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Institute of  
Environmental  
Health



**COLLABORATIVE COUNCILS:  
GUIDANCE ON PARTNERSHIP WORKING IN  
REGULATORY SERVICES**

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This guidance was produced by LACORS and CIEH in response to an increasing number of council regulatory services working together in a variety of ways across boundaries.

LACORS and CIEH would like to thank all those colleagues who provided information on their collaborative arrangements, which was essential to the guidance.

The guidance is designed to be a living electronic document that can be updated and we would welcome feedback and suggestions from councils. Are you working in an innovative partnership arrangement that is not included in the guidance? If so, please contact:

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## Drivers of Collaboration

Councils are increasingly developing innovative ways of working together to deliver regulatory services. A variety of different collaborative arrangements exist, some examples of which are explored in the case studies further on in this guidance. Councils may enter into such arrangements for an assortment of reasons, falling broadly within the categories of service improvement and cost savings.

### Service improvement

Councils are faced with pressure to improve their services, from central government through the performance framework, and from the public.

Human resource issues may in some cases provide the impetus for councils to work together, which can allow the pooling of resources and opportunities to raise the skill level of their workforce, and hence improving service levels.

The Pay and Workforce Strategy Survey 2006<sup>1</sup> showed that there are still many occupations where councils struggle to recruit and retain suitably skilled staff. Environmental Health and Trading Standards feature in the survey as two of the top 10 occupations experiencing recruitment difficulties; 58% of councils reported difficulties in recruiting environmental health officers. The Hampton Review 2005<sup>2</sup> also recognised the staffing level and recruitment and retention issues surrounding both the environmental health and trading standards professions.

Smaller councils may lack the critical mass of a specialist activity to employ specialist staff or, where having done so, those staff cannot maintain their expertise or there is no cover for absences. This problem was highlighted by the Performance Review 2005/6 Of Local Authority Air Pollution Teams<sup>3</sup> which found that officers commonly faced the following challenges:

- many were conducting the pollution control function in addition to other duties;
- many were unable to find, or obtain the resources required for training;
- many had academic backgrounds unrelated to pollution control;
- many had limited chances of increasing their experience, due to the small number of processes they regulate.

The idea of sharing expertise received wide support in terms of local authority industrial pollution work in the Action Plan Responding to Second Atkins Performance Review of LAPPC and LA-IPPC<sup>4</sup> which was produced jointly by Defra, CIEH, Welsh Assembly Government, National Society for Clean Air (now Environmental Protection UK), and LACORS. The report states a belief that shared working should be used more widely, although the approach used should depend on the authority and the circumstances. It recommends that all authorities should keep under review alternatives for service delivery, and should bear in mind the potential benefits of working with neighbouring authorities on a long-term basis or to fill gaps in regulatory service when losing a key officer.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.lgar.local.gov.uk/lgv/core/page.do?pagelid=24761>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/media/7/F/bud05hamptonv1.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/ppc/localauth/pubs/reports/pdf/perfreview-0506.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> [www.defra.gov.uk/environment/ppc/localauth/pubs/guidance/notes/aqnotes/pdf/action-plan.pdf](http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/ppc/localauth/pubs/guidance/notes/aqnotes/pdf/action-plan.pdf)

The CIEH management guide - Neighbourhood Noise Policies and Practice for Local Authorities<sup>5</sup> also suggests that developing an association or collaboration with other nearby councils and/or outsourcing elements of the noise management service may provide an economical but effective service for small authorities without specialists.

The Strong and Prosperous Communities White Paper<sup>6</sup>, published in October 2006, encouraged greater collaboration between councils and recognised the potential for service improvement:

*"There are significant opportunities to improve the quality and efficiency of services by joint working – either between some of the 388 councils in England, with other local public bodies, or at a regional or national level. We want all local authorities to unlock these potential benefits by delivering more services in collaboration with each other..."*

*"Collaboration is, therefore, essential if we are to really transform our services."*

And not only for 'back office' functions:

*"The potential benefits of collaboration for common transactional services have long been recognised, but frontline services can also benefit from partnership working and sharing."*

### **Efficiency & cost savings**

The White Paper also recognised the potential of councils working together to achieve greater efficiencies in addition to improvements in service delivery:

*"It will also be important for councils to develop new models of working, which should also involve collaboration between councils and other public bodies, if they are to achieve ambitious further efficiency improvements."*

The drive for efficiency has recently become even stronger, in part due to the announcement of the funding settlement that local government receives from central government in the Comprehensive Spending Review 2007. The Local Government Association states that the announced funding increases amount to real terms increases of 1.5% in 2008/09, 0.8% in 2009/10 and 0.7% in 2010/11. This comes at a time when local government is expected to deliver more and to do it better. This has led to innovation in the provision of services to maintain service levels, whilst maintaining council tax levels, the increase of which is highly politically sensitive.

Leader of Worthing Borough Council, Councillor Keith Mercer said:

*"I am very clear that Council services need to change with the times and that [joint working with Adur District Council] represents a real opportunity to meet the almost impossible challenges we face at a time of shrinking resources and yet the need to provide better services."*

There are other national drivers that may require greater collaboration if their efficiency requirements are to be met, including the Gershon review of public sector efficiency<sup>7</sup>, and the Hampton Review 2005 which considered the scope for reducing administrative burdens by

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<sup>5</sup> [http://www.cieh.org/library/Knowledge/Environmental\\_protection/Noise/NoiseManagementGuideSeptember2006.pdf](http://www.cieh.org/library/Knowledge/Environmental_protection/Noise/NoiseManagementGuideSeptember2006.pdf)

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/localgovernment/strongprosperous>

<sup>7</sup> [http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/media/C/A/efficiency\\_review120704.pdf](http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/media/C/A/efficiency_review120704.pdf)

promoting more efficient approaches to regulatory inspection and enforcement. The final report of the Lyons review into Local Government<sup>8</sup> published in March 2007 stated that efficiency improvements will continue to be a major driver for local government and achieving this is essential for gaining trust of the communities they serve. In addition, it states that innovation requires councils to assess whether they are best placed to provide services, or whether it may be more appropriate for them to commission such work.

### **Looking forward: multi-area agreements (MAAs)**

The operational guidance for the development of the Local Area Agreement framework<sup>9</sup> published by Communities and Local Government in November 2007 defines MAAs as “voluntary agreements between two or more top-tier or unitary local authorities, their partners (including, in two-tier areas, shire districts) and Government to achieve collective outcome-based targets to improve economic prosperity.” These agreements will therefore facilitate partnership working and collective decision-making. Communities and Local Government also recognises the potential for MAAs to achieve efficiencies through shared services and working towards common objectives.

The focus of MAAs will be policies related to economic growth, where it is logical to take a sub-regional view. For example, transport, planning and housing issues that transcend council boundaries. However, MAAs for objectives other than economic prosperity have not been ruled out and the structure is not fixed, but dynamic and evolving. The scope and composition of individual MAAs will vary, depending on the priorities and forms of governance of the particular sub-region.

The Local Government Association has produced a report on MAAs called ‘Pushing back the frontiers: the multi-area agreement pioneers’ which can be downloaded here:

<http://www.lga.gov.uk/Documents/Publication/pushingbackthefrontiers.pdf>

### **A note on the Strategic Partnering Workforce**

The Strategic Partnering Taskforce was established by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (now Department for Communities and Local Government) in 2001 to help local government improve services by working with other organisations, including other councils. Although their work is focussed on the most formal, strategic end of the partnership range, it does provide information and advice that may also be helpful to councils undertaking other types of partnerships, some of which is referenced within this document.

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<sup>8</sup> <http://www.webarchive.org.uk/pan/15454/20070428/www.lyonsinquiry.org.uk/docs/final-exec.pdf>

<sup>9</sup> <http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/localgovernment/pdf/550738>

## The Range of Collaborative Arrangements

The CIPFA guidance "Sterling Work - Financial Control and Budgeting for Local Authority Partnerships: A Practical Guide"<sup>10</sup> sets out four main types of partnership:

- (a) *executive partnerships*, which procure, directly, the works and services needed for the purposes of the partners; or which act in some other way on behalf of the partners
- (b) *advisory partnerships*, which procure few if any works or services. Instead, the partners agree, collectively, what each should henceforth do, individually, to further the collective objectives of the partnership. Ministers now often use the term *strategic partnership*, sometimes meaning any advisory partnership, but sometimes meaning multi-purpose advisory partnerships
- (c) *practical working arrangements* with other parties, often resting on correspondence or long usage
- (d) *contracts*, often called *partnering contracts*, which provide in various ways for an interactive relationship between clients and contractors. Neither party relies solely, as too often they do with traditional contracts, on compliance by the other with written contract conditions. Instead, one or more key features of the work are left to the parties to find and agree the best possible way of securing the objectives of both.

These are useful definitions, however for the purpose of this guidance, a different set of more specific categories of partnership are defined below. These have been developed using examples of councils working together that LACORS and CIEH are aware of. Working arrangements may not of course fit neatly into one definition and there are likely to be examples of 'hybrid' partnership arrangements, combining elements of one or more category. All arrangements have their relative advantages and disadvantages, and their appropriateness will depend on the particular situation and needs of the councils involved.

### Strategic Shared Service Provision

One of the most integrated approaches to partnership working is that of providing shared services across more than one council. Under this type of arrangement a strategic approach is taken when making decisions, and at an operational level officers provide services to residents across two or more council geographic areas.

The Strategic Partnering Taskforce<sup>11</sup> set out the following characteristics of a strategic service delivery partnership:

- demonstrates alignment of goals between partners;
- emphasises the importance of relationships;
- involves the delivery of services by one body on behalf of another or through joint working;
- aspires to deliver more value than a traditional contract;
- incorporates sharing of risk and reward;
- expects a change in behaviours from partners;
- intends to be flexible and is able to change in scope and nature over its lifetime;

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<sup>10</sup> <http://www.improvementnetwork.gov.uk/imp/aio/1001642>

<sup>11</sup> <http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/localgovernment/pdf/135055>

- demonstrates trust and good communication;
- focuses on outcomes rather than outputs;
- demonstrates joint working (planning, monitoring, problem-solving and decision making through a joint strategic board) and sharing of ideas and resources;
- is based on openness and honesty (e.g. open-book accounting);
- supports continuous improvement in service delivery over its lifetime and captures corporate learning;
- provides mutual benefit to all partners.

**Strengths:**

- Cost savings through efficiencies
- Consistency of service across more than one council area

**Weaknesses:**

- Potential dip in employee performance (due to redundancies, uncertainty etc)
- Elected members could have concerns about lack of local accountability

**Works well when:**

- Similar demographics and issues exist in the councils' areas
- Partners share objectives
- There is a history of working well together
- Councils are under the same political control
- Support services are also shared

**Formal partnership**

For a variety of reasons, councils may be reluctant to enter into an agreement where services are completely integrated and shared, as above. They may however still wish to realise the benefits of working effectively with other councils and may seek an alternative partnership structure to allow them to achieve their goals. This type of partnership might involve councils dedicating time and resources to working collectively, with the flexibility to engage on certain projects or work areas, whilst retaining a higher degree of independence.

**Strengths:**

- Allows pooling of resources (both financial and expertise)
- Consistency of service provision/enforcement

**Weaknesses:**

- Slow decision making if not managed properly

**Works well when:**

- Partners want to work together formally, but also retain independence and flexibility
- Partners have a history of working together effectively
- Support services are also shared

**Outsourcing a service**

Outsourcing is the practice of giving responsibility to deliver a service to another external organisation. This could include the private sector, but given the nature of this guidance, the focus here is on outsourcing from one council to another.

Outsourcing is not strictly 'partnership' working, given that one council is working on behalf of

another, as opposed to sharing resources and working jointly towards a shared objective. However, it is a way that councils may cooperate to address the pressures outlined in the introduction and therefore warrants consideration in this guidance.

**Strengths (for council outsourcing):**

- Use of expertise/specialist skills when they are scarce
- Where a small amount of activity exists in your area, service improvement through a larger/more experienced team in another council (rather than a part of one FTE)

**Strengths (for council taking on service provision):**

- More experience for your officers
- Potentially broader experience
- Better use of capacity/increased productivity
- Financial benefits that can be used to support your own service

**Weaknesses (for council outsourcing):**

- Possible loss of control
- Loss of experience/knowledge

**Weaknesses (for council taking on service provision):**

- Service in own area could decline if taking on too much work for existing workforce

**Works well when:**

- A council does not have a 'critical mass' of activity to support a full time employee, and a neighbouring council has a significant amount of activity in their area and consequent expertise
- Supported by a Service Level Agreement or similar

**Forming a consortium**

A consortium can be defined as cooperative arrangement among groups or institutions for a definite purpose.

**Strengths:**

- Stronger bargaining position, e.g. when procuring consultancy services
- Facilitation of information sharing

**Weaknesses:**

- A consortium is often not a legal entity, and therefore cannot procure services or hold finances itself – this must be done through one of the participating councils (lead council)
- Could lack focus if not well organised

**Works well when:**

- Working on a defined work area or specific issue
- A group of councils require procurement of consultancy services (especially where the consultant works within the councils to transfer skills to officers)
- All parties accept that it might not be equal 'give and take'

### **Joint employment**

This is an arrangement whereby officers or consultants are jointly employed to carry out work for more than one council. This might be as part of an existing partnership, or an independent arrangement.

#### **Strengths:**

- Cost savings
- Consistency of service across council areas
- Where there are small amounts of activity across councils, it allows officers to specialise and develop in-depth knowledge and expertise

#### **Weaknesses:**

- Differing enforcement policies and priorities across the councils could cause tension

#### **Works best when:**

- Small amounts of activity exist in neighbouring council areas
- Specialist knowledge is required, and expertise is scarce

### **Secondments**

A secondment can be defined as the detachment of a person from their regular organisation for temporary assignment elsewhere, or put more simply, where officers are 'borrowed' from one council by another. Situations may exist whereby councils may find it appropriate and beneficial to utilise this type of temporary arrangement. This is most likely to occur in emergency situations where authorities may temporarily have an enormous increase in their workload for a short period of time, for example, an outbreak of a serious animal disease or a major pollution incident.

#### **Strengths:**

- Ability to gain staff/expertise on a temporary basis

#### **Weaknesses:**

- Differing terms and conditions of staff from other councils can cause difficulties
- It may be necessary to provide an incentive for officers to undertake secondment

#### **Works best when:**

- A council requires extra staffing for a specific purpose or defined amount of time
- Managed by a formal agreement that sets out working conditions etc

### **Informal**

Some situations may be best served by a purely informal ad hoc arrangement, without any formal written agreements or contracts.

#### **Strengths:**

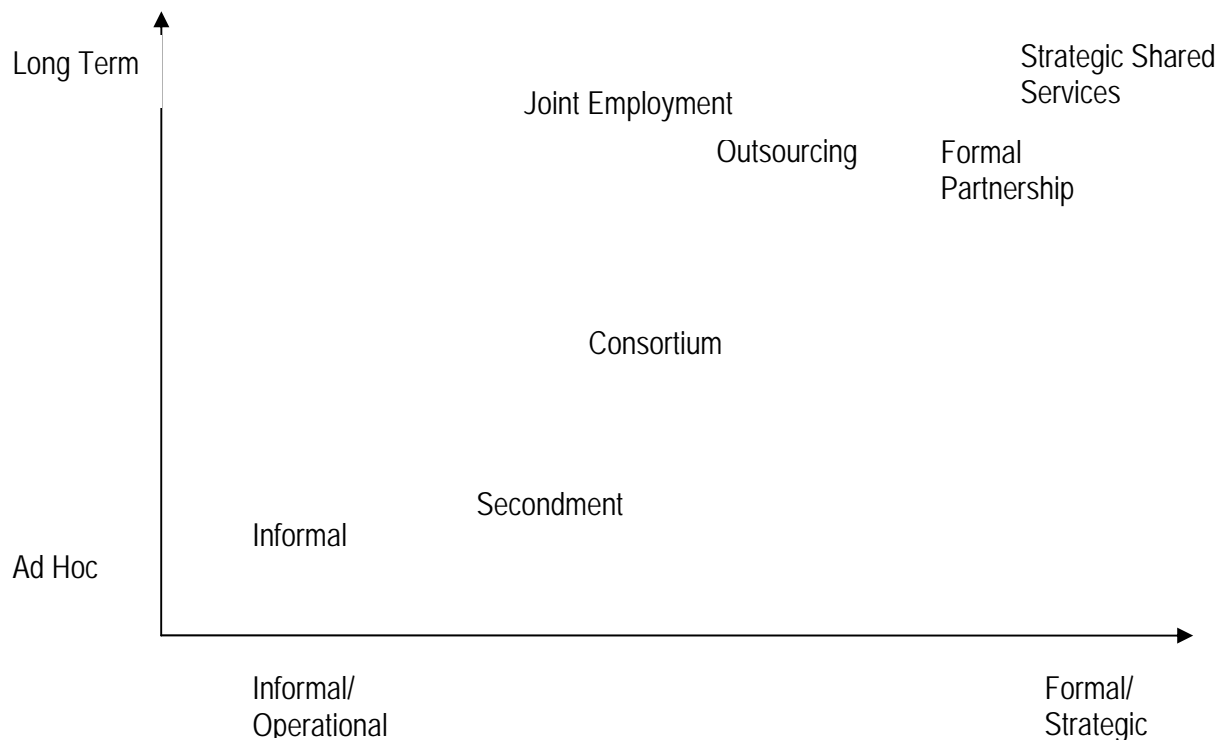
- flexibility

#### **Weaknesses:**

- Absence of a formal agreement could lead to lack of direction for the arrangement and confusion over objectives, governance, and resources

#### **Works best when:**

- Used for liaison/information sharing, rather than a specific project



### A Note on Trading Powers

The Local Government Act 2003 makes provision for councils to establish trading companies as joint ventures with other council and public bodies or the private sector. The legislation is not aimed at councils wanting to provide services to other councils or other public bodies.

The full text of the relevant part of the act can be viewed here: [Local Government Act 2003 \(c. 26\) - Statute Law Database](#)

A trading company set up jointly between two or more councils is most likely to occur as part of a broader partnership arrangement, rather than as a stand-alone activity. Although trading companies for regulatory services do not appear to be common, there are examples of them being used alongside regulatory services. An example of this can be seen in the Greater Manchester Public Protection Partnership case study.

The following documents provide further information, including the range of complex issues surrounding trading powers, and examples:

Using the new powers to trade and charge: local authority case studies:  
<http://new.lga.gov.uk/lga/aio/38444>

Enterprising councils: getting the most from charging and trading:  
<http://www.idea.gov.uk/idk/core/page.do?pagelid=1219494>

## Legal Framework

Local authorities can generally do only what they are expressly empowered to do and any contemplating entering into collaborative arrangements of any kind should be sure of their powers to do so. This may include seeking legal advice.

### **The Local Authorities (Good and Services) Act 1970**

This legislation enables councils to provide administrative, professional or technical services to other councils and to other public bodies (but not the private sector or the public in general) and section 1 (3) of the act provides for payment for these services. It should be noted that section 2 (2) requires that the accounts of a local authority entering into an agreement to provide a service under this act include a separate account in respect of the agreement

The full text can be viewed here: [The Local Authorities \(Good and Services\) Act 1970 - Statute Law Database](#)

### **The Local Government Act 1972**

Part VI of this act gives councils the ability to establish joint arrangements, such as the discharge of a function by another council (delegation) or the establishment of a joint committee.

The full text can be viewed here: [The Local Government Act 1972 - Statute Law Database](#)

### **Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations 2006**

These regulations preserve employees' terms and conditions when a business, or part of one, is transferred to a new employer. TUPE will apply if a "relevant transfer" occurs.

Councils considering a collaborative arrangement (such as jointly provided services) should ensure they are aware of any potential obligations under the Regulations.

The Improvement and Development Agency and Local Government Employers have jointly produced a guide to the regulations which can be accessed here:

<http://www.idea.gov.uk/idk/core/page.do?pagelId=6908271>

## Financial Considerations

Collaborative working between councils will undoubtedly raise financial and accounting issues. The extent and type of issues will depend on the type of arrangement concerned.

In response to the increase of partnerships in local government, CIPFA has published a comprehensive guide to financial and accounting issues in this context: "Sterling Work - Financial Control and Budgeting for Local Authority Partnerships: A Practical Guide":

<http://www.improvementnetwork.gov.uk/imp/aio/1001642>

The guide provides detailed advice, primarily aimed at Finance Directors, on the following areas:

- Assessing a partnership proposal
- Budgeting for partnerships
- Financial monitoring and control
- Financial reporting of partnership results

The Strategic Partnering Taskforce also produced a technical guidance note on strategic partnering and accounting, which although not comprehensive, does raise some relevant issues.

It highlights four potential areas to consider:

- Differences in the way accounting is performed
- Determining whether transactions are on or off balance sheet
- Assessment of value for money for each partner
- Open book accounting

To find out more, you can view the full document here:

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/localgovernment/pdf/135139>

The Audit Commission report 'Governing Partnerships'<sup>12</sup> highlights potential problems with assessing the costs of shared activity in partnerships:

- *corporate accounting frameworks do not offer the facilities needed for public bodies to record the full costs of partnership activities – opportunity costs and staff costs, as well as direct expenditure;*
- *although there are clear accounting streams for centrally funded partnership activity costs, many partnerships exist without dedicated external funding; and*
- *there is no common accounting framework across public bodies*

*Partnership governance arrangements can nonetheless set out clearly how funding is accounted for. Even where the partnership does not spend money directly, it will need to influence how partner bodies spend and it must be able to judge the impact of this funding in helping to achieve shared objectives.*

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<sup>12</sup> <http://www.audit-commission.gov.uk/reports/NATIONAL-REPORT.asp?CategoryID=&ProdID=1CDA0FEF-E610-463c-B3F3-220F607B1A2C>

## Human Resources Issues

Changes in service provision or structure of an organisation are likely to raise human resource issues, especially for arrangements which constitute a significant organisational change.

The Improvement and Development Agency and Local Government Employers have produced a guide on workforce issues in shared services. Although the guide is primarily aimed at HR professionals, it may contain some helpful information for managers or directors involved in a reorganisation: <http://www.idea.gov.uk/idk/core/page.do?pagelId=6328944>

Involving employees throughout the change process is likely to help achieve 'buy-in' and ease transition, as well as identifying any potential operational issues. The Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (ACAS) has produced an advisory booklet on employee communications and consultation, which is available here: <http://www.acas.org.uk/index.aspx?articleid=663>. The booklet outlines the importance of communication and consultations and sets out methods that can be used.

The Drive for Change project is sponsored by the Public Services Forum (Government, public service trade unions and employers) and contains practical advice for improving public services through effective engagement of trade unions and the workforce.  
<http://www.driveforchange.org.uk/index.asp>

Beacon Pendle Borough Council was awarded Beacon status for 'Transforming the delivery of services through partnership' and produced a Ten Point Guide to Member Involvement and Engagement: <http://beacons.idea.gov.uk/idk/aio/5806178>

## Ingredients for Success

From the information provided by councils that are involved in partnership working, it is clear that there are certain conditions which may make it more likely that a partnership will succeed:

- Good existing relationships – TRUST!
- Experience of successfully working together in the past/on other projects (an incremental approach)
- Clarity about your objectives
- Buy-in from staff and members
- Flexibility
- Honesty
- Same political control/unlikely to change
- Similar demographics and issues
- Services where there are national standards, e.g. H&S and food safety inspections, which are easier to integrate

Other organisations have also identified common factors in successful partnerships:

The Audit Commission local government briefing 'Building capacity through partnership' identifies five 'critical success factors':

1. *Strategic overview*
2. *Focus on service users*
3. *Building partner participation*
4. *Managing performance*
5. *Learning*

More information on each of these factors is available here: <http://www.audit-commission.gov.uk/Products/NATIONAL-REPORT/B062E460-ACC2-11d6-B9A6-0060085F8572/Building%20Capacity.pdf>

The Strategic Partnering Taskforce outlines 6 partnership principles, which are relevant to most types of arrangement:

1. *recognise and accept the need for partnership*
2. *develop clarity and realism of purpose*
3. *ensure commitment and ownership*
4. *develop and maintain trust*
5. *create clear and robust partnership arrangements*
6. *monitor, measure and learn*

For more information on the principles, the full document can be accessed here:

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/localgovernment/pdf/135112>

## Potential Barriers

As well as the elements above that are likely to contribute to success, barriers to entering into a partnership also exist:

- Costs of ICT system harmonisation
- Staff and member resistance
- Past conflict between partners
- Public resistance
- Legal constraints
- Finance/accounting
- Different fees and charges across councils
- Different working practices

In addition, there are also barriers to the success of an existing partnership:

- Poor communication
- Poor decision-making process
- Unrealistic goals
- Disagreements over finance
- Getting bogged down in the detail
- Lack of focus on outcomes

The IDeA improvement network has produced a list of top 10 partnership killers:

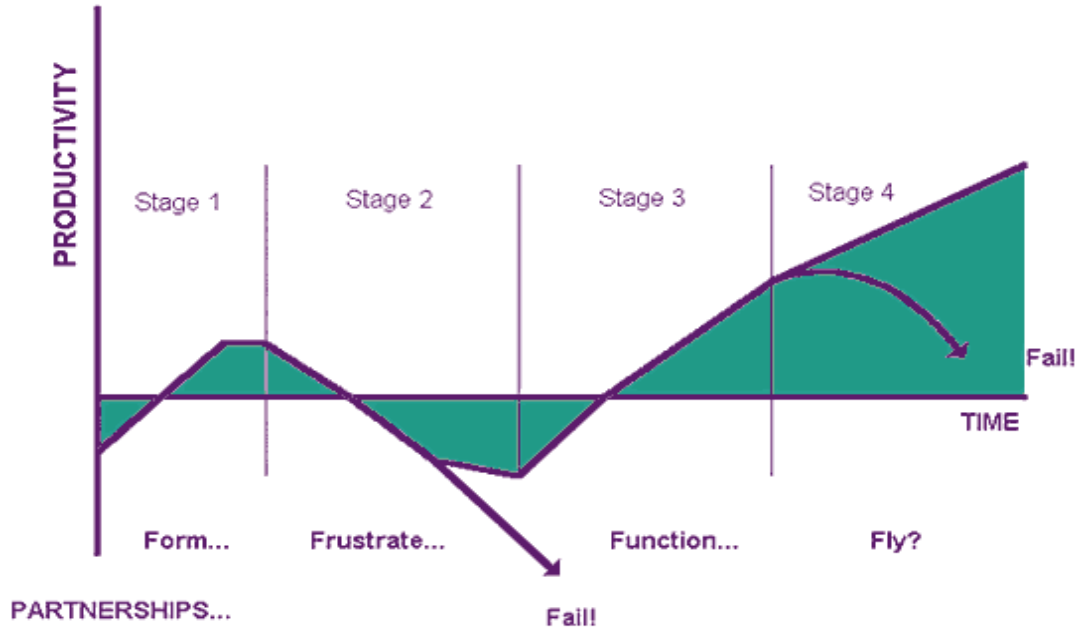
1. *Forever and ever...*
2. *One-upmanship*
3. *Right place, wrong people*
4. *Pulling rank*
5. *Mission creep*
6. *Only here for the cash*
7. *Target? Which target?*
8. *Death by drudgery*
9. *We know what's best for you*
10. *Strictly on a need-to-know basis...*

For more information on these problems and possible solutions, see the document here:

<http://www.improvementnetwork.gov.uk/imp/aio/11465>

## The Partnership Life Cycle

The Employers Organisation for local government (now Local Government Employers), produced the below partnership life cycle diagram and notes on each of the stages as part of their 'smarter partnerships' web-based tool<sup>13</sup>.



### *Typical characteristics of each stage*

#### *1 Forming*

- *common cause, arising from shared interests, opportunities, threats*
- *early enthusiasm: new challenge, new relationships*
- *exploring what's needed, what's possible*
- *nature of commitments unclear*

#### *2 Frustration*

- *partners feel "in a fog"*
- *disputes or tension over priorities and methods*
- *individuals questioning purpose of the partnership and reasons for being there*
- *hidden agendas influencing what partners do*
- *doubts about what each other brings to the party*
- *partners competing for credit and control*

<sup>13</sup> <http://www.lgpartnerships.com/resources/learn-part.asp>

### *3 Functioning*

- *renewed vision and focus*
- *progress through joint project teams*
- *partners talk in terms of "we" not "you"*
- *clear roles and responsibilities*
- *full accountability to each other for actions*

### *4 Flying*

- *successful achievement of partnership goals*
- *shared leadership*
- *partners changing what they do and how they do it to achieve partnership objectives*
- *trust and mutual respect*
- *partnership priorities central to partner activities*

### *5 Failing*

- *disengagement*
- *lack of commitment*
- *recurrent tensions*
- *breakdown or frittering away of relationships*

## Evaluating your partnership

Partnerships can be hugely beneficial, bringing added value to the organisations involved. However, they are not guaranteed to succeed. There may be many reasons that a partnership fails, from differing objectives to disagreements over finance.

The importance of evaluating a partnership was reinforced by the Audit Commission's 'Governing partnerships' report<sup>14</sup>, which states that "Local partnerships are essential to deliver improvements in people's quality of life, but...they may not deliver good value for public money, so local bodies should ask searching questions about those they are engaged in."

Therefore, no matter what form your partnership takes, it is essential to carefully evaluate it before entering into one; assess the effectiveness during the relationship; and, if the collaboration is for a fixed period of time, to look back on how successful the partnership was.

## Before you start

Before entering into an arrangement with another council, it is important to understand what both organisations want from the relationship and to establish the practical elements of running the partnership.

## Questions to ask yourself/your potential partner

Although not an exhaustive list, these questions give an indication of the type of issues that should be considered before entering into any kind of collaborative arrangement with another council.

- What do you want to get out of it?
- What can you bring to the relationship?
- How will success be measured?
- How will the work be managed on a day-to-day basis and who will have control over it?
- How will decisions be made?
- What are the resource implications?
- What are the legal implications?
- Will service users benefit?
- What are the alternatives?

## Available Tools

The [Strategic Service-delivery Partnerships: A decision-makers' guide](#) provides information and advice on carrying out a business review; undertaking options appraisals; risk assessment; and affordability, value for money and financial issues.

The [Partnership assessment tool - Assessing strategic partnership](#) includes a checklist of what to ensure is in place and what to avoid for those establishing new partnerships.

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<sup>14</sup> <http://www.audit-commission.gov.uk/reports/NATIONAL-REPORT.asp?CategoryID=&ProdID=1CDA0FEF-E610-463c-B3F3-220F607B1A2C>

[Rethinking service delivery: from vision to outline business case](#) contains practical advice on processes to follow when assessing how to rethink service delivery and also provides guidance on establishing baselines, which are important as they enable effective performance measurement.

As part of their Beacon award for 'transforming the delivery of services through partnerships', Bristol City Council produced a [10 step guide to selecting and keeping your partners](#). Although the guide relates to their choice of a housing provider, the 10 steps are relevant outside of this context.

What makes a good partner? 12 qualities for sound relationships from Local Government Employers: <http://www.lgpartnerships.com/resources/trust-whatmakes.asp>

### **During: assessing effectiveness**

It is crucial to evaluate the effectiveness of any partnership on a regular basis, to ensure that you are heading in the right direction and to identify any problem areas that might need to be addressed.

### **Available Tools**

The Employers Organisation for local government (now Local Government Employers) produced a 'smarter partnerships' toolkit for local authorities, which provides the following tools:

- [Quick health check](#) - 8 tests of a healthy partnership
- [Digging deeper - finding answers](#) - an interactive tool to analyse how well your partnership is working and how to improve it. It addresses the 4 themes of leadership, trust, learning and managing for performance.

The Department for Communities and Local Government has produced a [partnership assessment tool - Assessing strategic partnership](#) which is aimed to provide a simple and cost-effective way of assessing the effectiveness of partnership working. It contains a quick 'health check' which enables the identification of problem areas.

[Rethinking service delivery: making the partnership a success](#) is a guide from the Strategic Partnering Taskforce, which covers a broad range of issues. Of particular interest for evaluating the effectiveness of a partnership is chapter 9 - performance management and outcome measures.

The Audit Commission report [Sterling Work - Financial Control and Budgeting for Local Authority Partnerships: A Practical Guide](#) provides a checklist for councils to assess whether the arrangements in place for the partnership provide an adequate financial and legal framework and helps recognition of areas that may require revision. The checklist can be found in Appendix A of this document.

The Audit Commission report [Governing partnerships: Bridging the accountability gap](#) urges local public bodies to take a harder look at whether the partnerships they are in are delivering. It includes questions to ask yourself and your partner and practical advice on improving governance and accountability.

## After: exit strategies and measuring success

Some collaborations may be indefinitely ongoing; however, there will be situations where a partnership is arranged for a specific purpose or period of time. A partnership might also end due to its failure. It can be extremely useful to look back on your experiences to find out what went well and what did not. This may be particularly helpful for informing future partnership decisions and activities.

### Tools Available

The majority of the tools provided in the above section on how to measure effectiveness during a partnership can also be used to evaluate partnerships once they have ended. Using the same assessment process both during and after the partnership can more easily allow a direct comparison of success at different stages in the partnership's life cycle.

Local Government Employers provide the following advice on the end of a partnership<sup>15</sup>:

*If the partnership's job is done:*

- *celebrate what partners have achieved*
- *take stock of the lessons partners have learnt*
- *draw the partnership formally to a close, with recognition of everybody's efforts*

*If there is more to do, and the partnership is being disbanded to make way for some other vehicle:*

- *establish with partners the need for change - focus on desired outcomes*
- *make the most of opportunities which ending the partnership might offer*
- *promote theme of working smarter, not harder as a guiding principle*
- *identify forces acting in favour and working against change (force-field analysis)*
- *help the individuals affected adjust to the change*
- *introduce incentives which support the desired changes*
- *ensure excellent communication flows*
- *take care to build, not undermine relationships - trust takes a long time to build and moments to undermine*

Ending a partnership arrangement can be helped by having an exit strategy in place, where appropriate. The final report of the Strategic Partnering Taskforce<sup>16</sup> provides the following definition: "a workable and contractually agreed element of the contract or partnership agreement which should bind your partner to support your exit, setting out obligations at the end of the contract." Although exit strategies are likely to be a more integral part of a formal contract, more informal arrangements could also benefit from planning for the end of the partnership. The strategy can help identify under what circumstances the arrangement should terminate, and what the options are once it comes to an end. Planning for the practical aspects of this change can help ensure a smoother transition for all involved.

Chapter 11 of the SPT guide [Rethinking service delivery: making the partnership success](#) looks in more detail at exit strategies for local government strategic partnerships.

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<sup>15</sup> <http://www.lgpartnerships.com/resources/learn-ending.asp>

<sup>16</sup> <http://www.communities.gov.uk/localgovernment/efficiencybetter/nationalprocurementprogramme/strategicservicedelivery/theknowledgeprogramme/strategicpartnering/>

# *CASE STUDIES*

## Strategic Shared Service Provision: Worthing & Adur

Worthing Borough Council and Adur District Council are neighbouring local authorities on the South coast of England that are developing a long term partnership to have one workforce providing shared services to the two areas. Full implementation is expected to be achieved by April 2010.

### *Objectives*

There are dual objectives – to make savings, reduce costs and at the same time provide better, more efficient services to the people of Adur and Worthing. The two council leaders believe this partnership is the only way forward to minimise damage to frontline services and keep council tax down.

### *Approach*

The two councils have taken an incremental approach as opposed to 'big bang' and work has been taken forward on a phased basis, building on current partnership arrangements. This has allowed effective working relationships to be developed.

The joint project (originally known as Partnering Adur and Worthing Services or PAWS) was developed in several stages, starting with a shared vehicle workshop as a pilot. The project was given Pathfinder status by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister. The next big phase was establishing a joint depot operation for both Councils' Contract Services. Both councils jointly invested in the Adur depot to make it fit for purpose and retained the Worthing depot which is let out as commercial space, generating income for both councils.

An innovative arrangement was the setting up of "Simultaneous Executive Meetings" to make decisions on the joint arrangements. This meant the political leadership of both Councils met in the same place, at the same time, with the same agenda. The next stage was to investigate the potential of a joint waste management service. This service is very high-profile, and getting it right was essential. In November 2005, an open session was held for all elected members of the two councils to look into potential joint options. A public consultation on three options was held in May 2006 to which about 30,000 responses were received.

Each of the three options balanced cost, improved recycling rates, reduced litter, employee safety and public acceptability. One option was a clear favourite, and both the public and Members supported keeping a weekly residual waste service. (More savings would have been obtained from the "alternative week" option). The first of four phases went live in September 2007. The results have seen reduced levels of waste levels going to landfill and improved recycling levels. The joint service has achieved efficiency savings roughly equivalent to the 100,000 wheelie bins provided when compared to the costs of separately providing new fleets and maintaining separate services.

As this project was progressing well, the councils decided to look into further options for the future. The three identified were:

- Merger
- Joint services
- Status quo

The merger option was investigated in 2005, but was discounted as the statutory process takes over 4 years, and because of the effect of Council Tax equalisation. The merger would have resulted in Worthing residents' council tax increasing and Adur residents' council tax decreasing with no changes to the services provided. Therefore it was felt that the benefits were too far in the distance to achieve the required 'buy in' for the changes.

The option of jointly providing services was then investigated. A high level business case for the single officer structure was prepared by the Partnership Management Board and consultants were appointed to test and challenge the proposals. Regular weekly meetings were held to assess progress and clarify issues. Council staff, Unison, Members, the Audit Commission, the IDeA and the South East Centre for Excellence were also all involved in the process.

The decision to go ahead with the joint senior officer structure was made in July 2007 and will be fully operational by April 2008. The legal basis for the changes is the Local Government Act 1972.

The next phase is to review each service block by September 2008. The default position is that services should be provided jointly unless there is a valid reason not to. For example, Adur has retained its housing stock, whereas Worthing has transferred its stock to an RSL. Regulatory services are seen as well-suited to being jointly provided due to specialist skills being expensive and scarce and capacity issues. Further public consultation will be done as service standards are reviewed and new joint services approved.

Council staff will be transferred to the joint structure on a phased basis between 2008 and 2010. There must be a single employer and this will be Adur. Difficulties exist around differing terms and conditions of staff contracts, and employment law (especially TUPE<sup>17</sup>) must be adhered to. The councils have undertaken a pay and grading review, evaluating every position to ensure equality and consistency across the organisations and so that there can be a single joint pay scale for the new services.

### ***Governance***

Adur and Worthing remain as two separate councils, keeping their own set of accounts, their own identities and their own councillors. A key element of the governance is the Simultaneous Executive Meetings (SEMs) as referred to above. Councillors vote separately at the end of each SEM meeting, which removes the need to go back to each separate council to confirm decisions, making it an efficient process without undue bureaucracy. The new work is managed through a series of committees, on which both councils have representatives: Joint Strategic Committee; Joint Delivery Committee; Joint Staff Committee; and Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

### ***Resources***

Both councils recognised the need for additional resources in the short term to make this unique project work. A successful bid was made to the South East Centre for Excellence which is supporting the project by providing a project manager and £250,000 towards legal, finance and human resource costs.

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<sup>17</sup> Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations 2006 (SI 2006/246)

### ***Benefits & Outcomes***

Savings of more than £0.5 million per year are already being realised from the new joint senior officer structure as from 1 April, 2008. Improvements in service are also expected to be realised through harmonisation of procedures and consistency of service delivery. Experience has already shown that the major gains come from delivering a joint service to a common standard across the combined districts.

## Strategic Shared Services: West Yorkshire Joint Trading Standards Service

### *Approach*

Following local government reorganisation in 1974, West Yorkshire Metropolitan County Council was formed, which led to the then “Consumer Protection Department” being centralised geographically. In 1986, when the metropolitan county structure was broken up, some centralised services across the administrative areas of the constituent authorities (Bradford, Calderdale, Kirklees, Leeds and Wakefield) were retained in the form of West Yorkshire Joint Services (which includes analytical, archaeology, archives, ecology, materials testing and trading standards services).

### *Governance*

The arrangement is governed by a brief open-ended joint agreement, signed by the five constituent districts. The joint agreement sets out the legal basis of the arrangement (s101 of the Local Government Act 1972); governance, financial and budgetary arrangements; and responsibilities and service areas covered. It also identifies Wakefield District Council as the “Support Servicing Authority”, which provides relevant legal identity when required. For example, officers working on the delivery of the joint services are employed by Wakefield. There is also an accompanying Memorandum of Understanding, which sets out the arrangement in more detail.

The partnership is managed through a Joint Services Committee, on which each council has equal representation of councillors. There are also two sub-committees (the archives, archaeology, and trading standards sub-committee and the grants sub-committee).

### *Resources*

The budget for the service is agreed between all participating councils and the costs are then allocated on a population proportion basis. The group also generates income through providing services to local businesses.

### *Outcomes & Benefits*

The collaborative structure has achieved cost savings through economies of scale. CIPFA returns indicate that the cost of the service per head of population in West Yorkshire is significantly lower than the average for metropolitan areas.

The shared service also pools resources, allowing the group to buy specialist equipment that would be prohibitively expensive for a single council to purchase. The pooling of resources and capacity also results in officers being able to develop in-depth knowledge of specialist subjects.

### *Lessons Learned*

- Vitally important that performance can be monitored and reported to demonstrate value for money and that each authority receives its fair share of service delivery.
- Vitally important to work closely with Members and Senior Officers within the constituent districts to actively promote the service’s contribution to local priorities and demonstrate the benefits.
- Vitally important not only to demonstrate value for money, but also the high quality added value service deriving from economies of scale, yet without losing local service delivery and identity.

## **Formal Partnership: Greater Manchester Public Protection Partnership (GMPPP)**

The AGMA Public Protection Partnership consists of the ten Greater Manchester Authorities plus Warrington BC and Greater Manchester Fire & Rescue Service. These authorities have come together to develop a major programme of change in order to meet increasing public expectations and national regulatory reform requirements. A programme of work was developed to establish not only service improvement within each authority and consistency between authorities, but to establish new ways of working across the City Region, greater strategic alignment, innovative and alternative ways of achieving regulatory compliance, and to provide greater value for money and quality of service delivery.

There is a real need to encourage and support new enterprise to generate wealth, employment and economic growth across the Greater Manchester conurbation. Whilst this project is primarily concerned with meeting the national requirements for regulatory reform it is also a powerful catalyst in support of the wider government agenda for neighbourhood renewal and sustainable communities.

As single tier authorities, all members of the partnership are able to effect our collective decisions quickly. GMFRS as a single function authority covering virtually the whole of the partnership geographic area provides a powerful co-ordinating focus. In many respects GMFRS is able to move much more quickly than any of the other individual partners, and this provides the overall partnership with huge additional impetus.

The vision is for a locally managed, locally delivered and locally accountable service, whilst at the same time keeping a Greater Manchester perspective.

### ***Objectives***

- Improved business compliance with regulatory requirements
- Greater efficiency and effectiveness in service delivery
- More consistent business advice, training and contract services to businesses delivered through a not for profit company
- Greater consistency in policies, procedures and standards
- Joint service delivery where a single service can provide better value for money
- Joint approach to staff training and development.

### ***Approach***

Public Protection services across Greater Manchester have a long and successful history of collaboration, having achieved efficiency savings of over £500,000 by doing things once on behalf of all, and having developed joint policies and procedures across a wide spectrum of activity. They have also attracted a similar amount of external funding to undertake projects as a group. Until the beginning of 2007 public protection managers met on a regular but relatively informal basis, to share best practice and explore collaborative opportunities. A visioning day in early 2007 set ambitious new targets and which, it was recognised, needed more robust arrangements to deliver. A programme of work was initiated and divided into work packages led by individual public protection managers. Prince2 project management methodology was adopted and product based planning used to manage the many tasks and projects. The steering group signs off each product

description or PID so that expectations are articulated from the start. Standard Prince2 reporting keeps the programme on track and within budget.

## Outputs

A whole range of initiatives are being rolled out, the first priorities listed below:

### Standard Approaches

- Joint quality management system – to bring whole group to same level of accreditation – ISO 9000.
- Joint enforcement policy
- Joint service standards

### Service Development

- Underpinned by benchmarking exercise using Activity Based Costing, to better understand the processes and activities performed and their relative value and cost across the group.
- Underpinned by full baselining exercise leading to benefits realization management plan.
- Research and Development project as part of the Retail Enforcement Pilot to explore the cost/benefits of combined inspection and data sharing cross functionally and across local authority boundaries. The aim is to optimize both inspection processes and inspection regimes, aligning service standards and enforcement interventions for greater consistency and effectiveness

### Joint Services

- Joint public analyst service
- Joint dog kenneling and dog warden service

### Workforce Development

- Regional Workforce Strategy - To ensure the future provision of sustainable staffing resources to deliver the work of the partnership.
- Training Plan aligning workforce training needs with training delivery.

### Mobile Working

- Joint specification and framework agreement to enable shortlisted suppliers to be contracted without each authority undertaking full Official Journal of the European Union process, to enable better value for money in procurement.
- Best practice library of working practices
- Holistic approach to mobile working – event.
- Business cases for mobile working for each authority – using robust data gathered in ABC exercise.

### New Company

- To deliver training and bespoke services to businesses in support of better compliance
- To deliver training to AGMA public protection staff, and market courses across north west, providing better vfm and a greater range of courses.
- The new company commenced trading from 15<sup>th</sup> October 2007.

### Business Accreditation

- A quality mark is being developed as a business award to 'broadly compliant' businesses, to be launched in Autumn 2008.

### ***Governance***

New governance arrangements were implemented that brought greater strategic alignment, leadership and accountability, and by increasing capacity, enabled public protection managers to deliver the programme in addition to managing day to day services. There are three tiers of governance: a Sponsoring Team – who are ultimately accountable for success of the programme, a Steering Group – who manage the programme, and an Operations Group – who manage day to day operations.

### ***Resources***

GMPPP recognised the need for dedicated programme and project management resource to provide the organisational energy for the programme. However, the external resource is kept to a minimum and a large amount of officer time is contributed without charge. In the main, where skills are available within the partnership – procurement, IT, Legal, marketing and communications etc., authorities contribute on a quid pro quo basis. An authority leading on the development of a shared service would ask their procurement people to handle the tendering/contracting exercise and would bear that cost locally. It is felt that over the years this arrangement is fairly equitable. Specialist resources, when required – Counsel's Opinion, ABC consultants, Design companies etc, are funded from a shared pot into which each authority contributes as needed.

### ***Benefits & Outcomes***

The benefits of the partnership are expected to be largely in service improvement, with greater consistency, value for money, and effectiveness of service delivery. However, efficiencies will certainly be made in mobilising the workforce, through reduced desk cost, reduced administration costs and greater front line productivity. It is also anticipated that the R&D work for REP will enable the benefits of combined visits to be quantified, and the harmonisation of risk assessment systems to allow for the design of a more targeted and effective inspection regime. Joint services and joint approaches not only allow for greater consistency of service delivery, but reduce the cost of procurement and policy development substantially.

### ***Lessons learned***

Must do:

- Start with a clear idea of where you want to get to, write it down, keep checking you are on the right track and everyone who started out with you is still there.
- Governance arrangements – clear terms of reference with personal accountabilities for delivery.
- Articulate the deliverables in detail – assume nothing
- Communicate – then communicate some more
- Allow for partner involvement to ebb and flow – not everyone can be full on full time.
- Challenge everything currently done and look to improve wherever possible.

Must not do:

- Lose focus – keep it strategic but practical.
- Prematurely raise expectations.
- Allow the here and now to dictate ways of working for the future.
- Extend the agenda beyond capacity to deliver.
- Get bogged down in detail.

## **Formal Partnership: The Environmental Advisory Service (EAS)**

The Merseyside EAS was first formed as the Joint Countryside Advisory Service (JCAS) in 1986 following the abolition of the Merseyside Metropolitan County Council. Its original purpose was to continue to provide services to the newly formed unitary authorities of Sefton, Knowsley and St Helens. In 1998, other authorities became interested in the benefits of the service and in particular the new demands arising from the development of the Part 2A legislation. In 2001, the organisation was reformed as the Merseyside EAS.

### ***Objectives***

The original purpose of JCAS was to continue to provide scientific, technical and policy advice to the newly formed unitary authorities on ecology, nature conservation, minerals, waste and other natural resource matters. The Merseyside EAS has wider responsibilities than its predecessor, which include the development of inspection strategies, and the provision of more extensive services in the land contamination field.

### ***Approach***

In the context of contaminated land, all work is carried out in close co-operation with the Contaminated Land Officers within the client authorities. This includes the assessment of planning applications where there is a potential for the presence of contamination and associated recommendations for the imposition of planning condition and the following of essential risk-based best practice by the developer's consultant. The staff are also concerned with the provision of advice to the development of Local Development Frameworks, Unitary Development Plans and Supplementary Planning Documents. Here their great strength lies in the extensive local knowledge which has arisen from their services in the prioritisation of sites in the context of Part 2A and the management and recording of information about contamination incorporated within the GIS system. They are heavily involved in the review of consultants' reports relating to the redevelopment of strategic sites within the regeneration programme. Services in support of Part 2A also include review of phase 1 and 2 investigations and advice on the design of subsequent intrusive investigations/ remediation and project management. The whole organisation also deals with strategic planning matters, waste planning, ecology and biodiversity, environmental protection issues (but excluding air quality, noise and PPPC) as well as land contamination.

### ***Governance***

The Merseyside EAS is governed through a negotiated set of accepted service agreements supplemented by annually agreed work programmes. The work of Merseyside EAS is overseen by a Directing Group which has senior representatives from Halton, Knowsley, Liverpool, Sefton, St. Helens and Wirral Councils. The role of the Directing Group is to provide strategic direction for the service and meets twice a year. This is supplemented by regular meetings with the heads of planning through Merseyside District Planning Officers' Group.

In addition, the Contaminated Land Working Group (CLWG) comprising representatives from the Environmental Health/Protection Departments of core users of the contaminated land service meet on a quarterly basis to report progress and share best practice.

Merseyside EAS has a well developed time management and internal accounting procedures and prepare quarterly time analysis reports for audit and evaluation purposes.

***Resource***

Around 30 staff are employed in total (4 staff dedicated to contaminated land) at two office locations. The organisation is funded by means of a negotiated set of accepted service agreements and external sources of funding tied to individual projects.

***Outcomes & Benefits***

The services provided by the EAS are valued highly by their core clients and are able to provide added value and confidence to those areas with which they are involved in an economically viable way. It also allows the transference of skills by working closely with officers in the relevant councils.

## **Formal Partnership: Yorkshire & Humber Authorities Measuring instruments and Non–Automatic Weighing Instrument Verification Service**

The Yorkshire & Humber Authorities Measuring instruments and Non–Automatic Weighing Instrument Verification Service was established in 2006 and comprises the following councils: Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council, Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council, East Riding Of Yorkshire Council, Kingston-Upon-Hull City Council, North East Lincolnshire Council, North Lincolnshire Council, North Yorkshire County Council, Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council, Sheffield City Council, City Of York Council, West Yorkshire Joint Services.

The service operates solely for the purpose of verification of equipment under Directives 90/384/EEC and 2004/22/EC.

### ***Objectives***

The aim of the service is to enable all the constituent authorities to provide the highest possible standard of verification service for service users.

### ***Approach***

The service obtained single approved body status for the purposes of verification of equipment. Councils who are members of the service are responsible for their staff who are designated Technical or Verification Officers. All terms of employment and any disciplinary action are solely the responsibility of member councils.

The arrangement also makes provision for a comprehensive quality system and associated protocols/work instructions which must be adhered to at all times by members of the service and their staff who act under it. A Quality Manager is employed to ensure that that quality system is implemented and maintained throughout the region.

### ***Governance***

The arrangement is governed by a legal agreement with a memorandum of understanding as an appendix, which are reviewed on a three yearly basis. The legal document sets out provisions for the termination of the agreement, with 24 months written notice required. The Memorandum of Understanding appoints East Riding Of Yorkshire Council as lead authority for the service, and sets out the responsibilities, which include providing support services such as the provision of metrological, financial, legal and administrative services.

East Riding, as lead authority, manages the day-to-day running of the service. The Yorkshire and Humber Trading Standards Executive Group is the Executive Group for the service and makes any operational decisions as required.

### ***Resources***

The cost of the service is reviewed on an annual basis by the executive following submissions by partner councils of accounts and a likely future costing report. The costs of the services are shared equally between the authorities and East Riding of Yorkshire, as lead authority, invoices the other members annually.

Fees for the service are agreed at the beginning of each financial year, however, members can levy additional charges to cover extra costs (e.g. travel, officer time, subsistence etc) incurred as a result of activities in connection with the agreement. Fees are be collected by and remain the property of the member council which carries out each verification.

### *Outcomes & benefits*

The main benefit of this arrangement is the consistency of service delivery across many council areas, providing uniformity for the local business community. The introduction of a comprehensive quality system and appointment of a quality manager has contributed to consistency and service improvement. The requirements of the legislation are onerous for one council to carry out alone and pooling resources also allows officers to develop specialisms.

### *Lessons Learned*

- Leave yourself as much time as you possibly can to set up the partnership. A lot of time has been spent ironing out problems after the setting up of the partnership which should have been done beforehand.
- Ensure the politics involved are sorted out by senior management of each partner before the partnership gets off the ground. The Quality Manager of the group had to spend a lot of time sorting out politics which should have been done before he was in post.
- Ensure the Senior management of each of the partners is fully educated in the requirements purpose of the partnership before it is established.

## **Outsourcing a Service: Wigan Metropolitan Borough Council and Lancashire County Council**

Since 2004, Lancashire County Council has provided animal health and welfare services within the borough of Wigan, with which it has a shared border.

### ***Approach***

This formal agreement built on an existing informal arrangement between the two councils. The impetus behind the agreement was a reorganisation at Wigan MBC, coupled with the departure of their officer that performed the animal health function (as well as working on other service areas). Wigan MBC considered that due to the relatively small levels of animal health work in their area, rather than employing an officer who would spend only part of their time on this work, a better solution might be for Lancashire's larger team to carry out the work on their behalf.

The service includes several elements:

- Response to service requests
- Planned visits
- Licensing and data inputting
- Out of hours cover
- Other advice and support
- Customer service
- Management information

### ***Governance***

The Local Government Act 1972 (s. 101 (7)) prohibits the discharge of a council's animal health functions by another authority. Therefore, in order for this arrangement to comply with the law, Wigan MBC continues to have responsibility for the service and decision making, for example, whether or not to prosecute for an offence.

The arrangement is formalised by a Service Level Agreement (see following page) which outlines the responsibilities of both parties. This includes specific requirements, reporting requirements and required levels of achievement. The relevant officers from the two councils meet quarterly at panel meetings, when issues can be raised. The arrangement is also formally reviewed on an annual basis, although no changes have been required thus far.

### ***Benefits & Outcomes***

For Wigan MBC, this arrangement provides them with a team of 14 officers to deliver their service, rather than a part of one officer. This eliminates the problems of covering absences of one member of staff and they now also benefit from a 24 hour service, which would not have been possible had they continued providing the service themselves. This arrangement therefore allows a higher level of service to be delivered. Of the 94 visits made by Lancashire in the Wigan area, 63 were sent customer satisfaction surveys with a return rate of 11%. All the respondents were either fairly satisfied or very satisfied with the service, and all found officers courteous and informative at all times. There are also financial benefits for Lancashire CC of providing this service on behalf of Wigan, which supports their own service.

### ***Lessons Learned***

- Ensure all stakeholders are aware of changes and relative responsibilities and that this information is cascaded down to all of their staff.

**SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENT BETWEEN WIGAN METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL AND LANCASHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL, TRADING STANDARDS SERVICE FOR THE PROVISION OF ANIMAL HEALTH & WELFARE SERVICE WITHIN THE BOROUGH OF WIGAN.**

The service provided will be in accordance with legislative requirements relating to Animal Health and Welfare and with the provisions of the following Defra publication

A framework for the delivery of services in animal health and welfare: an agreement between Local Authorities, Defra and the Welsh Assembly Government.

In relation to any individual local issues relating to veterinary risk assessment of activities these shall be as agreed, between Lancashire County Council and the Defra Divisional Veterinary Manager.

The service provided includes several elements:

- Response to Service Requests
- Planned visits
- Licensing and data inputting
- Out of hours cover
- Other advice and support
- Customer service
- Management information

A profile of Wigan has been prepared by the Community Protection Department of Wigan MBC and is attached.

Also attached is a strategy detailing the aim, interventions, outputs, targets and outcomes of the Animal Health and Welfare Service? This follows an existing Wigan MBC Departmental format.

**Response to Service Requests**

The response to service requests relates to an estimated 40 enquiries per year. These will range from service requests from abattoirs, mainly single tag enquiries, many of which will be referred to home authorities. Other enquiries may require further investigation with a small proportion leading to prosecution and involving more time. Completed prosecution files will be submitted to Wigan MBC Legal Service for action. Any legal costs incurred will normally be recovered from the defendant.

**Risk assessment and planned visits**

The existing Defra database has been found to contain a number of errors. Wigan MBC are currently conducting a postal survey to update the information. Data entry will then be carried out by Lancashire County Council onto a computerised database (Flare system).

All premises will then be visited during the first year and a risk assessment carried out. Thereafter premises will be visited on the following timescales:

- High risk                      Annually
- Medium risk                    Every three years (agreed with DVM)

(It is anticipated that the majority of premises will be classified as medium risk, and a total number of 250 premises is currently assumed.)

### **Licensing and data entry**

This will involve the entry of all relevant movements of animals and recording of data on the AMLS (Defra) computer system. Licenses will be issued as required.

Data entry should be carried out within 3 days of the receipt of information.

### **Out of hours cover / emergency**

This entails the provision of support and enforcement in relation to any emergency call occurring both outside normal office hours and also during office hours.

### **Promotional activities**

To advise this Department in relation to any promotional or publicity activity undertaken and to provide website contact.

### **Customer satisfaction**

Wigan MBC currently monitors customer satisfaction. This will include the Animal Health and Welfare Service and the following targets are set:

To respond to:

- Emergencies within 60 minutes.
- 95% of other service requests within 3 days.

("Response" includes contact with the person making the service request and the provision of advice on how the matter will be actioned.)

To resolve 95% of service requests within 30 days.

("Resolution" includes the service of notice or instigation of legal action, not necessarily full completion of the case.)

To achieve the following customer satisfaction levels

- Courtesy and helpfulness of staff 95% (Service requests and inspections)
- Overall satisfaction 90% (Service requests and inspections)
- Problem resolved 90% (Service requests)

### **Management information and returns**

The service will include the provision of the following information to Wigan MBC:

On a monthly basis details of service enquiries completed and inspections carried out during the preceding month will be supplied for the purpose of carrying out the customer satisfaction survey.

On a quarterly basis the following information shall be supplied:

- Number of service requests received
- Number of service requests outstanding
- Number of formal cautions
- Number of prosecutions
- Number of routine inspections carried out
- Number of formal cautions
- Number of prosecutions
- Number of licences issued
- Number of movements

**Indemnification**

Agreement is required that you indemnify this Department or Wigan Council in respect of any claim arising out of the negligent actions of any officers employed by your Department.

Wigan MBC will likewise indemnify Lancashire County Council, the Trading Standards Service and it's officers in respect of any claim arising out of the negligent actions of Wigan MBC or it's officers.

This agreement may be terminated by either Wigan MBC and /or Lancashire County Council, Trading Standards Service, at any time by giving three months notice of their intention to do so, in writing to the other party or with immediate effect in the event that Lancashire County Council are unable to provide the service due to circumstances outside of it's control.

Signed on behalf of Lancashire County Council Trading Standards Service

..... Date.....

Signed on behalf of Wigan Metropolitan Borough Council

..... Date .....

## Forming a Consortium: Dorset & New Forest councils

District and Unitary Authorities in Dorset and the New Forest have formed a consortium and jointly appointed consultants to manage contaminated land related responsibilities.

### *Objectives*

The objectives of the exercise were to use economies of scale to buy support for the contaminated land regime, initially in drafting and implementing contaminated land strategies for the purposes of Part 11A of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 and latterly in supporting remediation of contaminated land through the planning process.

Other objectives included:

- Maintaining a working database for the individual member authorities and management of information on potentially contaminated sites
- Recording and categorisation (risk assessment) of potentially contaminated sites, including compilation of BVPI data
- Prioritisation of sites for investigation and action
- Assistance with the preparation of submissions to Defra for funding under the Capital Support Programme
- Training and liaison development with the LAs
- Establishing a means to achieve best value across the consortium for 'detailed inspections' (site investigations)

### *Approach*

7 District and 1 Unitary authority in Dorset and New Forest participate in the collaboration. The consortium of authorities formed as a result of the introduction of the Part 11A responsibilities and meets bi-monthly to share information and discuss the management of the consultants. The consortium also shares information through a dedicated section of their appointed consultant's database and has joint access to the extensive library of technical information held on the WPA web site. Contract terms are negotiated collectively, with flexibility for individual authorities to negotiate variations based on local requirements.

The consultants appointed were WPA Consultants Ltd. The contract currently provides three different charges: "core hours"; "bank hours"; and "general hours". Core hours are the hours bought by the individual authority which are crucial to the LA fulfilling its statutory obligations under Pt 11A; bank hours are those core hours which can be utilised for other tasks such as planning consultations; and general hours are work hours for the good of the consortium as a whole, administration etc.

The consultants initially worked in developing and implementing the contaminated land strategies of the consortium members under Part IIA of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 but now provide ongoing support where contaminated land issues are addressed under the planning system.

The type of support that the consortium has sought from their consultants is more than consultancy services for specific technical projects. Consultants work in authorities in a similar way to

employees and discuss matters with environmental protection practitioners within the authorities they serve.

Participants find that the arrangement allows them to develop their own skills to deal with contaminated land matters but also to have access to expertise in the many technical sub-specialisms within the area. Authorities within the consortium can vary the amount of support they purchase depending on their own resources.

The consultants provide web based resources to allow authorities to access information prepared for other members of the consortium that may be relevant to their own circumstances and to provide remote assistance.

The consortium use the consultants to assist in preparing bids for the Defra capital grant scheme for carrying out investigation and remediation works in addition to technical support.

The consortium has worked with the consultants to develop a consistent method of evaluating work in accordance with Best Value Performance Indicators 216(a) and (b) and the consultants have completed returns on behalf of the consortium members. The consultants have also assisted in providing returns to the EA.

#### **Evaluation**

The contract with WPA is due for renewal in April 2008. Due to the collective cost of the contract there is a need for it to be put out to EU tender and this process will commence in the New Year. In the meantime the contract with WPA has been extended with the individual councils for a further 6 months from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2008.

#### ***Resources***

The project has been funded from Environmental Health department budgets. The project has allowed authorities to successfully bid for capital grants from Defra.

The resource allocation is a matter for debate but the efficiencies of joint working and competitive tendering meet best value criteria.

The consultants provide a dedicated section of their web site for the consortium members with free access to the technical library.

The management of WPA is undertaken by the EH Managers for the individual authorities to ensure that their performance meets with the terms of the contract and each client's individual requirements but is also discussed at regular consortium meetings on a collective basis.

#### ***Benefits & Outcomes***

The consortium system has allowed contaminated land matters to be managed in an efficient and consistent manner bringing benefits to local communities in terms of efficiency savings and also in terms of managing the health protection aims that underpin the contaminated land regimes.

The required knowledge base for service provision has been maintained without impact from staff turnover.

### *Lessons Learned*

- The need to appoint a preferred contractor panel without having to go out to tender every time a site investigation is required. Currently 2 contractors have been chosen from a formal tendering process to go on the panel and are used whenever a more detailed investigation is required.
- The consortium was originally set up to deal with the Pt 11A responsibilities but experience has shown that this aspect of the work has often been 'hijacked' by the need to respond to planning consultations relating to potentially contaminated sites.
- The resources initially allocated by member authorities to this project are at times stretched and with current service demands are often inadequate to fulfil the need.

## Forming a Consortium: South Yorkshire Councils

Care4air is a partnership between the four local authorities in South Yorkshire (Barnsley, Doncaster, Rotherham and Sheffield) and South Yorkshire Passenger Transport Executive.

### *Objectives*

It is a social marketing project to inform people about air quality in the area and promote behavioural change.

### *Approach*

Care4air has a strong brand independent of the councils, which has helped to establish its reputation. It promotes good practice and has an awards scheme to recognise champions in schools, community members and private and public organisations. It has also utilised celebrity endorsement to successfully promote the aims of the partnership, as well as events, conferences and promotional materials such as balloons, Frisbees and leaflets.

### *Governance*

Sheffield acts as lead authority, co-ordinating Care4Air with an officer working as project coordinator which takes up approximately 50% of their time. There is no formal agreement, but the Care4Air working group composed of air quality and transport officers from the 4 South Yorkshire local authorities together with a representative from Travel South Yorkshire meet approximately every 6 weeks to decide direction, strategy and oversee key events.

### *Resource*

Care4Air was originally funded through the Defra air quality grant for the first 3 years. Currently it is funded through the South Yorkshire Local Transport Plan. Funding has been established from the Local Transport Plan for 3 years, (2007 -2010) subject to an annual review.

### *Outcomes/Benefits*

The care4air website has twice won awards from Air Quality Management Magazine. In October 2007, Care4Air carried out an evaluation exercise, which utilised data from 149 questionnaire responses. The results showed that a significant percentage (24%) of respondents had heard of Care4Air, with 97% of people rating air quality as 'very important' or 'quite important'.

### *Lessons Learned*

- Working in a partnership of councils has given the campaign a certain degree of freedom, especially around corporate design etc.
- Having messages that coincide with the aims of the Local Transport Plan has meant that we have forged links with transport planners. This has enabled better joint working across all related transport and air quality issues.
- Transport planners now sit on the steering group of Care4Air.
- Sheffield co-ordinates the scheme, has officer time committed, has the largest air quality team in South Yorkshire and as a result of this Care4air can appear to be Sheffield-centric, however this could be a function of Sheffield being the largest council in the partnership and therefore having the most activity.

- Despite the bullet point above, all of the partners have an equal stake in the campaign.
- Working in partnership has meant that partners can use activities in other partner areas to influence their own e.g. European Mobility Week was picked up in Sheffield and this enabled the other areas to encourage up take in their authorities.
- A smaller steering group of the coordinator and the media consultant work on ideas and actions which can then be discussed by the wider partnership.
- Amongst the council press officers in the respective partner areas, it has occasionally been difficult to get them to recognise/feature news/events etc if it is not purely for their area.

## **Joint employment: North East London Metrology Partnership**

The London Boroughs of Havering, Waltham Forest, Redbridge and Barking & Dagenham form the North East London Metrology Partnership.

### ***Approach***

The metrology service is delivered by a joint laboratory and two and a half officers for the whole geographic area covered by the four boroughs.

### ***Governance***

The arrangement is governed by a formal partnership agreement, a contract which:

- Defines the functions and responsibilities of the partnership, including areas of work and relevant legislation to be enforced.
- Establishes a Partnership Board, and sets out its constitution and terms of reference. A Chief Weights and Measures Officer from each borough sits on the Partnership Board, to which the partnership officers report, and has responsibility for making decisions. The board meets quarterly, although the partnership officers also provide email updates on an ad hoc basis.
- Outlines financial reporting and budgetary arrangements.
- Contains an exit strategy – that the agreement will continue until a majority decision is taken by the Board to dissolve the partnership. It also contains provisions for individual members to leave the partnership.

### ***Resources***

Under the service agreement, the Partnership Board determines the annual budget and all four boroughs contribute an equal share of the financial resources necessary for the partnership to perform its agreed functions.

As the partnership is not a legal entity, London borough of Havering manages the finances of the partnership, and set up a code in the trading standards accounts which functions like a normal local authority cost centre.

### ***Benefits & Outcomes***

The four authorities benefit from economies of scale, by having one laboratory serving all areas, instead of four separate ones. There are also reduced personnel costs and increased productivity as officers are dedicated to that function and do not get distracted by other issues. This also means that officers are able to focus on one part of the legislation, developing specialist knowledge, which improves competence. This is particularly important, as it has been difficult to recruit qualified employees. An additional benefit is better regulation for local businesses as there is a consistent service across the area and a central point of contact, which leads to a better administrative turnaround.

## **Joint Employment: North London Sub-Region Empty Homes Initiative**

The North London sub-region (NLSR) comprises the boroughs of Barnet, Camden, Enfield, Haringey, Islington and Westminster. The NLSR employs a team to work on its empty homes initiative across the boroughs.

### ***Objectives***

The aim of the team is to complement the work being carried out by the individual boroughs to reduce the number of long-term empty private properties in north London. This joint working aims to achieve economies of scale and the sharing of specialist skills and knowledge, as emphasised in the Greater London Authority report on empty homes in 2005/6.

### ***Approach***

The NLSR employs a team that work on the Empty Homes Initiative project across the six London boroughs that make up the sub-region. The team includes a project manager, grant officer and two enforcement officers.

The team has taken the approach that they should not do the work for the boroughs, but enable the boroughs to do it themselves, which has involved the team working closely with housing officers in the boroughs.

The sub-region now has an empty homes freephone and website. Publicity campaigns have also been carried out across the sub-region.

### ***Resource***

The NLSR successfully bid for funding from the Targeted Funding Stream, receiving £3.375m for the empty homes initiative. The funding covers the period 2006-2008 and part of this funding is used to employ the team.

### ***Governance***

The NLSR has a steering group which provides the opportunity for the team to meet with empty property officers and environmental health officers from the boroughs to discuss operational issues. The steering group currently meets every 6 weeks, although this will be changing to every two months. There is also a regular meeting of the service level managers who take funding and strategic decisions. This group then reports to the group of directors from all the boroughs.

### ***Outcomes & Benefits***

Sub-regional funding stemmed from the Gershon Review, which anticipated cost efficiencies. The NLSR has however found additional advantages of having a team working across the boroughs. Common procedures and policy and sharing best practice allow greater consistency of enforcement across the councils. The team's approach to working closely with borough officers and enabling them to carry out the work has resulted in the transference of skills and knowledge. An example of this is that previously, two of the boroughs did not carry out any empty homes grant work, whereas due to the support of the team, all six boroughs now do this work. All six boroughs now have an active enforcement programme (which currently includes compulsory purchase, enforced sale and in the future may include empty dwelling management orders). Before the enforcement officers worked with the boroughs only two boroughs had done any recent

compulsory purchase.

Five boroughs have recently carried out a street survey of all recorded empty properties and are in the process of improving their databases so they have more accurate information about their properties. This will enable the sub-region and boroughs to develop a more focussed approach according to the reason why properties have been left empty. It will also allow more accurate reporting on empty property statistics.

The initiative has also enabled the boroughs to jointly procure a contract for home improvement services across their areas. <http://www.northlondonemptyproperties.co.uk/>

## **Secondments: North Yorkshire County Council**

During the 2001 Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) outbreak nearly 100 officers were seconded to work in North Yorkshire to assist with 24 hours a day, 7 days a week monitoring and enforcement of a restricted infected area.

### ***Objectives***

The objective of the secondment was to secure enough officers to be able to carry out the significant extra enforcement requirements created by the outbreak.

### ***Approach***

This was the first ever restricted infected area (AKA blue box) and was due to a cluster of FMD outbreaks, in an attempt to stop the disease spreading to the East of England pig population. The blue box covered an area of 9,000 square miles, which contained 2,700 livestock farms and required heightened biosecurity rules. Patrols were required 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, putting an enormous amount of pressure on North Yorkshire's resources, especially given that they had been dealing with FMD since February that year. Following a request for assistance, around 60 officers were seconded to North Yorkshire from other councils.

### ***Resource***

The salaries of the secondees continued to be paid by the 'donor' council, and the costs were then claimed from North Yorkshire CC. Defra reimbursed/underwrote the significant extra expenditure created by the requirements of the outbreak, as it was a major unforeseen emergency, through a central government funding arrangement.

### ***Governance***

The secondees remained employed by their 'donor authority' and North Yorkshire CC was required to 'appoint' every seconded officer as an 'inspector' under the Animal Health Act 1981. Each officer also had to be provided with the appropriate authorisation warrants/ID cards. North Yorkshire CC also agreed to process any subsequent action arising from officers from other authorities, such as prosecutions.

### ***Benefits & Outcomes***

Due to the enormous pressure on North Yorkshire's service, sufficient enforcement would not have been able to be carried out if the secondments had not taken place.

### ***Lessons Learned***

- One of the main difficulties experienced during the secondments was the variance in working conditions amongst the local authority officers for example, night working allowances, lunch allowances and overtime rules. These differences resulted in North Yorkshire having to negotiate these terms, which diverted time and effort from the key task of carrying out the enforcement operations.

LACORS has produced guidance for inter-authority secondment of officers during major animal disease outbreaks, which can be viewed here: <http://www.lacors.gov.uk/lacors/NewsArticleDetails.aspx?id=14934> . Although the guidance is was developed in relation to animal disease outbreaks, many of the issues will be relevant to secondments in other service areas, for example it provides template agreements and information and advice on payment, conditions, managing the secondment, and even on choosing suitable accommodation.

## **Informal Arrangements: Somerset Air Quality Group**

The five Somerset district councils plus the County Council work together to produce a county-wide air quality strategy. In Somerset and other areas with two-tier local government, the district councils are responsible for preparing the air quality action plans, while the county council is responsible for the Local Transport Plan (LTP) and other traffic and transport programmes. In Somerset, an air quality steering group was formed in 1998 to co-ordinate the local authorities' respective efforts. Officers preparing the LTP have been included in the air quality steering group, and have liaised closely over transport issues. In 1998-99 the districts carried out a stage one review and assessment of air quality, to identify sources of pollution that might need to be investigated. This was followed by a stage two review and assessment, to further investigate the pollutants identified in stage one. The informal arrangements allows greater liaison and exchange of information between different officers working to achieve a goal.

## **Informal Arrangements: Contaminated Land Officer Groups (CLOGs)**

In many areas, groups of Contaminated Land Officers (CLOGs) from constituent authorities meet to discuss the changing regulatory systems, new guidance etc and to share their collective experience relating to procedural and technical issues and problems encountered in the carrying out of their regulatory responsibilities. Many of these groups have grown from the more general groups formed under the auspices of the CIEH to deal with environmental protection or pollution issues. They serve an important role in the provision of help and advice on particular problem areas, but also act as a point for the distribution of information from the CIEH, Defra or the Environment Agency, and for the development of a collective view on important developments and issues of concern which arise from time to time.

The leadership of the CLOGs can vary, while the most common model is of a chairman and secretary, "elected" for a year's term though some rotate these duties meeting-by-meeting. Meetings may be more or less regular and the minimal incidental costs are typically born by the hosting authority. In a few situations, administrative services and leadership is provided by local officers from the Environment Agency. In at least one area, however, the North East, similar functions are provided by a Forum organised by the local Agency officers, with membership drawn from academic and private sector consultancy, environmental suppliers and regulators.

## **Working across council boundaries: a note on Health & Safety Flexible Warranting**

Although this is not a case study about specific councils working in partnership, the new flexible warranting scheme is a very interesting example of an innovative way that councils are collaborating.

### ***Objectives***

Flexible warranting is a voluntary scheme that allows one enforcing authority to appoint inspectors from another authority to undertake work on its behalf (the arrangement can also apply between the Health & Safety Executive and local authorities). It provides a practical approach designed to make the best use of joint resources by removing the current barriers that restrict where an authority or individual inspector can apply health and safety legislation. The aim of flexible warranting is to facilitate the collective use of resources to increase the effectiveness of the regulatory system. It provides a flexible approach that allows local deviation from the national structure dependent on available resources, risk profile and economic activity within a locality. It is about supporting an area approach that makes the best use of the skills and strengths available.

### ***Approach***

The use of flexible warrants can cover a wide range of regulatory interventions – but the key element is that application is based on local agreement between participating authorities. The basic model is making an initial intervention on behalf of the other regulator, which might include reactive work, complaints and accidents. The model could also extend to proactive work, with a 'virtual team' approach to regulation.

### ***Governance***

S.19 of the Health & Safety at Work Act 1974 provides the legal basis for local authorities to appoint inspectors to carry out relevant statutory provisions. The mechanism for formalising a flexible warranting scheme is a Memorandum of Understanding. It sets out demarcation arrangements and also covers the management arrangements – including for example indemnification of inspectors, communication between authorities, competence requirements and dispute resolution. The extent to which flexible warrant holders will intervene on behalf of another enforcing authority can also be varied by the Memorandum of Understanding. It is supported by an Inspector's Manual, providing further details of the arrangements between the enforcing authorities, and practical tools to assist with the operation of the flexible warrants system.

### ***Benefits & Outcomes***

Benefits of flexible warranting include being able to provide local solutions to local issues; better use of scarce resources; timeliness of interventions and responsiveness; officers utilising skills more often; and delivering sensible health and safety regulation.

### ***Contact***

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## Sources of Further Information

ODPM Strategic Partnering Taskforce (SPT) established 2001.

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/localgovernment/efficiencybetter/nationalprocurementprogramme/strategicservicedelivery/theknowledgeprogramme/strategicpartnering/strategicservicedeliverypartners/introduction/>

SPT paper – 'Funding Partnerships: Making it Easier and Less Costly'

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/localgovernment/pdf/135061>

SPT final report (2004)

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/localgovernment/strategicpartneringtaskforce>

Advice notes & FAQs

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/localgovernment/efficiencybetter/nationalprocurementprogramme/strategicservicedelivery/theknowledgeprogramme/strategicpartnering/advicenotes/>

Technical notes and assessment tools

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/localgovernment/efficiencybetter/nationalprocurementprogramme/strategicservicedelivery/theknowledgeprogramme/technicalnotes/>

Rethinking Service Delivery series – part of the Knowledge Programme

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<http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/localgovernment/rethinkingservicedelivery4>

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<http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/localgovernment/rethinkingservicedelivery>

Vol. 5: making the partnership a success

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/localgovernment/rethinkingservicedelivery2>

Strategic service-delivery partnerships: a decision maker's guide

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/localgovernment/strategicservicedeliverypartners>

CLG – 'Service Transformation Through Partnership' toolkit, 2006 -

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/localgovernment/pdf/151462>

Local Government Strategic Partnerships – Market Intelligence Feasibility Study  
<http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/localgovernment/localgovernmentstrategic>

IDeA - Transforming the delivery of services through partnership beacons  
<http://beacons.idea.gov.uk/idk/core/page.do?pageld=6521432>

CIPFA 'Sterling Work' - Financial Control and Budgeting for Local Authority Partnerships: A Practical Guide  
<http://www.improvementnetwork.gov.uk/imp/aio/1001642>

Employers Organisation (now Local Government Employers) Smarter partnerships website  
<http://www.lgpartnerships.com/>