

PRINCIPLE 1 - RECOGNISE AND ACCEPT THE NEED FOR PARTNERSHIP

This principle is concerned with two main factors: the extent to which there is a *partnership history* and the extent to which there is a *recognition of the need* to work in partnership. These factors are obviously related in that a strong local history of partnership working should reflect an understanding of the need to work in this manner, whilst a weak history of partnership working may reflect an insufficient appreciation of the extent to which agencies depend upon one another to achieve organisational goals. Without such an appreciation, genuine partnership working will be very unlikely to develop.

Element A: Identify principal partnership achievements.

The extent to which local agencies have a prior record of successful partnership working is crucial in determining the scale and pace of their future achievements – in short, ‘success breeds success’. This does not mean that areas with a limited history of working together cannot reach the levels attained by more mature partnership networks, but to begin to do so there needs to be a mutual awareness of what *has* been achieved jointly. Those areas with more substantial joint achievements will also need to be confident that these have been of demonstrable benefit and worthy of further development. What you would therefore be considering here is a clear and agreed account of what has *already* been achieved through partnership working. This may cover both formal arrangements, probably at a strategic level, or less formal arrangements, often at operational level.

Element B: Identify the factors associated with successful partnership working.

Much of this assessment tool is asking you to identify in detail the factors associated with partnership working. Here we want you to reflect upon the reasons *why* the principal partnership achievements which you have just identified have been possible. In part you may wish to identify factors *external* to the locality, such as the requirements of central government or regional bodies. However, it is also likely that you will identify some specific *local* conditions or individuals. You may be returning to examine the importance of some of these factors later but here you should consider whether what you regard as the most significant *general* factors associated with your previous partnership achievements are known and understood.

Element C: Identify the principal barriers to partnership working.

Partnership working is rarely straightforward. Sometimes the barriers to working effectively together turn out to be too formidable, and even where some measure of success *is* achieved, some barriers to partnership are more difficult to overcome than others. To move forward in a more sustainable relationship it is important to be clear about the nature and extent of any such barriers so that steps might be taken to minimise their influence. As with the principal factors associated with success, these barriers might be both external to the locality or internal to it. Several types of barrier can be distinguished: structural, procedural, financial, professional, cultural and matters of status and legitimacy. Other parts of the framework will return to some of these in more depth, but for now you should simply consider whether the main types of barrier are known and understood.

Element D: Acknowledge whether the policy context creates voluntary, coerced or mandatory partnership working.

It is important that partners understand the policy context within which partnership working is taking place or proposed. There needs to be a clear recognition of the pressure upon individual partners. In particular, partners must acknowledge that whereas some will enter the partnership entirely voluntarily others may be coerced or even required to do so. It is vital to the success of partnership working that such degrees of pressure – whether local or national - are mutually recognised and understood.

Element E: Acknowledge the extent of partners' interdependence to achieve some of their goals.

Potential partners need to have an appreciation of their interdependence, without which collaborative problem-solving makes no sense. If there is objectively *no* such interdependence then there is no need to work together. If there *is* some interdependence, but this is insufficiently acknowledged or inadequately understood, then further understanding needs to be acquired before any further partnership development can take place.

Element F: Acknowledge areas in which you are not dependent upon others to achieve your goals.

Not all of an organisation's activities require a contribution from a partner in order to be undertaken effectively. Organisations will normally have some ‘core business’ which they would expect to undertake with little or no reference to other partners. They would also expect others to acknowledge their legitimacy to operate in a certain field of activity and to define appropriate practice within this field. Without such an understanding there is a danger of partners overstepping the limits of agreed areas of partnership working.

Partnership Assessment Tool



PRINCIPLE 1

Recognise and Accept the Need for Partnership

Elements of the principle

- A. Identify principal partnership achievements.
- B. Identify the factors associated with successful partnership working.
- C. Identify the principal barriers to partnership working.
- D. Acknowledge whether the policy context creates voluntary, coerced or mandatory partnership working
- E. Acknowledge the extent of partners' interdependence to achieve some of their goals.
- F. Acknowledge areas in which you are not dependent upon others to achieve your goals.

Rapid Partnership Profile

| To what extent do you agree with each of the following six statements in respect of the Partnership which is the subject of this assessment exercise as a whole? | strongly agree | agree | disagree | strongly disagree | Comments |
|--|----------------|-------|----------|-------------------|----------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There have been substantial past achievements within the partnership. | | | | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The factors associated with successful working are known and understood. | | | | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The principal barriers to successful partnership working are known and understood. | | | | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The extent to which partners engage in partnership working voluntarily or under pressure/mandation is recognised and understood. | | | | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a clear understanding of partners' interdependence in achieving some of their goals. | | | | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is mutual understanding of those areas of activity where partners can achieve some goals by working independently of each other. | | | | | |

