten</li> <li>• The Partnership by Design database was created</li> <li>• 2 pilot reviews were done in East Dunbartonshire Council supported by the lead officer in SED (Strategic Learning Partnership and Town Centre Management Steering Group)</li> <li>• Benefit reports commissioned from Par-X</li> <li>• Changing and increased responsibilities for the partnership team and senior director. Partnership by Design no longer driven by the team. No further reviews are initiated after this.</li> </ul>
2003  Autumn	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SED works with Claire Maclellan to integrate the Partnership by Design toolkit on the SE intranet (December 2003)</li> </ul>
2004  Autumn	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Simon Clark commissioned to review the Employability Partnership</li> <li>• Evaluation commissioned from Rocket Science UK Ltd</li> </ul>

It was envisaged that the development process would take about six months. In reality it took about 12-18 months.

### 3.2.2 Costs of producing tool

The overall **costs** of producing Partnership by Design can be split up into four specific components. These are:

1. The time used by SED staff to create, develop and support Partnership by Design
2. Staff time spent on reviews
3. Support bought in from the consultancy company Par-X Limited, and
4. The cost of developing the database

<b>Costs and resources</b>	<b>2000-2001</b>	<b>2001-2002</b>	<b>2002-2003</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
<b>Staff time – TeamSix<sup>1</sup></b>	4.5 days SED staff time pr week: £37,000	6 days SED staff time pr week: £48,100		£70,000
<b>Staff time – reviews<sup>2</sup></b>	12 reviews leading to an action plan 6 reviews ending after the issues report 1 review ending after the interviews			£14,230
<b>Consultancy costs</b>	£25,000	£25,000	£4,500	£54,500
<b>Database</b>		£9,500 (development)+ £2,250 (training and 25 support hours)		£11,750
<b>TOTAL</b>				Ca. £150,000

<sup>1</sup> Staff time costs are calculated like this:

SED staff time – gross costs: £37000 (£30K + overheads) pr year for staff time, £74000 (£55-60k + overheads) pr year for SED director time

2000-2001 calculated on the basis of 4 days staff time, 0.5 day director time

2001-2002 calculated on the basis of 5.5 days staff time pr week, 0.5 day director time

<sup>2</sup> Staff time in reviews calculated on the basis of 5 days staff time pr review leading to an action plan, 4 days pr review leading to an issues report and 3 days pr review ending after interviews. Working days in a year: 226 days. Gross salary costs: £37,000.

### 3.3 Experiences of the review process

First, a caveat: the fact that many of the Partnership by Design reviews we were exploring took place more than 3 years ago meant that many interviewees found it difficult to remember the details of the process.

We have produced a summary of feedback from people in SED and non-SED people below as well as people's views on what future tools need to be like. For more detailed feedback and quotes, see section 3.3.1.

#### **Summary of feedback**

For people in SED:

- The focus on partnership working and their ***inclusion in the development process*** of Partnership by Design was experienced positively – it helped to create a '***mental map***' for partnership working.
- The support and guidance materials were clear, and people were clear about where to go for support.
- There were varying concerns about the ***resources required*** to review partnerships through the Partnership by Design review process. Some thought this was what was needed and that it fitted in well with the way they worked. Others thought it was too time intensive and wanted the process outsourced.
- It was difficult to find time to prioritise the ***issues report*** and SED members of staff did not always get a lot of feedback.
- The process was considered to be most effective with ***partnerships that needed to change***, where the context was stable enough for real progress to be made and where partnership members were willing to embrace the process.

For non-SED people:

- There was an understanding of the need to look at partnership working
- The process felt like a '***SED thing***' – the tool had inherent inequalities and asked for SED's performance in particular but not for other partners' performance
- There was an issue about the ***leadership dimension*** which did not appear to get the significance that it deserved



### Interview feedback about a future tool

Based on our interviews we have identified a number of key needs which a set of future tools and techniques should meet. Together they provide a set of criteria for testing the set of tools available to SED staff and their partners.

- **Checklists** which help people make sure that in setting up partnerships, joining partnerships or just checking a partnership they are currently a member of, they can quickly and easily make an assessment of whether the key components are in place. These checklists should allow for regular reviews as the partnerships evolves and changes. The checklists should be **simple, quick and easy to use**.
- A **range of tools** that meet the needs of the user; Some tools are for use by individuals, other by organisations and yet others for the partnerships. Other tools are needed for the **different stages** of partnership working.
- In terms of partnership tools, there may be a need to create different tools for strategic and operational partnerships. Partnerships need to be **helped to take 'time out' and to use this time productively** and in a structured way to review their progress and refresh their vision and purpose. This could include tools to help the partnership plan, implement and review their strategy or delivery. Partnership tools must **encourage ownership** by all members by adding value and insight to each partner
- There need to be tools which help individuals, organisations and partnerships understand and measure their **outputs and outcomes**
- There is strong appeal in **using internet technology** to allow easy access, simple and appealing use, and the aggregation and/or comparison of returns

It is clear that people are anxious to build on the processes used and lessons learned in the Partnership by Design process in future tools. There is a place for the Partnership by Design process in this range of support. Our view is that it served its main purpose in terms of the needs of SED at the time.

### 3.3.1 Detailed feedback about the process

We present below a summary of the feedback we gained during our interviews. We have divided the feedback into sections on:

- Initiating the review process
- Interview process
- Issues report
- Support materials and guidance
- Drop off in use
- Suggestions for future use/future toolkit
- Views on overall process

#### Initiating the review process

**Too many partnerships** were identified to go through the Partnership by Design review process. In the beginning it was intended that **all** of SED's 25 key partnerships would be evaluated through Partnership by Design. In future years it was planned to review 3-5 partnerships, which seems a far more realistic aspiration.

*"In this case the outcome was known before the process was embarked on"* (SED staff)

*"Someone from SED said they were going through this and were doing this exercise. I could see the merit in looking at the various partnerships, and I think most people felt it would be valuable to look at."* (non SED partnership member)

The initial introduction (to a partnership by SED) of the Partnership by Design process may have created buy in, but sometimes not enough **awareness of whole process**

*"Partners were open to the process – it was a good partnership (SED was the major contributor) and the process was not expected to throw up any problems"* (SED staff)

*"When I heard about it I thought it was used throughout the network. As we went through it we changed a few things about it. We let [SED staff member] take the lead in everything, and he then reported back to the partners."* (non SED partnership member)

The strong SED ownership of the tool in one case raised expectations of **SED leadership** – not only of the review process but of the partnership

*"SED said: We're gonna change this partnership and this is what we're going to use. And then I thought they'd take the lead [in the partnership] because they were leading the process. And they didn't want to do that, so we went through this process with no clear leader. They influenced the partnership but they weren't prepared to take a lead role, and the partnership has fizzled out, because the central issue of leadership was not addressed."* (non SED staff partnership member)

In other cases, it raised the expectation that SED would lead the process

*"It was perceived as a SED thing"* (SED staff)

## Evaluation of Partnership by Design

The Partnership by Design process was not appropriate for **all partnerships** or at **all times**

*“The timing was wrong to do anything like that. Changes happened and new people came in”  
(SED staff)*

*“I was fairly confident embarking on it, and felt there would be benefits. And I felt there would be benefits to me – in terms of building relationships. The only reservation was using [the partnership which was a relationship] as a formal partnership.” (SED staff)*

### Interview process

Most people thought the interviews were **time-consuming**, but for others they **fitted in with their way of working**

*“The interviews were long, and people had to take a lot of time out of their day. Partners found it difficult to commit time to interviews.” (SED staff)*

*“Doing it didn’t feel like a lot of extra work. It felt like part of the work I did, and it was helpful in terms of deepening relationships.” (SED staff)*

*“We did identify a need to try to make this a less labour intensive process. However, there is a need to trade this off against the fact that the face to face labour intensive interactions are a key strength of the process.” (SED staff)*

While some people thought an **objective and independent third party** should do the interviews, others thought it was valuable for SED staff to do the work to **build relationships**

*“It was better to get somebody else doing it – because of workload. It was also important to have somebody independent.” (non SED partnership member)*

*“If we were to need the same kind of review now I would prefer a short sharp review facilitated by a skilled third party” (SED staff)*

*“I don’t think it is too much to ask of partners to spend time in an interview. The selection of people, in terms of doing it, is very important. It is about having a wide range of people – to get different agendas and viewpoints.” (SED staff)*

*“It was a lot of time out of your diary to do this. It was very time consuming – I should say the interview process should be outsourced. That would free up staff time.” (SED staff)*

For some there was an issue about **peer review** – it was difficult for one partner to collect open views from others about the partnership

*“Because it was SED doing the interviews it is likely that we got a more positive response!” (SED staff)*

*“The process needed a skilled, independent third party” (SED staff)*

## Issues report

It was difficult for SED staff to **find time/prioritise** writing the issues report.

*“We tried to get the process done in 6 weeks, and didn’t manage at all.”* (SED staff)

*“Moving from the interview to an issues report was the main difficulty. It worked better when people did interviews in a short period. Getting people to do the report was a struggle, and when it took too long for the issues report to get back to the partnership the process lost momentum”* (SED staff).

Often, there was **not a lot of feedback** from interviewees to the issues report

*“Possibly the least useful bit [of the process] was the interim evaluation report being sent round because there were not many changes. However, it was still worth doing.”* (SED staff)

*“There was no feedback from the interviewees to the issues report. I even phoned them all. But maybe that was because there were no surprises in the issues report”* (SED staff)

## Support materials and guidance

There was varying feedback about the **materials and guidance**

*“There was a varying degree of enthusiasm for the “How does SED compare?” bit of the clipboard. This was because partners did not have enough knowledge about SED performance. Also, because it was SED doing the interviews it is likely we got a more positive response!”* (SED staff)

*“The issues were a wee bit superficial – it really needs to get into each of them in a bit more depth... Some areas need more clarification – for example, ‘clarifying roles’ – what does this mean?”* (non SED staff)

*“It made sense. I don’t remember having difficulty with it.”* (SED staff)

*“Some of the questions [in the clipboard] were quite repetitive”* (SED staff)

*“Other toolkits are more helpful because they break down into specific issues and can be used in more flexible ways”* (non SED staff)

Several people mentioned the **involvement of SED staff** in the development of the process and the materials

*“It was useful for SED people to have an early input. We saw it as quite positive. We were able to feed back and learn from each other. Most people viewed it as a very positive process. And there was a commitment to improve the process.”* (SED staff)

### Drop off in use

Despite awareness of the need for it, the **process never became embedded** in SED's operation planning process. There were recommendations by the consultants (Simon Clark Associates report in April 2001 and again in the end of phase 2 report by Par-X Limited in August 2002) about embedding the tool, but the key recommendations appear not to have been implemented and Partnership by Design is not a part of all SED's staff performance appraisal system (PERFORM)

*"It needed to be driven by someone. It doesn't just happen by itself"* (SED staff)

*"I didn't have enough time dedicated to go through this whole process. I had enough for the interviews but everything else was in addition to my normal workload."* (SED staff)

### Suggestions for future use/future toolkit

There were suggestions about the **kinds of partnerships** that should go through a review

*"Full process is best suited toward the big and complex partnerships. Using it with too small a group takes away the anonymity"* (SED staff)

*"The best use of resources would be to focus on partnerships which are not succeeding. It would be best to focus resources on partnerships where change is necessary."* (non SED staff partnership member)

There were also suggestions about complementing Partnership by Design by other tools:

*"All the stuff is there [on the web] in terms of different toolkits – it is up to me to bring it together and make it work. There is lots out there. Partnership by Design needs to be updated and used alongside other toolkits. It does offer something different but there are gaps in terms of leadership and getting under the skin of issues"* (non SED staff)

*"I would like to see a more dynamic process this time – one which engages the partners more like Working Together, Learning Together to ensure ownership and involve everyone on an on-going basis."* (non SED staff)

Finally, a main area of recommendations was about **whether or not to outsource** the process. Both views were represented.

*"It could have people other than SED staff carrying out the reviews. The down side is that you lose some learning and you don't have the relationship building"* (SED staff).

*"It is the easy way out to commission someone to do it. This is an opportunity to build relationships. That was what got the benefits. We were walking the talk."* (SED staff)

## Evaluation of Partnership by Design

### Views on overall process

*“It all went very well. The people I interviewed found it effective and it was all pretty straightforward. I recommended it to someone in another LEC” (SED staff)*

*“The key to the success of the process was getting people together to debate the issues” (non SED staff)*

*“The structure was very good and logical – the whole layout and design was very good” (non SED staff)*

*“Partnership by Design was right for its time” (SED staff)*

*“What doesn’t work is doing all the work and then taking it to the partnership for approval” (non SED staff)*

*“There is a gap in terms of the leadership dimension” (non SED staff)*

*“We are still struggling with a lack of partnership behaviour – we are not a system with a good memory and there is a constant need to refresh and remind people about what partnership working is about” (SED staff)*

*“We need to review regularly and have a process for both reviewing and what we should do when we set up a partnership: Partnership by Design is too time consuming to do this” (SED staff)*

### 3.4 Outcomes

Of 26 partnerships identified for the Partnership by Design process, 23 partnerships embarked on it. In 21 cases, interviews were carried out with the members of the partnerships, and in 12 cases the process led to the production of an action plan (for a graphical representation of this, see appendix A4).

#### Capturing the Benefits

In September 2002 Par-X limited produced a report 'Capturing the Benefits', which set out to capture "hard" and "soft" benefits of 23 reviewed partnerships. These benefits were either around enhancements to the capacities of the partnerships, resource gains in terms of time or money or improved outputs.

The report concluded that:

- The benefits to partnerships were not equally distributed. Some partnerships benefited immensely while others benefited little or hardly at all. For example, two partnerships – The Employability Partnership and the Training Providers' Network – accounted for just over a third of the total benefits recorded.
- The partnerships which embraced the process and created an action plan produced more benefits for SED and the partnership.

The most typical benefits were:

- Increased clarity of purpose
- Increased commitment
- More effective and efficient organisation of the partnership
- Stronger mutual understanding

One of the main conclusions is that for the review to create results there needs to be buy in from other partners.

The feedback from interviewees made it clear that Partnership by Design was particularly effective when the following conditions were right:

- some issues, but neither too few or too many
- an understanding of a need to change the partnership
- a stable context

### 'Difference made' Scorecard

The difference made Scorecard was sent to 13 people. We received scorecards from 8 people (see appendix). The topic of 'SED benefits in relation to resources' was only analysed in relation to scores received from people within SED.

Feedback from our scorecard (see table below) from eight people was analysed to show that the tool was considered **to have made the most difference in the areas of 'the right people being present in the partnership' and 'the partnerships' communication networks'**, and least difference in terms of a **'commitment to continuous improvement'**.

Topic	Average Score
Involving the right people	3.3
Strong communications networks	3.3
Clarity of purpose and roles	3.1
Effective working arrangements	2.9
Sustained customer focus	2.9
Partner organisation support	2.9
Tangible benefits	2.9
Commitment to continuous improvement	2.8

Average Scores (where 5.0 is a 'significant difference' and 1.0 is 'no difference')  
setting out the difference made by Partnership by Design

- The scores for 'Benefits in relation to resources' show that the majority of people thought the benefits matched the time and effort put into the review process. No respondent thought that the benefits exceeded the time and effort put into the review process, but some thought the time and effort exceeded the benefits. This is based on replies from six people within SED.



## Evaluation of Partnership by Design

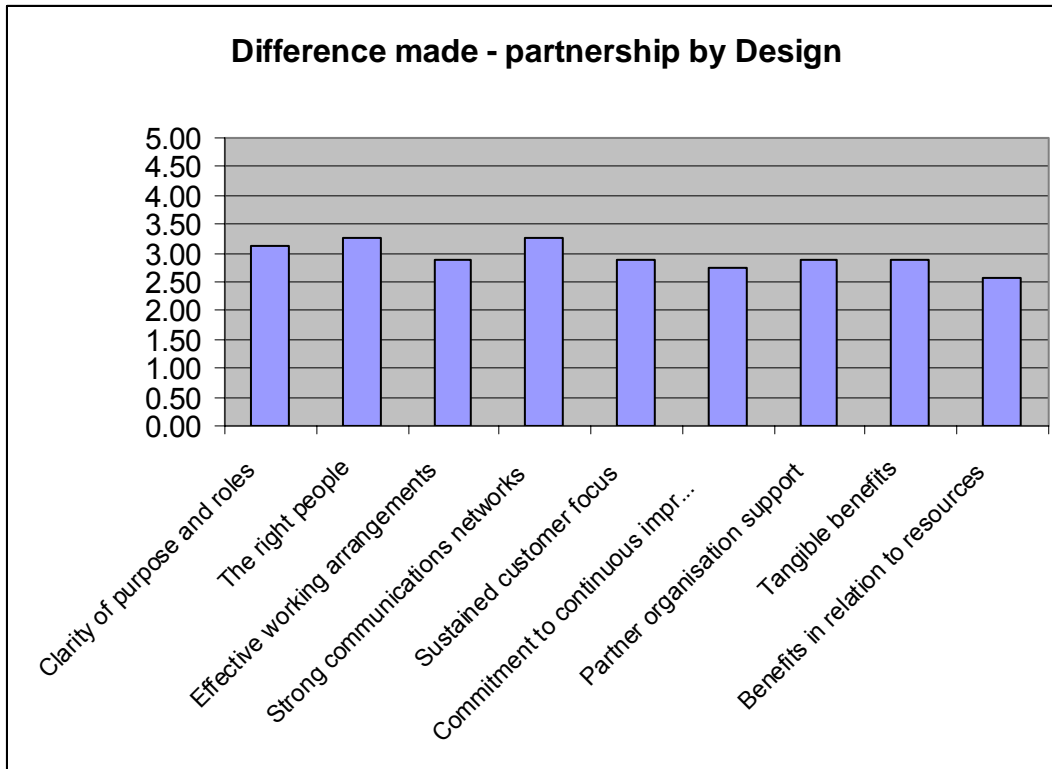


Diagram showing the average score (out of 5.0) for the perceived difference made by the Partnership by Design process (where 3.0 represents 'some difference' and 2.0 'little difference'). In terms of *benefits in relation to resources*, a score of 3.0 represents 'the benefits matched the resources'

For a copy of the 'difference made scorecard', see appendix A5. (Please note that there were only six internal and two external responses, that the range of scores was wide and so the averages need to be interpreted with care.)



## 4 The changing context

### 4.1 The changing significance and role of partnership

There have been three key developments since the introduction of Partnership by Design: The 'refreshment' of Smart Successful Scotland, the introduction of Local Economic Forums; and the introduction of Community Planning and Community Planning Partnerships. Recently the announcement that an Employability Framework for Scotland – with some clear expectations about significant local partnership working to make employability services clearer, more coherent and more effective – has served to re-emphasise the growing significance of effective partnership behaviour.

- The **refreshment of Smart Successful Scotland** has introduced a new focus on city regions (and cities as drivers of the economy), emphasised – for the first time – the need (and expectation) for SE and HIE to work in partnership with other agencies to achieve the objectives set out in Smart Successful Scotland and refined the significance of developing global connections – with its implication of international perspectives and partnerships.

**Implications for SED:** It is clearly going to be important for the LECs to appreciate the expectations placed upon them of effective partnership activity. With the development and application of the Partnership by Design process SED have a reputation of being 'ahead of the game' but they will wish to enhance the extent to which partnership practice and behaviour is embedded across the organisation and to recognise and reward effective partnership working if they are to maintain this reputation and meet newly raised expectations. Specifically, SED will wish to maintain their focus on the significance of partnerships as key delivery vehicles, ensure that 'city-region' partnerships are functional and effective, and apply their partnership experience to the growing significance of public/private partnerships and joint ventures.

- The introduction of **Local Economic Forums** following the publication by the Scottish Executive of National guidelines for Local Economic Forums in March 2001. The concept was put forward by the Scottish Parliament's Enterprise and Lifelong Learning Committee following their inquiry into local economic development. The role of Forums was to agree a programme of action for the streamlining and improvement of the local delivery of services and much of this is focused on effective partnership action to reduce overlaps, duplication and confused presentation of services to customers – and to fill gaps where necessary. The first focus of the Forums was on streamlining and coordinating business support services – this was a priority passed down to the Forums by the Executive. The second task was the development of local economic strategies which are now being implemented in the Forum areas.

**Implications for SED:** Following significant early achievement and associated commitment, many of the LEFs appear to be struggling with their focus and role and there is a need to ensure that the commitment of their important membership is maintained and supported in making a difference to the effective and efficient delivery of economic development services. For many LECs there is a key priority to ensure that the LEF partnership is sustained, committed and focused on a few areas where it can make a real difference. SED now have considerable insight and experience to offer to their LEF in terms of the benefits of partnership working. There is an opportunity to refocus and refine partnership activity in the LEF and influence the delivery of the local economic strategy.

- The **Local Government Scotland Act 2003** which created a legal framework for Community Planning Partnerships. With the creation of Community Planning Partnerships the Local Economic Forums became their economic development 'arm', and Scottish Enterprise and its LECs have a legal obligation to play their part in the Community Planning process.

**Implications for SED:** Although there appears to be a weakening in the significance placed on Community Planning by the Scottish Executive – and many Community Planning Partnerships also appear to be struggling to make sense of their brief – it is clear that with strong local leadership and effective partnership working the Community Planning approach can be hugely influential in delivering more joined up services which relate more closely to local needs. SED will need to ensure that:

- Their own contribution is whole-hearted, focused and effective
- They are helping the partnership as a whole to be effective and focused
- They are being realistic about the time and energy they devote to it in the light of the actual performance of other partners and of the partnership as a whole

In Appendix A6 we set out in more detail the current issues and practical implications of the development of the Community Planning process for SED and its partnership practices.

The implications of this context – Smart Successful Scotland, the development of Local Economic Forums and the taking forward of Community Planning – for SED are:

- The significance of **partnerships as structures for effective delivery** is – if anything – becoming stronger.
- The **expectations** on LECs and the SE Network more generally to engage productively with a wide range of partners has been heightened with the refreshment of Smart Successful Scotland
- This will require **new forms of partnership** which will be central to the achievement of SED's objectives: notably it will need to contribute to successful partnership working across the city region, exploiting the links to the drivers of the Glasgow economy; and developing new forms of public/private partnership to drive global connections and internationalise local services and products.

- SED has an important role to play **in helping key local partnerships** – notably the CPPs, the LEF and the structures that may be announced as part of the Employability Framework – to be focused and effective
- If SED is to play their role to the full they need to ensure that they have **extensive partnership skills and behaviours at all staff levels** and that their approach to partnership working is rigorous and systematic. There needs to be clear commitment from management which is explicit and understood by all

## 4.2 Other approaches and tools

As part of our brief we examined other tools and approaches to see if anything could be learnt from them that would be of value to SED and its partners. Specifically we were considering the following questions:

- Are there now other tools which would be of particular value to SED staff and their partners? If there are, in what circumstances would they be of value?
- What can we learn from the design of the tools in terms of content, format, ease of use and appeal? Does any of this need to be taken on board in further developing Partnership by Design?

Since the Partnership by Design toolkit was developed, other tools and approaches to evaluating and improving partnership working have appeared. In Appendix A7 we provide summaries of the content and focus of the most relevant toolkits. What a review of these toolkits reveals is that:

- There are now a **very wide range of tools** designed to help partnerships pinpoint their current strengths and weaknesses and use this to improve their performance
- Nearly all of them are **web-enabled** and this accessibility has been vital to their widespread use
- The most used tools all allow partners to carry out **quick interactive assessments** which produce guidance on appropriate ways forward. The process is short and appealing and can be carried out at any time by any member
- There is **nothing which approaches the depth (or demands) of Partnership by Design** – in other words there is no toolkit which provides a structure which matches the clipboard and the reporting process of Partnership by Design
- It is **difficult to identify particularly appropriate toolkits** as this will depend on personal preference and the different ways in which people work. However, there are a **relatively small number of high profile and widely used tools** – in other words they have stood the test of time and have proved usable and appealing by numerous partnerships and partners.

- There is **surprisingly little consensus about the key features of partnership success** – the only feature they all have in common is the need for clear and agreed purpose and objectives. The more recent tools all agree on the significance of partnership leadership.

One of the key issues raised by this review of other tools is about their appeal and simplicity of use. In a matter of minutes they can generate some real insights into development priorities and guide users to those areas that need further examination and action. Compared with this Partnership by Design appears to be quite a substantial 'all or nothing' approach.

It is likely that many people would like other choices – quicker and perhaps dirtier – which helped them quickly to assess the health of a partnership and the kind of actions needed to enhance effectiveness and performance.

### 4.3 The local policy context

Our interviews revealed strong support for devoting time and effort to a relatively **small number of key strategic and operational partnerships**. Interviewees identified the following as the **key strategic partnership**:

- Local Economic Forum – responsible for the economic development input to the Community Planning Partnership and therefore of central importance to the development of coherent and coordinated approaches to the local economic development task
- East Dunbartonshire Community Planning Partnership:
- West Dunbartonshire Community Planning Partnership
- Argyll and Bute Community Planning Partnership

The Community Planning Partnerships are **the** strategic planning partnership: it has legal status and the LEC has a specific legal obligation to contribute to them.

The three Councils are the key partners of SED and it is recognised that they require considerable investment as strategic partners.

Interviewees identified the following as the **key operational partnerships**:

- Employability Partnership
- Business Gateway Management Team
- Global Connections Partnership
- Clydebank Rebuilt
- Strathleven Regeneration Company
- Loch Lomond National Park (SED work on an operational level)

#### 4.4 Organisational context

In the new Customer Relationship Management (CRM) System which is being rolled out across the SE Network, it is anticipated that a partnership will be treated like any other relationship. At the moment there is no requirement to input information about partnerships. That may change when phase 2 (or possibly phase 3) of the implementation starts in April 2005 – it will be up to SE National to make a decision about what (if any) kind of information will be required.

If people do choose to enter information about partnerships, the kind of information they are likely to enter will be about the partnership as a lead/opportunity, and include details about:

- Proposed actions
- Agreed actions
- What has actually been done

Parts of the Partnership by Design tool are currently integrated in Scottish Enterprise National's intranet under relationship management (in the evaluation section). The process of Partnership by Design has been lost in the way that it is integrated in the Relationship Management toolkit as it appears in disaggregated bits and pieces.

The relationship management part of the intranet also includes a relationship management toolkit section which links to a 'criteria proforma'. The use of this proforma is mandatory "if you wish to apply the principles of the Scottish Enterprise Relationship Management process in full".



## 5 Evaluation of Partnership by Design: Conclusions and lessons

### 5.1 What difference has it made?

The overall Partnership by Design process was a **significant investment** for SED – we estimate that the total cost in terms of consultancy and staff time has been in excess of £150,000. This appears to be an appropriate investment in the development of a thorough process to ensure company wide understanding of the principles and practices of effective partnership action and behaviour.

Our assessment of how the outcomes of the process compared to the investment of time and resources is on three levels:

- The outcomes for SED as an organisation in relation to SED investment
- The outcomes for individual partnerships in relation to the staff time resources required by the Partnership by Design review process
- The partnership database

#### ***The outcomes for SED as an organisation***

It is inevitably difficult to assess the outcomes from the Partnership by Design process for SED as an organisation and to attribute these directly to the process.

It is clear that the process overall had a high profile and was **viewed very positively** by staff. It also went further than benefiting SED – partly because of the inclusive design process which involved partners and partly because of the partnership reviews themselves.

The process lead to a number of **intangible outcomes** such as:

- Heightened focus and awareness of partnerships in SED
- Increased staff understanding of partnership, practices and behaviours
- The creation of a valuable 'mental map' for those working in partnerships that has encouraged a more rigorous approach
- Enhanced listening skills
- SED staff 'walking the talk' in terms of partnership working in relation to partners and the effect this may have had

It is impossible to estimate the value of these intangible outcomes, **but we are clear that it is important not to undervalue them.**

A number of individual partnerships benefited from the Partnership by Design process. More importantly, the Partnership by Design process significantly heightened awareness within SED about the key features of successful partnership behaviour and helped to embed a more systematic and rigorous approach to partnership activity. In other words there was a 'passing wave' of a strong and active focus on partnership working and its effectiveness, supported by a thorough and systematic framework, and when it had passed SED was not the same.

Specifically, it left the organisation with **enhanced partnership skills** which have been applied to other partnerships and situations.

The key strength of Partnership by Design was the creation of a thorough and detailed structure for engaging one to one with other partnership members. This investment enhanced the quality of working relationships and this benefit appears to have spilled outside the specific partnerships to benefit relationships more generally.

There was a **missed opportunity to embed the process in SED's structures** and operational management (for example individual appraisals), which meant a drop off in use and consequently the potential of the Partnership by Design process was not exploited to the degree it could have been.

### ***The outcomes for individual partnerships***

While some partnerships gained few or no benefits from the process, others benefited greatly from the Partnership by Design review process. The **tangible benefits** that were created for individual partnerships by the review process included:

- Increased clarity of purpose
- Increased commitment
- More effective and efficient organisation of the partnership
- Stronger mutual understanding

In one case the process led to a **complete re-organisation and refocusing** of a partnership as the New Deal Strategic Partnership became the Employability Partnership (many other New Deal Strategic Partnerships across the UK were broadening their scope at about the same time but it is clear the Partnership by Design process was the key driver for this change in Dunbartonshire)

### ***The partnership database***

In retrospect it is clear that the creation of the **partnership database** has not offered SED value for money. It was only used once or twice to put out information about partnerships and the information is now out of date. There is access to the database from the current intranet but there is no evidence of active use.



## 5.2 Lessons for the future

- Tools such as Partnership by Design **can make a significant difference to partnership working** and to individual partnerships. Tools and structures can create good habits – which become working practices (**'mental maps'** of good partnership working)
- Effective partnership behaviour and working practices **must be embedded in the systems and processes of an organisation** and these can be supported by a tool such as Partnership by Design. There is real scope to work closely with the ongoing review of the relationship management toolkit at Scottish Enterprise National
- Great partnerships invest a considerable amount of **time** in deepening their understanding of each other and in regularly reviewing their focus, objectives and performance. In this context the amount of time required by the Partnership by Design process is modest. It was reasonable to expect this kind of investment, but in practice it has proved to be too much for many staff and the process has not proved to be as appealing or straightforward enough in its application as originally hoped.
- Such a **process needs to be driven at different levels**. It needs to be supported by management with an understanding that people need to set sufficient time aside – not just for attending partnership meetings but ensuring that between these meetings partnership action moves forward and SED make their full contribution.
- This is likely to be linked to a wider issue within SED about the way that tasks and responsibilities are linked to investments of time and **how this investment of time is recorded and managed**. Without this clear allocation of time to support an individual's contribution to a partnership, and the effective recording and management of these allocations it is unlikely that tasks such as partnership building will be seen as other than a low priority burden placed on top of more pressing day to day demands.
- A partnership tool with a focus on one partner – brought to the partnership table by one partner and analysing in detail the contribution by only one partner – **raises issues of review leadership and ownership**. Many partners clearly perceived the tool as an “SED thing” and expected SED to lead the review process.
- The Partners by Design review process needs to be **streamlined** and the review process should only be embarked upon with **'the right partnerships at the right time'**.
- To fit with the changing context of partnership working and the new working practices that SED now face, the Partnership by Design toolkit should be **complemented by other tools** – some allowing objective and facilitated partnership reviews by an independent third party; others creating quick internal checklists or self assessments for SED staff and their partners. There need to be tools for individuals, organisations and partnerships.

- There is a need for an **'induction tool'** which introduces new members of staff to existing partnerships

## 5.3 Recommendations

### Tools

The Partnership by Design toolkit has brought SED a wealth of learning; in moving forward it is important to build on this. This should involve:

- Maintaining but streamlining the Partnership by Design toolkit.
- Reviewing the detailed content of the toolkit in the light of experience (for example, the toolkit does not currently include the characteristic of leadership, and it would be appropriate to review this in the light of recent developments in our understanding of effective partnerships).
- Complementing the toolkit with other tools. These tools will be a mixture of development of other tools as well as bespoke tools for SE and would offer SED staff and partners a range of tools from which they can choose according to their need and situation.

### Processes

In order to embed the tools and their use in SED and Scottish Enterprise National we would recommend the following approach is taken:

- There is an ongoing review of the relationship management toolkit on the SE's intranet led by Claire Maclellan at Scottish Enterprise National. There is real scope to work closely with the team behind this ongoing review, to ensure that not only SED but the rest of SE have access to the tools that will be developed.
- Phase 2 of the CRM systems' development may not include anything specific about partnership. There may be scope to influence the way partnership working is approached in the continued development of the CRM system.
- CMT's commitment to partnership working. We recommend a structured approach which will set out what the required tools are, how it is expected they will be used and the consequences of that in terms of workload management and dedicated 'partnership management' time for managers and staff.
- Partnership working embedded in SED's future operational plans. In recognition of the growing importance of partnership working, the approach taken by SED and the associated resources to support this process should be included in SED's operational plan. This will give clarity to staff about the priority of and support for partnership working.

## 5.4 Next steps

SED has real expertise in partnership working. To build on this and take forward the continued effort to focus on and improve partnership working in the organisation, we propose the following process:

Stage	Task	Description
1	Initial development of 'Partnership Tools' document and tools	<p>The 'Partnership tools' document will identify the needs to be met in a future toolkit and allow Rocket Science UK to do focused desk research of other tools which meet these needs</p> <p>The document will set out the need for tools in terms of different users (individuals, organisations, partnerships), the stage of the partnership, and the function of the tool (quick review, full review, progress and performance measurement)</p> <p>Refine the Partnership by Design toolkit</p> <p>Desk research of other possible tools</p> <p>The initial development of tools based on the needs identified in the framework document</p>
2	Workshop with staff and subsequent piloting of tools	<p>Presentation of the 'Partnership Tools' document</p> <p>Opportunity for staff to provide initial feedback</p> <p>Plan for subsequent piloting of different tools</p> <p>Receive feedback from piloting of different tools</p>
3	Workshop with staff and managers	<p>Workshop with staff and managers to present the revised tools and review support needs</p>
4	Final 'Partnership Tools' document and final tools	<p>The final 'Framework for Partnership Investment' document will contain a policy framework for the use of partnership working tools, including the time and support set aside for staff to engage in 'partnership management'</p> <p>The final stage will involve a presentation to the CMT</p>
5	Launch of toolkit	<p>Training session with managers</p> <p>Handover of documentation</p>

## Appendices

### A1 Interviews about Partnership by Design and aide memoire

Name	Organisation	Face 2 Face	Phone	Scorecard
Mags Letham	SED		√	
Derek Kane	SED	√		
Alison Bennett	SED	√		√
John Godwin	SE Glasgow		√	
Bob Gibson			√	√
Scott Govan	SED	√		
Ricky McGilchrist	SED		√	
Stuart Ward	SED		√	√
Irving Hodgson	West Dunbartonshire Council		√	
Judith Pollock	East Dunbartonshire Council		√	
Fiona Dickson	East Dunbartonshire Council		√	

## Evaluation of Partnership by Design

John Morrison	East Dunbartonshire Council		√	
Chris Thomas	SED	√		√
Jim McAloon	SED	√		
Allan McQuade	SED	√		√
Lynn Rew	SED	√		
Alex Mackenzie	GGHB		√	

### PROJECT INTERVIEWS: AIDE MEMOIRE

#### Choice of partnership and introduction of PbD

- Why was this partnership selected for the use of PbD?
- How was the process introduced to members?
- Was there agreement among all members that this would be valuable?

#### Experience

- How did the process go?
  - Initial internal Review (ie of SED interest and partnership contribution to SED objectives)
  - Interviews
  - Consideration of initial audit
  - Full review

#### Action plans

- Did you identify issues for an action plan?
- Did you actually produce an action plan? What was the process like?
- To which extent have you followed up on the issues identified? (Note: Try to distinguish between the extent of follow up depending on whether the action plan was actually produced or not)

## Evaluation of Partnership by Design

### **For people who carried out the review**

- Was it clear what the process entailed and what you had to do?
- How easy was it to use the materials?
- What was the documentation like?
- Was the support you received adequate?
- Did you have any unanswered questions or concerns about the process?

### **Difference made**

- Were the recommendations fully adopted and applied?
- What difference did the use of PbD make to this partnership:
  - Clarity of purpose and role?
  - Membership (ie was it shrunk or expanded, or was current membership confirmed as appropriate)?
  - Effective working arrangements?
  - Strong communications networks?
  - Sustained customer focus?
  - Commitment to continuous improvement?
  - Partner organisation support?
- What difference did the use of PbD make to the customer focus?
- What difference did the use of PbD make to SED involvement in this partnership?

### **Lessons**

- What were the strengths and weaknesses of the PbD process in this case?
- What were the most useful aspects of the process, and what were the least useful aspects?
- What did you learn from this application of the PbD process about the parts of PbD that it is important to keep, and the parts that need to be streamlined?

**A2 Interviews about the future of partnership working**

Name	Organisation	Face 2 Face	Phone	Scorecard
Mags Letham	SED		√	
Andy McQuire	SE Lanarkshire		√	
John Godwin	SE Glasgow		√	
Ruth Roy	SED	√		
Fiona Dickson	East Dunbartonshire Council		√	
John Morrison	East Dunbartonshire Council		√	
Steve Inch	Glasgow City Council	√		
Ian Mitchell	Communities Scotland	√		
Dave Anderson	SED	√		
David McGregor	SED	√		
George Thom	East Dunbartonshire Council		√	
Isabel Brown	Scottish Enterprise National		√	

## **AIDE MEMOIRE – STRATEGIC STAKEHOLDERS**

**(Please note: Strategic stakeholders were only asked questions about the Partnership by Design toolkit and review process if they were familiar with it. Otherwise, they were asked the strategic questions of current partnership working challenges and the implications of this for future tools and processes)**

### **1. Context**

What are the main factors affecting the context in which partnerships now operate?

What are the practical implications of the changing context for partnership working?

- Public sector partnerships
- Private sector partnerships
- SED involvement in partnerships

### **2. Design Process and Implementation**

What resources were required to create and implement Partnership by Design?

- support input
- mentoring input
- other

Why was there such a significant fall off in its use after its initial two years?

Why was there such a low conversion rate between Full Reviews and Action Plans and a further fall off from Action Plan to sustained implementation?

When did Partnership by Design work best and why?

What demands did it place on individuals and the wider organisation in terms of time and support?

What were the main benefits of the process both to the partnership and individual organisations?

Is there any evidence of the impact on the performance of SED as a partner?

### **3. Analysis**

How would you rate its effectiveness and efficiency?

Can the systems, process and materials be streamlined and simplified?

Where has it not worked so well? What are the reasons for this?

- Bilateral partnerships
- Project partnerships
- Strategic partnerships
- Operational partnerships



#### **4. Improvements**

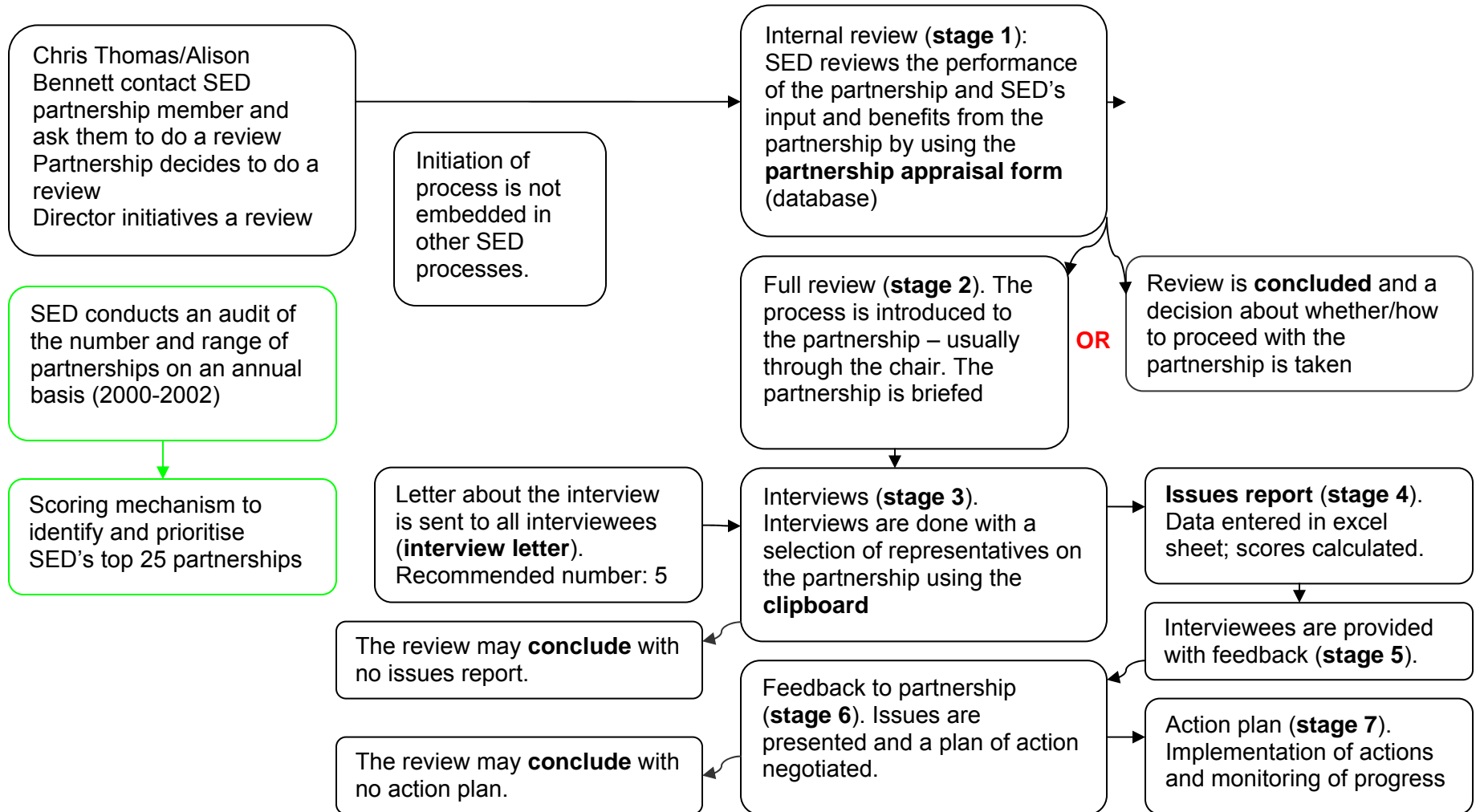
Are you aware of any good practice against which Partnership by Design could be benchmarked?

What can be done to ensure that partners are fully motivated to enhance the effectiveness of their partnership and value Partnership by Design in helping them to do this?

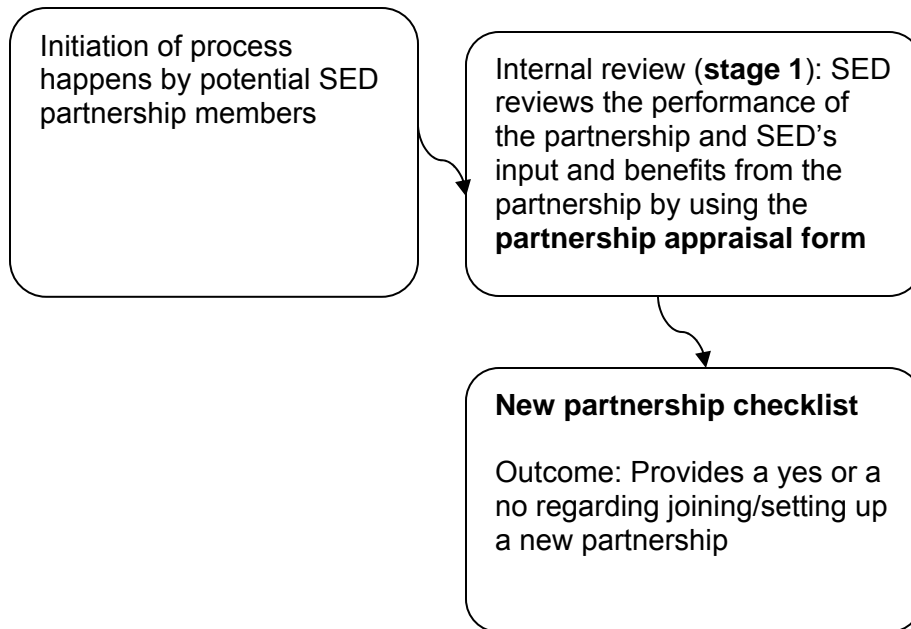
How can the conversion rate between Full Review and Action Plan be enhanced – and how can we ensure real commitment to the sustained implementation of the Action Plan?

### A3 Diagram of the Partnership by Design process

#### PROCESSES – PARTNERSHIP BY DESIGN – EXISTING PARTNERSHIPS



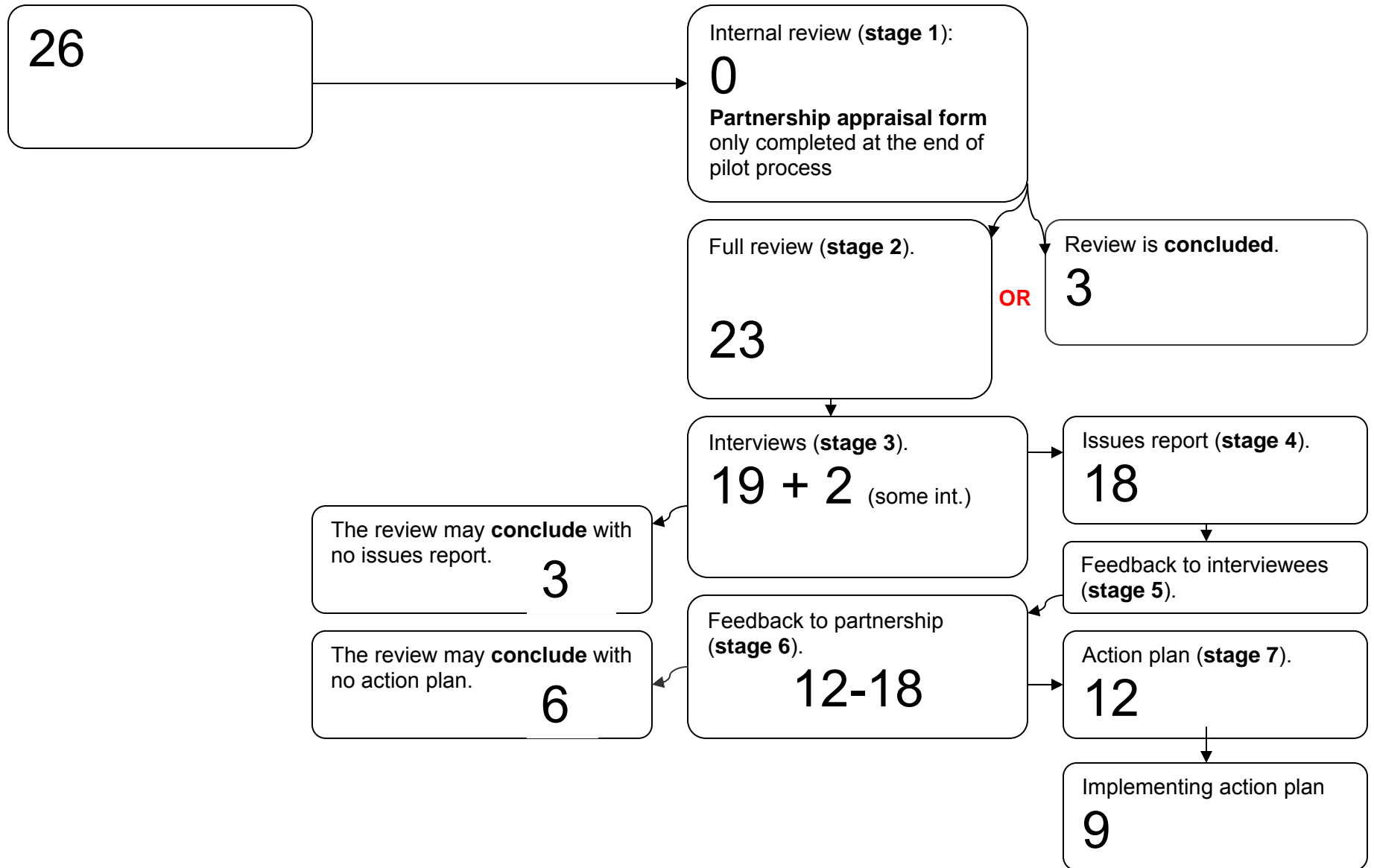
**PROCESSES – PARTNERSHIP BY DESIGN – NEW PARTNERSHIPS**



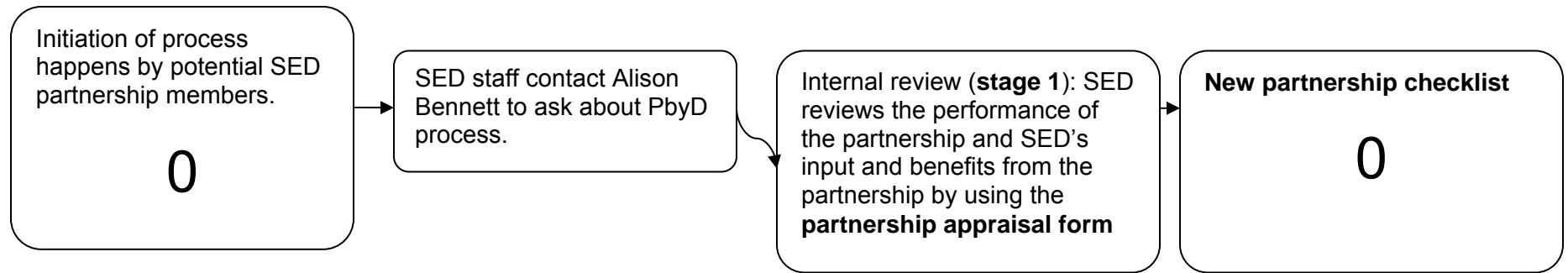
#### **A4 Stages reached by the different Partnership by Design reviews**

The following diagram is a copy of the process diagram in appendix A3 and sets out the number of partnerships completing the different stages.

**EXISTING PARTNERSHIPS – NUMBERS AT EACH STAGE**



**NEW PARTNERSHIPS – NUMBERS AT EACH STAGE**



**PARTNERSHIP REVIEWS AND THE STAGE THEY REACHED**

**Key:**

**Stage not reached**

**Stage reached**

Name of Partnership	SED Exec	Interviewees	Stage reached				
			Interviews	Database	Issues report	Action plan	Implementation
HRD Forum	Ricky McGilchrist	Bill Rae – MOD Martin Bell – Quisine Ann Rushforth - Scotnursing					
New Deal Strategic Partnership	Derek Kane	Mike O'Donnell – SIP Pam Courtney – EDC (has left) Anne Wilson – Job Centre Plus Irving Hodgson - WDC					
Lennox Castle Task Force	Mhairi Donaghy (no longer with SED)	John Dempsey – EDC George Thom – EDC Tom Campbell – NHS Andrew Thomson – EDET					
Strathclyde European Partnership	Virginie Hannah	Michael McKearnan – SEP Lorraine Irvine – SEP Sallyann Low – SEP					
Training Providers Network	Derek Kane	Marie Sommerville – EDL Duncan Mitchell – Addapt Louise McKenna George Thomas – TELL Michael Gill – WDC Cameron Morris – formerly SED, now TLP					

Evaluation of Partnership by Design

Name of Partnership	SED Exec	Interviewees	Stage reached				
			Interviews	Database	Issues report	Action plan	Implementation
Strathclyde European CE's Group	Dave Anderson	Lorraine McMillan – SER Hugh Cameron Russell Simpson – Russell Simpson Associates Liz Connelly – SEL					
Small Business Gateway	Madeline Smith (now in AQ)	Graham Keith – TLP Judith Pollock – EDC Bob Adams – SEN Mags Letham – SED Seamus Lalor – ABC (left) Alistair McKinnon WDC					
Learning Community	Mhairi Robertson	Bobby Jones – now WDC Roddy McVicar – TELL Anna Hemphill – OntoWork Susan Carragher – WDC					
West Dunbartonshire SIP	Jim McAloon	Mike O'Donnell – WD SIP Archie Thompson – Community Rep June Todd – Community Rep George Gillespie – SIP Chair Andy White – WDC					
West Dunbartonshire Community Plan	Chris Thomas	David Dowie – Comms Scotland Tom Jackson – Coordinator John Godwin – SED (now SEG) Liz Cochrane – WDC Helen McKee – GGHB Tim Huntingford - WDC					
Get Learning Steering Group	Shona Cormack (now with SE Tayside)	David Wilkinson – Consultant Brian Lister/Peter Malcolm – Cumbernauld College Matt Mochar – Clydebank College Tom McCusker – Cumbernauld Coll.					
Futures Programme	Madeline Smith (now at AQ)	Mags Letham – SED Linda Kearney – SEL Anna Hemphill – Onto Work Cynthia Beckwith – SEA Ian Mackenzie – Client Roddy Whiteford – Cameron House					



Evaluation of Partnership by Design

Name of Partnership	SED Exec	Interviewees	Stage reached				
			Interviews	Database	Issues report	Action plan	Implementation
Kirkmichael SIP	Aileen Edwards	Margaret McSorley Liz Manon – SIP Eileen McRory Ronnie Finnigan Lynn Smillie – ABC					
East Dunbartonshire Community Plan	Alison Bennett, Action Planning process led by Fiona Dickson, EDC	John MacDonald – SPT Cllr Julia Southcott – EDC Brian Raeburn – East of S Water Alex MacKenzie – GGHB Vicki Nash – EDC					
New Community Authority	Derek Kane	Grace Gunnell – WDC Marjorie Logue – Careers Scotland Gordon Paterson – Clydebank Col. Neil McKechnie – WDC Danny McCafferty – WDC					
PSYBT	Mags Letham	Martin Ferrie – PSYBT John Godwin – SED (now SEG)					
Dunbartonshire Export Partnership	Stuart Ward	Jim Timmoney – SED Ian Downie – ABC Judith Pollock – EDC Margaret Finnie Bob Gibson – WDC					
West of Scotland Loan Fund	Judith Pollock (EDC)	Bob Gibson – WDC David Kermack Richard Gibson Robert Paton Andrew Dickson - DSL					
Clydebank College	Alison Abraham	No commitment to pursue					
National Park Group/Balloch Forum	Allan McQuade	No commitment to pursue					
Argyll and Bute Community Planning	Chris Thomas						
LIS Team Scotland	Scott Sanderson		Some				

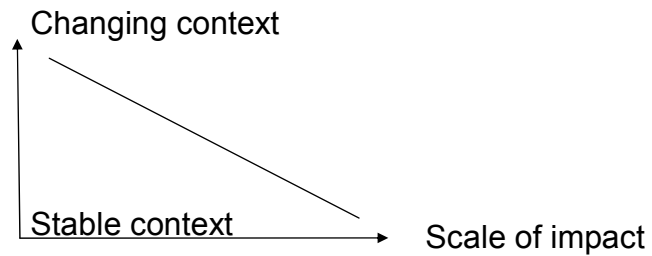
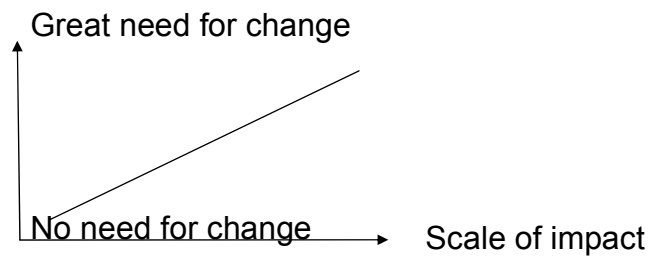
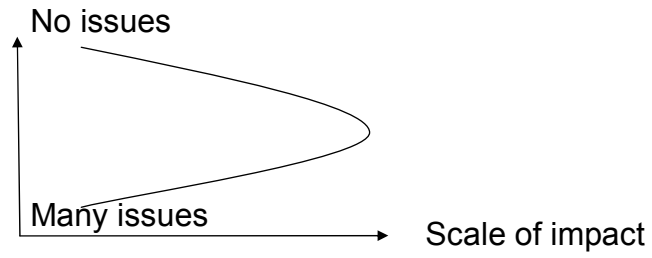
Evaluation of Partnership by Design

Name of Partnership	SED Exec	Interviewees	Stage reached				
			Interviews	Database	Issues report	Action plan	Implementation
West Dun Millennium Link Forum	Lynn Rew		Some				
AILLS Tourist Board	Dave Anderson	Review never started					
East Dun Millennium Link Working Group	Mhairi Donaghy (left SED)	Review never started					
Clydebank Task Force	Elaine Reilly	Review never started					

## Evaluation of Partnership by Design

The feedback from interviewees made it clear that Partnership by Design was particularly effective when the following conditions were right:

- some issues, but neither too few or too many
- an understanding of a need to change the partnership
- a stable context



### A5 Difference Made Scorecard

SCORECARD TOPIC	1	2	3	4	5
<b>Topic: Difference made – Partnership by Design</b>					
<b>Clarity of purpose and roles</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The PbyD process made no difference to the clarity of purpose and roles of the partnership</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The PbyD process made little difference to the clarity of purpose and roles of the partnership</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The PbyD process made some difference to the clarity of purpose and roles of the partnership</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The PbyD process made quite a lot of difference to the clarity of purpose and roles of the partnership</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The PbyD process made a very significant difference to the clarity of purpose and roles of the partnership</li> </ul>
<b>The right people</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The PbyD process made no difference to the right people being present in the partnership</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The PbyD process made little difference to the right people being present in the partnership</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The PbyD process made some difference to the right people being present in the partnership</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The PbyD process made quite a lot of difference to the right people being present in the partnership</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The PbyD process made a very significant difference to the right people being present in the partnership</li> </ul>
<b>Effective working arrangements</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The PbyD process made no difference to the working arrangements of the partnership</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The PbyD process made little difference to the working arrangements of the partnership</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The PbyD process made some difference to the working arrangements of the partnership</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The PbyD process made quite a lot of difference to the working arrangements of the partnership</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The PbyD process made a very significant difference to the working arrangements of the partnership</li> </ul>
<b>Strong communications networks</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The PbyD process made no difference to the partnership's communications networks</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The PbyD process made little difference to the partnership's communications networks</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The PbyD process made some difference to the partnership's communications networks</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The PbyD process made quite a lot of difference to the partnership's communications networks</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The PbyD process made a very significant difference to the partnership's communications networks</li> </ul>
<b>Sustained customer focus</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The PbyD process made no difference to customer focus in the partnership</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The PbyD process made little difference to customer focus in the partnership</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The PbyD process made some difference to customer focus in the partnership</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The PbyD process made quite a lot of difference to customer focus in the partnership</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The PbyD process made a very significant difference to customer focus in the partnership</li> </ul>

Evaluation of Partnership by Design

SCORECARD TOPIC	1	2	3	4	5
<b>Topic: Difference made – Partnership by Design</b>					
<b>Commitment to continuous improvement</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The PbyD process made no difference to the commitment to continuous improvement in the partnership</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The PbyD process made little difference to the commitment to continuous improvement in the partnership</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The PbyD process made some difference to the commitment to continuous improvement in the partnership</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The PbyD process made quite a lot of difference to the commitment to continuous improvement in the partnership</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The PbyD process made a very significant difference to the commitment to continuous improvement in the partnership</li> </ul>
<b>Partner organisation support</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The PbyD process made no difference to partner organisation's support to the partnership</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The PbyD process made little difference to partner organisation's support to the partnership</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The PbyD process made some difference to partner organisation's support to the partnership</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The PbyD process made quite a lot of difference to partner organisation's support to the partnership</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The PbyD process made a very significant difference to partner organisation's support to the partnership</li> </ul>
<b>Tangible benefits</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The PbyD process provided no tangible benefits to the partnership</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The PbyD process provided a few tangible benefits to the partnership</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The PbyD process provided some tangible benefits to the partnership</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The PbyD process provided quite a lot of tangible benefits to the partnership</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The PbyD process provided a very significant amount of tangible benefits to the partnership</li> </ul>
<b>SED benefits in relation to time and resources invested</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The time and effort put into the PbyD process far exceeded the outcomes achieved for SED</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The time and effort put into the PbyD process exceeded the outcomes achieved for SED</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The outcomes achieved by the PbyD process for SED matched the time and effort put into the process</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The outcomes achieved by the PbyD process for SED exceeded the time and effort put into the process</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The outcomes achieved by the PbyD process for SED far exceeded the time and effort put into the process</li> </ul>

## A6 The changing context in terms of community planning

A number of issues facing the **Community Planning process** at its current stage of development can be identified:

- There is a risk that the **process becomes overwhelmed** by everyone wanting to use it (and its structures) to deal with every problem of joining up services and engaging with communities. SED can help by ensuring that it doesn't add to this burden and by helping the partnership to focus on some key areas where the CPP can make a real difference.
- There is a real issue about the **accountability of partnerships**: in other words there are leaders and managers who are directly accountable through systems that do not require them to go through a process of engaging with communities. In some areas this paradox is overridden by strong leadership which builds these requirements into performance management. But in many areas the community planning process appears to be listless because of the lack of motivation for change. SED is in a position to make a real difference by ensuring the committed and skillful contribution of its own staff at every level – in those areas related to its objectives and resources.
- So the third key issue is about building the community planning process into **appraisal systems** to ensure that its two requirements of community engagement and effective delivery through joined up action are required forms of behaviour. SED needs to ensure that the contribution to effective partnership working and delivery by each member of staff is required, recognised and rewarded.

Quite a sophisticated array of support is being put in place for the community planning process:

- The Communities Scotland toolkit has been produced
- Standards for Community Engagement have been produced and are now being piloted
- Communities Scotland's Area Offices are supporting the production of ROAs – but there appears to be concern about the lack of innovation and learning that many of these display, and it is proving difficult to make the shift from a focus on outputs to a focus on outcomes.
- The Scottish Executive is extending the concept of Community Planning Champions to the local level
- The New Improvement Service for Local Government has introduced a support service for Local Government leaders
- The most recent announcement concerned support for community engagement through the Community Voices Network and the associated Community Voices Fund.

## Evaluation of Partnership by Design

This rapidly developing context has a number of important implications for partnerships and the support they require:

- The **significance of strategic partnerships** has grown and many are struggling with the issue of how to add value in terms of strategic integration and alignment and how to measure the progress and impact that they are making
- There is a growing recognition of the **significance of strong and effective leadership** in the community planning process – crucially in terms of creating the environment within which partnership behaviour can thrive and ensuring that community engagement and joined up delivery is explicitly incorporated in appraisal systems
- The **shift of emphasis from process to outcome** continues to strengthen and it is striking that this is leaving many partnership tools – which often focus on process at the expense of outcomes – behind
- There is growing experience in aligning strategies but limited experience in **jointly engaging with communities to understand needs**
- Community Planning Partnerships need help to **ensure that they are not overwhelmed by resolving problematic service joins – and to focus on those areas where only they can make a difference**
- Finally, there is growing interest in the **benchmarking** of joined up service delivery to allow partnerships to measure their progress, compare themselves with others and pinpoint and learn from good practice.

Local Community Planning Partnerships are currently looking at a number of toolkits to help frame an action plan to help facilitate partnership working. Some of the toolkits that have been identified as helpful include:

- “Communities Scotland - Managing Partnerships Handbook. This has a good theoretical basis but has a strong practical focus with specific advice on all aspects of partnership. I am finding this extremely helpful and informative.”
- “The Local Government National Training Organisation (lgnto) 'Smarter Partnerships' toolkit. [www.lgpartnerships.com](http://www.lgpartnerships.com). This has useful action headings and benchmarks but also with specific actions that you can undertake to meet the benchmarks that are outlined.”
- “The Rocket Science e-Scorecard for partnership and closing the opportunity gap developed for Communities Scotland.”

## **A7 Other tools and approaches**

### **Review of other tools and techniques available**

A growing number of tools and toolkits are now available which aim to assist partnerships to evaluate and improve their performance. There is considerable overlap between the tools and guidelines on offer although as yet no clear market leader has emerged. This section looks at some of the tools currently available and then considers how these relate to Partnership by Design

#### **Tools for individuals**

##### ***Communities Scotland: Detailed Guidance on Partnership Working***

This toolkit sets a clear context for partnership working and considers the variety of types of partnerships now in existence. In addition to the theoretical background and context of the key areas of partnership working, it offers a wide range of practical tools and guidance for assessing strengths and gaps as well as offering key insights into areas such as group dynamics or barriers to partnership working. [www.communitiesscotland.gov.uk](http://www.communitiesscotland.gov.uk). There are a large number of tools aimed at helping individuals understand and assess their involvement in meetings, teams and to other components of partnership.

#### **Tools for organisations**

##### ***Partnerships with People***

A Practical Guide - Demonstrating how innovative and successful organizations bring the best out of their people to achieve significantly enhanced business performance. This practical guide focuses on organisational structure and culture and offers partnerships practical advice on how to understand partner organisations. By demonstrating how innovative and successful organizations bring the best out of their people, the guide offers useful information for partnerships looking at how attitudes and staff skills affect organisational performance. [www.dti.gov.uk/pwp](http://www.dti.gov.uk/pwp) This report and worksheets look at an organisation's involvement in partnership.

#### **Tools for the whole partnership**

##### ***Practice, Progress and Value: Learning Communities - Assessing the Value they add.***

This toolkit offers frameworks for setting up, developing, sustaining and measuring partnerships and is clearly structured around partnership, participation and performance. Developed by the DfEE (now DfES) with a focus on learning to promote social cohesion and economic development, it offers guidance, ideas, examples and tools relevant to Community Planning. [www.lifelonglearning.co.uk](http://www.lifelonglearning.co.uk). It is based on tick-box lists of criteria for successful partnerships accompanied by ideas for actions.



***Renewal.net***

This toolkit is aimed at partnerships working as part of renewal and regeneration initiatives and offers insights for partners from public, private, voluntary, and community sectors. Particular tools give details on building and reviewing partnerships as well as helpful guidance on partnership membership and roles. [www.renewal.net](http://www.renewal.net)

***LSP Delivery Toolkit***

The LSP Delivery Toolkit is designed to support all Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs) in producing credible plans, putting in place their means for delivery, and reviewing and improving existing strategies.

***Build a partnership***

Partnership working is a requirement of almost all renewal and regeneration initiatives. It is essential to invest in building partnerships and making them work well in order to achieve a balance of both inclusiveness and effectiveness

***Smarter Partnerships***

This toolkit was specifically designed to help local authorities and their partners assess their partnership and facilitate its development. With a strong focus on partnership review, Smarter Partnerships also offers tools which help develop shared understanding, common values, and useful partnership skills.

***www.lgpartnerships.com***

This toolkit contains useful worksheets and processes for carrying out a health check for the whole partnership.

***Suffolk Partnership Evaluation Toolkit***

This toolkit was designed to enable evaluation and facilitate development of partnerships. Its self-assessment inventory looks at action, efficiency, inclusivity, learning and development, and performance management before transferring these issues into practical applications through an action plan. This is a useful tool for existing partnerships and examples show that many partnerships use it on an ongoing basis. [www.suffolk.org.uk](http://www.suffolk.org.uk)

***Five Vital Lessons***

A series of tools which aid partnerships to assess, review, understand and develop key components of their work as a partnership. Paying particular attention to involvement with the private sector, this toolkit is designed to help clarify performance issues and help partners agree priorities, future direction and joint action. <http://fivevital.educe.co.uk>

***Market Towns Healthcheck Handbook***

The handbook contains practical guidance and information for revitalising communities. As the title suggests it was developed on the theme of Market Towns but its advice and examples on creating, organising and driving a partnerships are equally relevant to Community Planning Partnerships committed to a strong engagement with their local community. [www.countryside.gov.uk](http://www.countryside.gov.uk) . This looks at setting up a partnership, gaining community commitment, completing a healthcheck, creating a vision, preparing an action plan, and putting the plan into action for partnerships.

## **Tools for partnership projects**

### ***Act Local. Community Planning For Sustainable Development. The Duthchas Handbook***

The Duthchas Project brought together 22 public agencies in 3 communities to develop strategic planning with clear commonality of vision, goals and objectives, and a coherent action plan. Focusing on the theme of sustainable communities the lessons for Community Planning range from planning a partnership through mapping the area to measuring progress. [www.duthchas.org.uk](http://www.duthchas.org.uk)

The handbook focuses on setting up projects in partnership. Looks at strategic approach as well as operational matters - resources etc. It includes guidelines and case studies.

### ***Renewal.net***

This toolkit is aimed at partnerships working as part of renewal and regeneration initiatives and offers insights for partners from public, private, voluntary, and community sectors. Particular tools give details on building and reviewing partnerships as well as helpful guidance on partnership membership and roles. [www.renewal.net](http://www.renewal.net)

### ***Define the problem toolkit***

Part of the process of bringing about neighbourhood renewal involves defining the problems and needs of a neighbourhood. Defining the problem involves moving from the identification of need to the development of a strategy for action

### ***Select a project toolkit***

Project appraisal is an essential tool in regeneration and neighbourhood renewal, but audits of appraisal practice have found significant weaknesses. Effective project appraisal offers significant benefits to partnerships and, most importantly, to local communities.

### ***Implement a project toolkit***

Topics considered here include: developing an implementation plan, recruiting and supporting staff and volunteers, managing money, securing commitments, managing performance, planning for the future and setting up project management arrangements

### ***Track progress toolkit***

Renewal partnerships need know whether and how far they are progressing towards achieving outcomes and meeting objectives. Tracking progress involves both short-term monitoring, of activities and expenditure, and longer term evaluation of impact and outcomes.

### ***Influence the mainstream toolkit***

Realigning the design and delivery of mainstream service provision is a key aim of neighbourhood renewal. Along with all their other priorities, of designing and delivering their own programmes, renewal partnerships have to develop strategies for influencing the agencies that are likely to be around once special funding has finished.

### ***An A to Z of partnerships and networks***

An A-Z of partnership with a specific focus on how to use the Internet to build networks and benefit communities [www.partnerships.org.uk](http://www.partnerships.org.uk)

***Competitiveness through Partnerships***

Department for Education and Skills site: Competitiveness through Partnership  
[www.dfes.gov.uk/led](http://www.dfes.gov.uk/led)

***Creating online networks***

Making The Net Work aims to help those planning to get their organisation or neighbourhood online, or create local technology centres. We are also interested in virtual teams and networks [www.makingthenetwork.org](http://www.makingthenetwork.org)

***Education and Skills Mutual Advantage***

Department for Education and Skills Mutual Advantage site: Working with Voluntary and Community Organisations on Learning and Skills [www.dfes.gov.uk](http://www.dfes.gov.uk)

***Guidance for public/voluntary sector partnerships***

The guidance draws on practical experience and should be of advantage to all those involved, or potentially involved, in partnership with public sector agencies  
[www.ourpartnership.org.uk](http://www.ourpartnership.org.uk)

***The Step by Step Guide to Practical Partnership***

Produced by RAISE (Regional Action and Involvement in the South East), the regional voluntary sector network for the South East, this document gives a step by step guide to successful partnership working. [www.raise-networks.org.uk](http://www.raise-networks.org.uk)

**Reports and Research**

***Joining Up to Improve Public Services***

This report examines the promotion of joint working between public, private, and voluntary sectors. It provides guidance on key drivers for joint working which are identified as goal setting, progress measurement, resource allocation, leadership, and shared responsibility. [www.nao.org.uk/publications](http://www.nao.org.uk/publications)

***Strategic Partnering for Local Service Delivery***

Exploring strategic service delivery partnerships between the public, private and voluntary sector, this recent publication is produced by the New Local Government Network, an independent think-tank [www.nlgn.org.uk](http://www.nlgn.org.uk)

***A Fruitful Partnership***

Though written in the form of a report, this paper contains checklists of questions which highlight and help address corer partnership issues including: deciding which partnerships to join; getting started; operating efficiently and effectively; reviewing success; alignment; use of resources; creative approaches; and influence. It is written by the Audit Commission and can be found on their website at [www.audit-commission.gov.uk](http://www.audit-commission.gov.uk)

***Partnership Working***

This report from the Scottish Executive Social and Economic Partnership Project considers (i) the meaning, role and principles of partnership working, (ii) current experience of partnership working, suggestions for improving partnership working, and

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views on new mechanisms for partnership working. It is available for download from the Scottish executive website at [www.scotland.gov.uk](http://www.scotland.gov.uk)

### ***Partnership Working: Key Issues around evaluation***

This report from the Office of the Chief Researcher of the Scottish Executive examines some of the key principles of partnership working and looks at a number of helpful definitions in evaluation of partnership (SMART, LEAP, ROAMEF). It is available for download from the Scottish executive website at [www.scotland.gov.uk](http://www.scotland.gov.uk)