

Working better together?

Delivery chain analysis - removing obstacles to local joint working



Planning and
delivery tool
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Organising and running delivery chain analysis workshops

‘Valuable time out to objectively review work of the Affordable Housing Task Group.’

Dorset LSP

‘A really interesting approach – time well spent.’

Derby LSP

‘Excellent facilitators and a good mix of discussion and practical exercises.’

Gateshead LSP

Planning and delivering outcomes

‘A delivery chain is the complex network of organisations, including central and local government agencies, and bodies from the private and third sectors, that need to work together to achieve or deliver an improved public sector outcome.’
National Audit Office and Audit Commission, Delivering Efficiently: Strengthening the Links in Public Service Delivery Chains, 2006, Page 7.

- 1** Local agencies often find it difficult to understand how their different contributions fit together into a delivery chain. They can even be hindering each other’s efforts. This guidance on organising and running delivery chain analysis workshops should help partners to plan, manage, and deliver their local area agreement (LAA) outcomes.
- 2** Delivery chains for a local strategic partnership (LSP) make the links between strategic objectives (in the sustainable community strategy (SCS) and LAA) and frontline service delivery. Each delivery chain has four types of link or relationship:
 - Single agency internal links – internal systems and processes such as performance measurement, management, and review. They are overseen by internal management.
 - Contractual or regulatory links that define how one part of the chain performs for others. These links are overseen by external institutions and agencies.
 - Common purpose links between organisations to achieve an LAA target or SCS objective. These are strengthened by mutual respect and trust and, sometimes, overseen by the duty to cooperate.
 - Wider community links that rely on influence and persuasion; for example, LSP engagement with the private and third sectors. They are strengthened by mutual respect and trust.
- 3** This guidance is designed for workshops involving people from the different organisations involved in an LSP. It assumes the workshop will be externally facilitated so participants can be guided through the stages of delivery chain analysis in a structured way that helps build mutual respect and trust.
- 4** This guidance is one part of a suite of products published alongside the Audit Commission national study *Working Better Together? Managing Local Strategic Partnerships*.

Delivery chain analysis and Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA)

Delivery chain analysis is not the same as CAA. The twelve delivery chain questions focus on one aspect of local collaboration to achieve agreed outcomes.

Inspectors' judgements will be based on a wider range of evidence and performance criteria to inform area and organisational assessments.

- 5** The Audit Commission used delivery chain workshops as part of the research for *Working Better Together? Managing Local Strategic Partnerships* where they were used in six of the case study areas. Each workshop focused on a single LAA outcome identified by the LSP. The workshops were attended by 12-15 people from operational and strategic backgrounds in their organisations. This guidance follows the experience of those workshops and participants' feedback.

Planning and delivering outcomes

How three LSPs used delivery chain workshops

Case study 1. Better and more coordinated use of land for affordable housing

The Dorset Affordable Housing Task Group decided to explore better and more coordinated use of land for affordable housing in a delivery chain workshop.

Representatives of the county council, district council, registered social landlords, developers, and the community used the delivery chain questions to self-assess their progress towards the outcome. They assessed action or progress for each question as red, amber or green.

Then they agreed the workshop should focus on two issues:

- developing capacity; and
- understanding existing levers and incentives.

Two groups then worked on these issues to identify the obstacles to, or gaps in, a successful delivery chain.

This workshop led to actions by LSP partners. These included:

- a resource/capacity audit;
- a land campaign;
- a land disposal protocol;
- a feasibility study for a public sector shared land database;
- an agreed list of levers and incentives for releasing land;
- private landowner consultation; and
- LSP outcomes in staff appraisals.

The LSP is now interested in using delivery chain workshops to improve outcomes for the other LAA targets.

Case study 2. Reducing childhood obesity

Gateshead LSP decided that childhood obesity was an issue to explore in a delivery chain workshop. Three groups of partner representatives used the 12 delivery chain questions to assess progress towards reducing childhood obesity.

The workshop agreed on three areas for improvement:

- identifying and developing local capacity to reduce childhood obesity;
- developing a shared and understood operational plan; and
- identifying available resources.

Two groups then worked on these issues to identify the obstacles to, or gaps in, a successful delivery chain.

Agreed actions included:

- improvement in capacity building and community involvement;
- healthy living courses;
- staff training for family liaison partners;
- improved sharing of information between partners;
- mapping and evaluating of existing activities; and
- building an improved evidence base.

The council now wants to use this form of planning for the whole LAA.

Planning and delivering outcomes

Case study 3. Helping children in poverty

Derby City Partnership identified children in poverty as its priority for the workshop. Two groups of LSP members assessed their progress towards reducing the proportion of children in poverty.

The two groups agreed four improvement priorities:

- clearly defining the outcome they were aiming at;
- assessing capacity and resources to help children in poverty;
- developing a shared and understood operational plan; and
- developing a partnership approach to risk management throughout the delivery chain.

Agreed actions included:

- mapping partner involvement in target delivery;
- a gap analysis of interventions;
- decommissioning activities from other areas to free up resource; and
- agreeing a cross partnership risk management approach and compiling a partnership risk register.

The Partnership has used the learning from this workshop to further improve its delivery planning.

Running a workshop

Using delivery chain analysis to improve LAA planning

6 Delivery chain workshops enable the key stakeholders in LAA targets to get together to remove obstacles to, and weaknesses in, the delivery chain. A good delivery chain workshop brings people together and gets agreement on things they know they should have done already. An excellent delivery chain workshop brings people together and gets agreement on new ideas and innovative approaches created through the workshop.

7 Figure 1 shows a typical delivery chain workshop and the importance of preparation, management of the day, and follow-up.

- Preparation 1. Delivery chain analysis and planning is complicated and involves a range of partners. The LSP organising the workshop should consider the benefits of using an external facilitator to ensure the workshop delivers an effective delivery chain. The LSP host and the facilitator must agree on the topic for the workshop. For LAA and SCS workshops the topic should be one, or one element of, the agreed outcomes.

- Preparation 2. The host should then work out who to invite to the workshop. There should be no more than twenty people: everyone must have a chance to join in. Invitees should represent all the key stakeholders, and they should represent strategic, executive, and operational roles.
- Preparation 3. The host should then work with the facilitator to identify four or five people to send the twelve strategic questions to in advance. These people return their answers to the facilitator before the workshop. Their answers help with planning for the day and with identifying priorities for further delivery chain analysis.
- Preparation 4. The host organises a suitable, accessible, room for the workshop. The room should be large enough to accommodate twenty people in café style with six to eight people at each table. There should be flipcharts and pens available for each table. The workshop lasts about six hours so there should be suitable arrangements for refreshment and comfort breaks.
- On the day. The host should introduce the workshop and lead the discussion on the choice of the target for delivery chain planning. The facilitator should then run the rest of the day.

Running a workshop

Figure 1 Running a delivery chain workshop

Preparation

LSP host organises the venue and invites participants.

Planning meeting. Agree focus for the delivery chain workshop.

Facilitator and host agree on the issue and who should be invited to the workshop. They discuss the context and performance data.

On the day

Seating plan mixes people with different roles and from different organisations.

Introductions.

Discussion of why the issue was chosen - what is the impact of getting it right?

The LSP host should lead this. The following sessions are led by the facilitator.

Presentation: What is a delivery chain? What will be done today?

Work in groups to map the partners and stakeholders in the delivery chain.

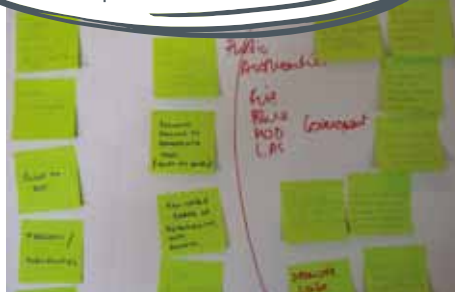
Individual scoring and group review against the 12 delivery chain questions.

Identification and discussion of priorities for in-depth work.

Work in groups to identify what an optimum delivery chain should look like and who will be involved.

Action planning. Who will do it, when and how?

Non-priority issues can be dealt with later in the day or through follow-up work.



Outputs and outcomes

Report back to the LSP. What is planned, what will be done? What else does the LSP need to do?

This is a chance to think creatively. Take advantage of having different people together in one room.



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- At the end of the day. The host and the facilitator should make sure that everyone is aware of what will happen next – and thank them for attending and contributing. The host and facilitator should agree on who will record the content of the flipcharts and write up the report of the workshop.

Action plan and follow-up

- 8 At the end of the workshop the participants should know what they, and their colleagues in the LSP, are going to do next. They should also have a better understanding of their colleagues and have developed stronger social networks to support the delivery of LAA or SCS outcomes.
- 9 The final key to the success of the workshop is in the quality of the action plan. The LSP, and member organisations, should know:
 - what LAA or SCS outcome they concentrated on;
 - which delivery chain stages they focused on in the workshop;
 - what the ideal position would be for those delivery chain stages;
 - what actions they need to take to achieve the ideal position;
 - when they would achieve it;
 - who is responsible for achieving it; and
 - what resources are necessary for achieving it.
- 10 Most LSPs then go on to do workshops on other topics – or they return to those issues that were non-priority on the day but may now be worth looking at.

Conclusions

- 11 Delivery chain workshops are a powerful tool to get partners together to tackle an issue of common concern. With the right preparation and an experienced facilitator they can create ideas and solutions in six hours that partners would struggle with for six months.
- 12 More details of how to run a workshop are provided on the CD *Using Delivery Chain Analysis for LAA Planning and Delivery*. Details are also available on www.improvementnetwork.gov.uk/lsp.
- 13 There is more information about the Audit Commission study *Working Better Together? Managing Local Strategic Partnerships* at <http://www.audit-commission.gov.uk/lsp>
- 14 There are two appendices to this note:
 - twelve strategic delivery chain questions; and
 - template for action planning.

Appendix 1: The 12 strategic questions

This self-assessment helps LSPs to develop delivery chains and plan the delivery of LAA outcomes. It may be used separately for each outcome or applied to delivery planning for the whole agreement.

Please score each question separately as red, amber, or green. Red responses should be scored -1, amber 0, and green +1. Scores of between 9 and 12 suggest an

effective and efficient delivery plan. Between 3 and 8 suggests risks to delivery and reduced efficiency. Scores of less than 2 point out that significant improvement is needed. Scores between -3 and -8 suggest inefficiency and ineffective delivery and -9 to -12 show a high degree of failure.

Where responses are shown as red then action is required urgently to facilitate planning.

1. Is the outcome clearly defined?

RED	-1	The outcome is vague and its measurement is complex.
AMBER	0	The outcome is clear but not all partners are signed-up and measurement is difficult.
GREEN	+1	The outcome is clearly defined, understood and agreed by partners.
SCORE		

2. Is the evidence base sufficiently robust?

RED	-1	Little research and no piloting resulting in a weak evidence base.
AMBER	0	Some research on existing evidence highlights factors on which to focus but this is not implemented at all levels resulting in a high failure risk.
GREEN	+1	Extensive preliminary research and piloting of interventions. Interventions at all levels and across agencies are aligned maximising effectiveness and minimising cost.
SCORE		

3. Is there sufficient capacity, including available resources, to deliver?

RED	-1	No resource assessment across the delivery chain resulting in a risk of misdirecting resources.
AMBER	0	Assessment of resource availability is undertaken and capacity issues are being addressed.
GREEN	+1	Keen awareness of resource and capacity issues. Resource is directed to where it is most effective and capacity is regularly reviewed.
SCORE		

4. Is there a shared partnership operational plan describing how services/interventions will be provided?

RED	-1	No cohesive cross-agency operational plan. Some individual partner documents.
AMBER	0	An operational plan exists but most delivery partners have not been involved in its production nor is it widely available.
GREEN	+1	An operational plan exists, produced with all delivery partners; widely available and well understood. Front line staff and service users consulted.
SCORE		

5. Are the objectives supported by a funding strategy?

RED	-1	No funding identified or multiple short-term funding streams with funding not dependent on performance.
AMBER	0	Longer-term funding allows more certainty, but there are still multiple overlapping streams. Some performance-related funding.
GREEN	+1	Funding streams mapped as part of strategy development; number of funding streams rationalised. Funding is structured to incentivise performance and awarded on proven performance. Where appropriate, funding periods are extended.
SCORE		

6. Do the various partners and levels within them communicate regularly using reliable information so that there is good coordination?

RED	-1	No mechanism in place for the different partners and levels of the delivery chain to come together and address issues.
AMBER	0	Some coordination but insufficient to create a common understanding of risks and issues facing delivery.
GREEN	+1	Regular contact between all levels of the delivery chain. Active communication between the front line and the centre so that front line information informs strategic decision making and across partners.
SCORE		

Appendix 1:

The 12 strategic questions

7. Are levers and incentives fit for purpose?

RED	-1	Few levers or incentives in place.
AMBER	0	Some incentives in place. Levers are established but without consultation; not piloted so not always the effective ones.
GREEN	+1	Incentives are fit for purpose. Levers are based on context, and the ability of individual partners to respond.
SCORE		

8. Are the risks to the delivery chain well managed?

RED	-1	No risk assessment is undertaken.
AMBER	0	Internal partner risk assessment is undertaken; but awareness of key risks is not cascaded through the delivery chain.
GREEN	+1	Thorough partnership risk assessment is undertaken; risk management culture exists throughout the delivery chain. Each stage of the chain has a high awareness of key risks.
SCORE		

9. Do performance management systems enable tracking of delivery?

RED	-1	Multiple performance management systems; hard to measure
AMBER	0	Performance management systems can measure progress but indicators are not entirely accurate or have other weaknesses.
GREEN	+1	Shared systems in place. Regular monitoring. Frequent stock takes. Performance easy to track against objectives. Routine corrective action.
SCORE		

10. Is there strong leadership that is accountable through clear governance structures at all levels of the delivery chain?

RED	-1	Leadership is poorly assigned. Shortage of clear guidance results in lack of clarity about who should take the lead.
AMBER	0	Some guidance issued on roles and responsibilities, but incentives and measures are lacking to ensure accountability.
GREEN	+1	Leadership at all levels of the delivery chain is in place, understood and resourced; backed by incentives and performance management. Strategic and delivery leadership are clearly distinguished and in place.
SCORE		

11. Are mechanisms in place for regular feedback and review supporting continuous learning?

RED	-1	Nothing in place to promote feedback. No facility to disseminate examples of good practice.
AMBER	0	Guidance filtered down, but no mechanisms to communicate feedback from delivery level upwards.
GREEN	+1	Frequent feedback between all delivery chain levels. Feedback reviewed, and guidance and examples of good practice shared.
SCORE		

12. Have systems to achieve efficiency been built into the delivery chain?

RED	-1	Assets and services not shared. High administration costs due to lack of innovation, internal review and challenge to working practices.
AMBER	0	Opportunities to increase economies of scale not fully realised. Some asset and service sharing. Scope to further reduce transaction and administration costs.
GREEN	+1	Early engagement from key partners when designing delivery chain. Asset and service sharing where suitable. Front line configured to best deliver services. Customers are encouraged to use the most cost-effective delivery channels.
SCORE		

Appendix 2: Action planning framework

You can use this action planning framework to record, monitor, and report the results of a delivery chain workshop.

Action plan for delivery chain workshop stage X: [title of delivery chain]					
Issue/ideal position	Action	When	Who	Resource implications	How we will know actions have been successful
Brief notes of issues to be dealt with...	A simple description of the action that must be taken.	Target completion date.	A named person if possible.	Describe the resources needed for this action.	Simple description of the evidence of success.
... or the ideal of what this stage of the delivery chain should look like			Sometimes you will need to name more than one person.	They are not just financial resources. Think of people, time, buildings and other assets.	

Further information

Copies of the national report *Working Better Together? Managing Local Strategic Partnerships* are available at: www.audit-commission.gov.uk/lsp

We welcome your feedback. If you have any comments on this paper, or are planning to use the 12 strategic questions, or you are running a delivery chain workshop please do get in touch: please email nationalstudies@audit-commission.gov.uk

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