

# **Mapping approaches to integrating performance indicators across local strategic partnerships**

Gathering examples of perceived good practice

**Final report**  
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## **Executive summary**

### **Purpose**

This study forms part of a longer-term evaluation of LSPs. The purpose of this particular strand of work was to map and explore cases of perceived good practice in integrating, aligning, or creating a framework for performance indicators.

This paper is based on brief research in nine case study LSPs, chosen on the basis that they each had a reputation for having made considerable progress in, or adopting an innovative approach to, the selection, development and use of shared cross-sectoral indicators.

### **Context**

All LSPs need and are expected by government to have effective performance management arrangements; LSPs in receipt of Neighbourhood Renewal Funding (NRF) are required to demonstrate this. LSPs have to manage performance at three key levels:

1. The partnership itself – i.e. the efficiency, effectiveness and appropriateness of the partnership's internal systems, processes, and relationships
2. Outcomes on the ground – i.e. ensuring that strategies and plans are moving in the right direction and making a difference to the lives of local people
3. The 'value added by the LSP' – i.e. the connection between level 1 and level 2 or the benefit that working together brings over and above what agencies would achieve working alone.

LSPs need to develop different mechanisms for managing performance at each of these levels.

### **Progress to date**

The effective performance management of partnerships is a complex and challenging task. Partners frequently have multiple and competing objectives and, as voluntary institutions not formal organisations, LSPs need to negotiate and influence performance management rather than enforce it. LSPs are new institutions and performance management arrangements are clearly in their infancy.

Given the complexity of performance managing in a partnership context, and the fact that partners themselves are at very different stages in the development of performance management approaches, it seems reasonable to suggest that this may take some years to evolve.

We found that progress is patchy, even though LSPs acknowledge it as a priority. Not surprisingly the greatest progress seems to have been made in sub-partnerships that are well established, relatively well resourced and which have a clear remit defined in statute rather than at the level of the LSP itself.

Most of the cases we examined considered the alignment of performance management systems across partners too ambitious an aim. Rather, they are aiming to develop an integrated

performance management system that would enable the LSP to monitor those shared or commonly owned targets that have been included in the strategies and plans of the LSP and its various sub-partnerships and groups. Even this more limited task was widely acknowledged to be complex and difficult.

### **Interesting practice**

Some of the practices we consider particularly worth highlighting are:

- Wigan has developed an inclusive process to map the web of causal links between goals, objectives and actions, and uses a sophisticated and flexible ICT system for tracking and reporting progress.
- North East Lincolnshire has adopted a 'life stages' approach to planning in order to encourage agencies to work together in new ways. Interestingly Coventry has moved away from this approach to a more conventional thematic structure for their community strategy.
- In Surrey, a shared database provides integrated performance management data to 11 crime and disorder partnerships throughout the county, permitting analysis of crime data alongside data on social and economic risk factors; Middlesbrough has a similar project.
- Middlesbrough has developed the 'LSP driver', a tool based on the EFQM 'excellence model', for assessing the performance of the partnership. This is complemented by a longitudinal evaluative study to track changes in residents' perceptions of outcomes.
- Coventry has taken a partnership approach to monitoring and evaluation in priority neighbourhoods funded through the NRF. Community researchers identify the information requirements of priority neighbourhoods and communities of interest, and provide qualitative data to help interpret statistical indicators.
- Croydon has developed the Community Strategy as a 'sum of existing plans and strategies' in order to build ownership, and has mapped targets and performance indicators that apply to agencies within the partnership against key themes and priorities.
- A number of LSPs are starting to move from performance monitoring to the active management of performance. In Bradford a partnership delivery team will facilitate more coherent and effective partnership working, while a team comprising the chief officers from the main partner organisations will oversee performance management. In Croydon, the Council's Scrutiny Committee will oversee progress towards implementing the Community Strategy and will involve partner agencies in this process. In Manchester, a performance management group has been formed, which has helped to build capacity within the LSP and sub-partnerships.

### **Key messages**

Key messages to LSPs and local stakeholders are:

- Many of the most difficult challenges in developing and using shared indicators are not technical, but behavioural and structural. Partners need to develop an appreciation of the value of performance management and the use of indicators as a diagnostic and learning

mechanism. Effective challenge – to turn performance monitoring into true performance management – is proving difficult. There are also cultural as well as technical barriers to data sharing.

- Indicators are not everything; they are only as good as the performance management system in which they are embedded. Investing considerable resources in developing a new indicator, but then being unable to collect data against it – to interpret the resulting information within the context of an analysis of causal influences, or to encourage partners to change their actions as a result – will clearly not be worthwhile.
- Although some LSPs and their partners have developed sophisticated ICT systems for storing and analysing data, there are some dangers in associating performance management too closely with these kinds of technical developments. Ultimately, performance management hinges on a shared understanding of goals, an ability to prioritise, a willingness to share information and data, the judgement and skill required to draw meaningful interpretations from data and a commitment to acting on these interpretations in pursuit of continual improvement. Much progress can be achieved on these fronts without the need for a 'high tech' system.
- Good performance management needs to be an integral part of the LSP's work – not an add-on. It requires considerable (senior level) commitment on the part of members, a deep understanding of the competing and divergent pressures that partners are subject to, and trust, in order to challenge the performance of other agencies in a constructive fashion. Undertaken in this spirit, performance management is a vehicle for building the partnership – creating an opportunity for partners to learn about each other, confirm their vision and priorities, and enhance and sustain morale through providing clear evidence of results.

Key messages to central government and the regional offices are:

- Some of the problems LSPs are encountering with developing shared indicators are symptomatic of the issues they are facing more generally. These include defining the focus and remit of the partnership, especially the relationship with the plans and activities of partner agencies and sub-partnerships, and identifying how best the LSP can add value. Performance management and the use of shared indicators at the level of the LSP is of little value if similar approaches are not adopted in the sub-partnerships which are typically responsible for delivering outcomes. The ODPM and other central government departments can help in this by providing a clear and consistent message.
- Resourcing is also an issue. Although 'high tech' solutions are not essential, it is apparent that the development of a sophisticated and effective performance management system requires a significant investment and the ongoing commitment of resources from partners. But LSPs themselves are not well resourced, and do not necessarily see this as a priority. In recognising this, government (indeed all stakeholders) need to ensure that expectations about progress are realistic.
- The wide variety of approaches being adopted by the case study partnerships clearly illustrates the value of locally developed solutions to suit local circumstances. A performance management system for an LSP has to reflect the cultures, organisational structures, and power relationships of the partnership and its partners. A 'one size fits all' approach imposed

by the centre could be ineffective. Hence, our recommendation that government guidance<sup>1</sup> would be most helpful and welcome if it is non-prescriptive and allows for local diversity in approach and focus.

## **Conclusion**

If the LSP is genuinely to add value, it cannot afford to have weak performance management arrangements, but neither should it become yet another site to performance manage partner agencies. Defining the precise focus and scope for performance management by the partnership is not easy. Some partnerships are still struggling with a plethora of indicators derived from the plans of partners and sub-partnerships; others have made a determined effort to focus on specific areas where the partnership can add value. Over time, the LSP needs to develop a performance management framework that will enable partners to monitor, evaluate, and plan joint work in such a way that they are held to account for their individual actions and achieve better results collectively than they would by working alone.

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<sup>1</sup> The NRU is developing an LSP Performance Management Framework model.

## **The purpose of this study**

This study forms part of a longer-term evaluation of local strategic partnerships (LSPs) undertaken on behalf of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) by a consortium of the Universities of Warwick, the West of England, and Liverpool John Moores, and the Office for Public Management (OPM™).

The purpose of this particular strand of work was to map and explore cases of perceived good practice in integrating, aligning, or creating a framework for performance indicators. The intention was:

- to learn from and to highlight perceived progressive practices in this area (to other LSPs and wider stakeholders)
- to assess how far LSPs that are perceived to be progressive in this area have advanced this issue, so that developing local, regional and central policy can be grounded in reality
- to provide a 'scoping' review to see what sort of support may be useful for LSPs more widely
- to provide some analysis on cases that central and regional stakeholders commonly cite as being good even though there may be little real understanding or evidence to support that view.

The main focus of the work was the LSP, as a site where partners are required to work together to design and deliver improved outcomes for their local areas. As partnership arrangements in many areas were well advanced before the establishment of LSPs, this study also examined the practice of sub-partnerships or subgroups, where that was appropriate. However, as our primary point of contact was the LSP, the focus was on sub-partnerships of the LSP rather than partnership working more widely. In particular, we uncovered little about the use of shared indicators within established bilateral partnerships such as those between health and social services.

This report, along with nine accompanying case studies, are the main outputs from the project. The case studies relate to LSPs in the following localities: Middlesbrough, Wigan, Bradford, Coventry, Croydon, Surrey, Liverpool, Manchester and North East Lincolnshire.

The case study sites were chosen on the basis that they each had a reputation for having made considerable progress in, or for adopting an innovative approach to, the selection, development and use of shared cross-sectoral indicators. Given the nature of the project and our remit, it was not possible to test or confirm that what is described in the case studies necessarily represents best practice. Nevertheless, it is hoped that this piece of work will contribute to an understanding of what good practice may be.

Although the main focus of the report is on performance indicators, issues concerning the way in which indicators are monitored and data is used inevitably take one into broader questions of performance management. We therefore touch on these broader questions where they are relevant to the main discussion about performance indicators.

## Methodology

The research for this project was undertaken over a three-month period between April and June 2003. Following consultation across government departments, the LGA and Audit Commission, regional government offices and the research team, ODPM provided a list of possible case study sites, with an indication of areas of particular interest to pursue. We then phoned these sites, to explore briefly the areas of perceived good practice, and asked each of them to send a range of background documentation for review.

On the basis of this information, a decision was made on whether or not each site was suitable for inclusion as a project case study. Those chosen were interviewed by phone, to pursue areas of interest in more detail. The generic protocol used for these interviews can be found in the Appendix. However, it is important to note that as case study sites were chosen for different reasons, the format of each interview varied considerably.

## Context

The measurement of performance is an increasingly important part of the management of public services and intrinsic to performance management approaches. Performance measurement of services, and organisations providing services, against targets, indicators and standards is now commonplace, and there are many sets of performance indicators in use by partners or stakeholders in LSPs. However, it is widely recognised that there are increasing levels of difficulty associated with the movement from measuring inputs and outputs to measuring outcomes, and in measuring performance on so-called 'cross-cutting' issues requiring joined up working between service providers.

## Concepts and definitions of performance management

Performance management is a complex area, and in our experience the various definitions and concepts that people use to understand and describe it can cause confusion.

In figure 1 we set out our understanding of the performance management cycle. On the far right hand side is the aim or objective - i.e. the overarching goal that an organisation is trying to achieve. An example (taken from North East Lincolnshire's Community Plan) might be that children and young people live in a safe and supportive environment. Planning processes will result in the identification of a number of inputs that are thought to be required to meet this objective. By 'inputs' we mean the 'factors of production' or raw ingredients – in this example inputs might include finance, staff members etc. As the diagram indicates, inputs may contribute to a variety of different outputs. 'Outputs' are the result of input factors plus organisational activity. They are usually concrete and tangible – for example in this case, one output might include the establishment of three new youth centres to provide safe spaces for young people. Outputs can contribute in any number of ways to the achievement of 'outcomes'. One possible outcome in this instance is a reduction in the number of young people who are victims of crime. Outcomes tend to be less tangible, more complex, and harder to measure than outputs.

In a well constructed performance management environment, feedback mechanisms need to be developed at every level, to ensure that progress can be monitored, remedial action can be triggered where necessary, and longer term planning can be informed. Whilst simple milestones can be used to track outputs, indicators need to be developed to monitor outcomes and the achievement of overarching aims or objectives. Several outcomes may contribute to the achievement of a single overarching aim or objective and one outcome may also contribute to the achievement of another. For this reason, indicators are better thought of as existing in a web or network, rather than a simple hierarchy.

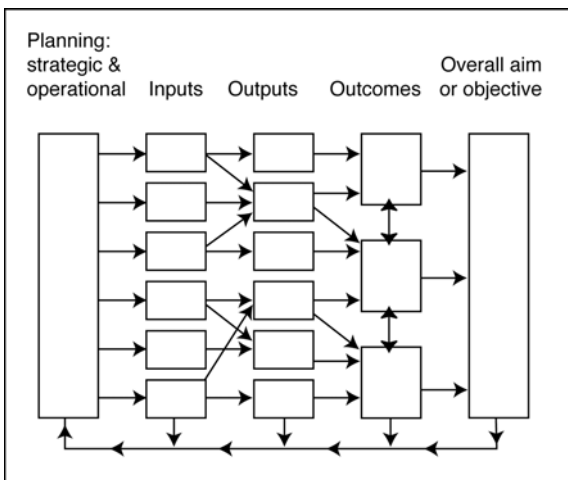


Figure 1. Key elements of the performance management cycle

## Performance management in LSPs

Performance management is one of the six accreditation criteria that the NRU has applied to those LSPs in receipt of Neighbourhood Renewal Funding. The headline statement on this criterion in the 2002-3 accreditation guidance was:

*'Member organisations have aligned their performance management systems, aims and objectives, criteria and processes to the aims and objectives of the LSP'.*

Accreditation for NRF LSPs in its previous sense is likely to be cancelled and replaced by a requirement to demonstrate that the LSP has some form of performance management in place. For non NRF LSPs, the non-prescriptive guidance for all LSPs of March 2001 also states that LSPs should have effective performance management arrangements.

The former accreditation guidance says that LSPs should aim to demonstrate how they intend to:

- 'Monitor results by partners and families of partnerships so they can challenge poor performance and adapt strategies and plans in response to changed local circumstances, risks and opportunities

- Align aims and objectives, performance management, planning and budget cycles and other systems of key partners. This might include development of shared joint local targets and indicators’.

LSPs need to manage performance at three key levels:

- **Level one:** The partnership itself – i.e. the efficiency, effectiveness, and appropriateness of the partnership’s internal systems, processes, and relationships
- **Level two:** Outcomes on the ground – i.e. ensuring that strategies and plans are moving in the right direction and making a difference to the lives of local people
- **Level three:** The ‘value added by the LSP’ – i.e. the connection between levels one and two or the benefit that working together brings over and above what agencies would achieve working alone.

LSPs need to develop different mechanisms for managing performance at each of these levels. Structured self-assessment processes can be developed to tackle level one questions (e.g. Middlesbrough’s Partnership Driver and the NRU’s new Performance Management Framework). At present, many LSPs are still relying on milestones or output indicators to track level two questions. However, it is clear that, as partnerships progress, managing performance at this level will require the development and use of suitable quantitative and qualitative outcome measures. (It is widely recognised that public perceptions can lag behind evidence of improved outcomes and the LSP will need to develop qualitative as well as quantitative indicators in order to track both over time.) Measuring the value added of LSPs is notoriously difficult. It seems likely that, for the time being at least, performance measurement and management at this level will rely on partner perceptions and the systematic collection of stories and examples of where partnership working has led to action and outcomes that would not have taken place in the absence of the LSP.

Case study interviews touched on all three of the aspects of performance management outlined above. The main focus of this study was on the development and use of shared indicators to measure outcomes on the ground.

The 2002 survey of LSPs, conducted as part of the national evaluation of LSPs, found that they were starting to make progress with performance monitoring and management, but most had not got very far. Nineteen per cent of respondents had agreed a list of performance indicators against which to assess their progress. Thirty-nine LSPs (62 per cent of those who responded to this part of the question) were using the Audit Commission’s Quality of Life indicators – mostly amongst other indicators. Amongst those LSPs that had not agreed a list of PIs, 62 per cent were considering PIs and 23 per cent were considering or already had in place alternative performance management arrangements. 26 per cent had not yet started to consider performance management. NRF LSPs appeared to have made more progress in performance management than non-NRF LSPs. Our nine case study LSPs included five that had agreed PIs in 2002, and four that were still working on this.

## **Indicators and performance management**

Performance indicators can be considered to be 'shared' in at least four senses:

- First, an indicator that is clearly the responsibility of a single agency may nevertheless be recognised as so important in contributing to shared goals that it is included within the Community Strategy, and performance management of it is considered the legitimate concern of the LSP (for example the level of GCSE passes amongst 16 year olds).
- Second, even if the indicator falls largely within the established domain of one agency, the nature of the problem may be recognised as a cross-cutting one, desired outcomes are jointly owned, and partners are committed to working together to identify actions that they can each take in their own areas to help achieve change against the indicator (for example the level of teenage pregnancies).
- Third, indicators may be constructed in such a way as to obviously require the collaboration of two or more agencies (for example the educational attainment of young people leaving care, requiring the collaboration of social services and education).
- And fourth, an indicator may not fall clearly within the remit of any one agency and be only attainable through partnership action (for example, reducing the number of children in priority neighbourhoods who live in low income households).

So considerations of 'sharing' cannot be divorced from wider issues of performance management, an indicator that is 'shared' in one locality may not be shared in another, the degree of 'sharing' is better understood as a spectrum than a dichotomy, and the extent of 'sharing' may be a matter on which partners disagree.

## **Performance management over time**

Effective performance management of partnerships is a complex and challenging task. Partners frequently have multiple and competing objectives and, as voluntary institutions not formal organisations, LSPs need to negotiate and influence performance management rather than enforce it. In this context, and as LSPs are new structures, one would expect that their performance management arrangements would take some time to evolve.

Figure two charts the progression from an environment where agencies are functioning separately to one where they are operating as an effective partnership, and have aligned their aims, objectives, processes and performance management systems. As the diagram shows, in many instances, the first step along this journey may be more limited cooperation between two or three partner agencies.

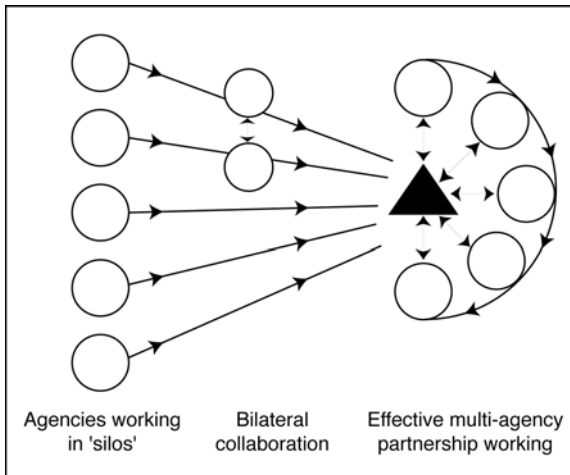


Figure 2. Progression toward effective multi-agency partnership

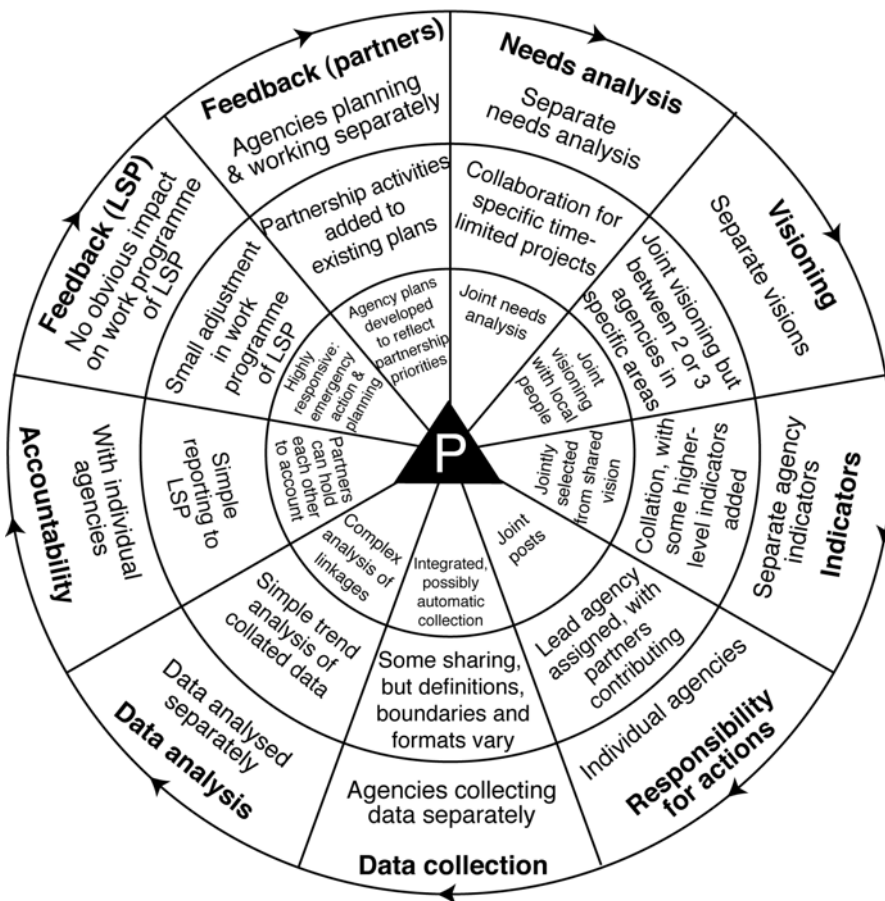


Figure 3. Progression toward integrated performance management in the partnership context

Figure three explores the implications for performance management of this progression toward effective partnership working. The nine sections of the circle represent the most important elements of an effective performance management framework in a partnership context. In seeking to more effectively align performance management systems to the aims and objectives of the LSP, agencies will need to move from an environment where each agency operates separately (the outside rim of the circle) to one where there is increased cooperation and integration in all the nine areas identified (the inner rim). First steps in this process might involve

discussions around need and priorities and the simple sharing of information on existing indicators and targets. As integration deepens, partners will need to develop new indicators to fill gaps and address cross cutting issues, assign responsibility for action, and devise shared mechanisms for collecting and analysing data and holding each other to account for performance.

Figure three provides a framework for our discussion of the key findings from this project.

## **Illustrations of practice from the case studies**

In the following section we summarise key elements of the approach to performance management in each of our case studies. Full text of the case studies can be found on the ODPM's web site.

### **Manchester**

The public consultation process on the development of the Manchester Local Strategic Partnership (MLSP) and the Manchester Community Strategy (2002-2012) (MCS) was launched on 19 June 2001. The final draft of the MCS was launched at the inaugural meeting of the Manchester Conference – the overarching partnership of the MLSP in January 2002, where delegates from a range of organisations came together to confirm the direction, themes, and priorities of the MCS and the structure of the MLSP.

Key elements of the MLSP's approach to performance management to date include:

- Establishing a clear relationship between CS priorities and the thematic groups charged with taking them forward
- The formation of a performance management group, which has helped to build capacity within the LSP and sub-partnerships
- Considerable progress within the crime and disorder partnership where an integrated intelligence led approach to managing performance is being developed.

### **Liverpool**

Liverpool's Local Strategic Partnership is a family of partnerships, comprising Liverpool First Board, Liverpool Partnership Group (LPG), city wide thematic Strategic Issue Partnerships (SIPs), Cluster Partnerships providing an area and neighbourhood dimension, and two sub-groups dealing with NRS/PSA and the city's SRB6 scheme, respectively.

The Strategic Issue Partnerships are autonomous, existing independently of the Liverpool Partnership Group but having representation on LPG and working alongside it to contribute to delivery of the Community Strategy. Protocols defining the roles and responsibilities, including performance management, are currently being agreed between each SIP and LPG.

Key features of the LSP's approach to performance management include:

- Thoughtful approach to the selection of indicators with notable success in some areas – e.g. Strategic Housing Partnership
- Clear assignment of responsibility for particular actions within the Community Strategy, with Strategic Issue and Cluster Partnerships charged with driving progress and responding to performance information

- 'Learning approach' – with monitoring used as an opportunity to identify and learn from good practice.

## **Surrey**

The Surrey Strategic Partnership was established in January 2002. Key features of the partnership's approach to performance management include:

- Selection of indicators linked to development of a long term, detailed, vision for the county generated through scenario planning
- Development of a partnership LPSA, including negotiating a formula for sharing out reward for meeting LPSA targets so that all agencies benefit in proportion to their contribution
- A shared database developing out of crime and disorder work.

## **Croydon**

The Croydon Strategic Partnership has spent the last year developing a working understanding of the performance management environment within which it operates. In so doing it has drawn upon a history of partnership working, and sought to build on and enhance the performance management 'infrastructure' that already exists for the majority of partner organisations.

Key features of the partnership's approach to performance management have included:

- Development of the Community Strategy as a sum of existing plans and strategies, and mapping targets and performance indicators that apply to agencies within the partnership against six themes and 21 priorities.
- Identifying a number of priority areas where new indicators need to be developed to 'fit' local circumstances, in the light of public consultation.
- The Council's Scrutiny Committee will oversee progress in implementing the Community Strategy, and will involve partner agencies in this process.

## **Coventry**

Coventry was one of the first areas to develop a Community Plan, back in 1997. The City Forum, the forerunner to the Coventry Partnership, was established to oversee the Plan. Key features of the City Forum and the partnership's approach to performance management include:

- A long history of partnership working and community planning to draw on in developing the performance management framework.
- Planned restructuring of the partnership to reflect the priorities of the new Plan, currently in development.
- Project managers from partner agencies to be appointed to drive delivery in the thematic groups.

- A Performance and Planning project funded through Invest to Save, to develop a web-based management information system.
- A partnership approach to monitoring and evaluation in priority neighbourhoods funded through the NRF, involving community researchers who identify the information requirements of priority neighbourhoods and communities of interest, and provide qualitative data to help to interpret statistical indicators.

## **Bradford**

Bradford Vision was established in 2001, although a strategic partnership (Bradford Congress) has existed since 1993. Key features of Bradford Vision's approach to performance management have included:

- The development of a detailed long-term vision for Bradford, with senior-level backing from the Council.
- Effective joint working between agency leads for each of the themed chapters in the Community Strategy and officers from the Council's Scrutiny and Performance Directorate to select indicators.
- Establishment of a partnership delivery team to facilitate more coherent and effective partnership working, and a team comprising the chief officers from the main partner organisations to oversee performance management of the partnership.

## **Middlesbrough**

Middlesbrough Partnership was established as an LSP in 2001. A rigorous and thoughtful approach to performance management has been key to the development of the partnership to date. Although there remains much work to be done, there are some examples of good and/or innovative practice. Key features of Middlesbrough Partnership's approach include:

- An integrated approach to performance management that encompasses the Community Strategy, Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy and the performance of the LSP itself.
- The use of the 'LSP driver', a tool based on the European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM) excellence model, for assessing the performance of the partnership.
- A mixed methodology, relying on both qualitative and quantitative data from a variety of sources.
- A recognition of the significance of different timescales for performance management, with resources devoted to some longer-term evaluation work.

## **Wigan**

The Leader's Forum was established to help coordinate and provide leadership for Wigan's partnerships framework. Building on the Council's strong and effective approach to performance management, the Forum is in the process of implementing a rigorous system for the LSP. Key features of the Leader's Forum approach to performance management have included:

- The development of an inclusive process to map the causal links between goals, objectives and actions.
- Use of a sophisticated and flexible ICT system for tracking and reporting progress
- Development of some imaginative new indicators that reflect local people's priorities.

### **North East Lincolnshire**

North East Lincolnshire's Local Strategic Partnership was formally established in October 2001. Key features of the partnership's approach to planning and performance management to date include:

- The adoption of a 'life stage' approach to planning in order to encourage agencies to work together in new ways.
- The identification of a small number of priority outcomes and the development of a more intensive system for monitoring performance against these.
- Appointment of Project Managers and Information Managers from lead agencies to ensure delivery and oversee data collection and management.
- Thorough and thoughtful presentation of indicators and performance data in the Community Strategy.

## **Discussion of key findings**

In the section that follows, we outline some of the key findings emerging from the case studies under the nine headings set out in figure three.

### **Expectations and progress to date**

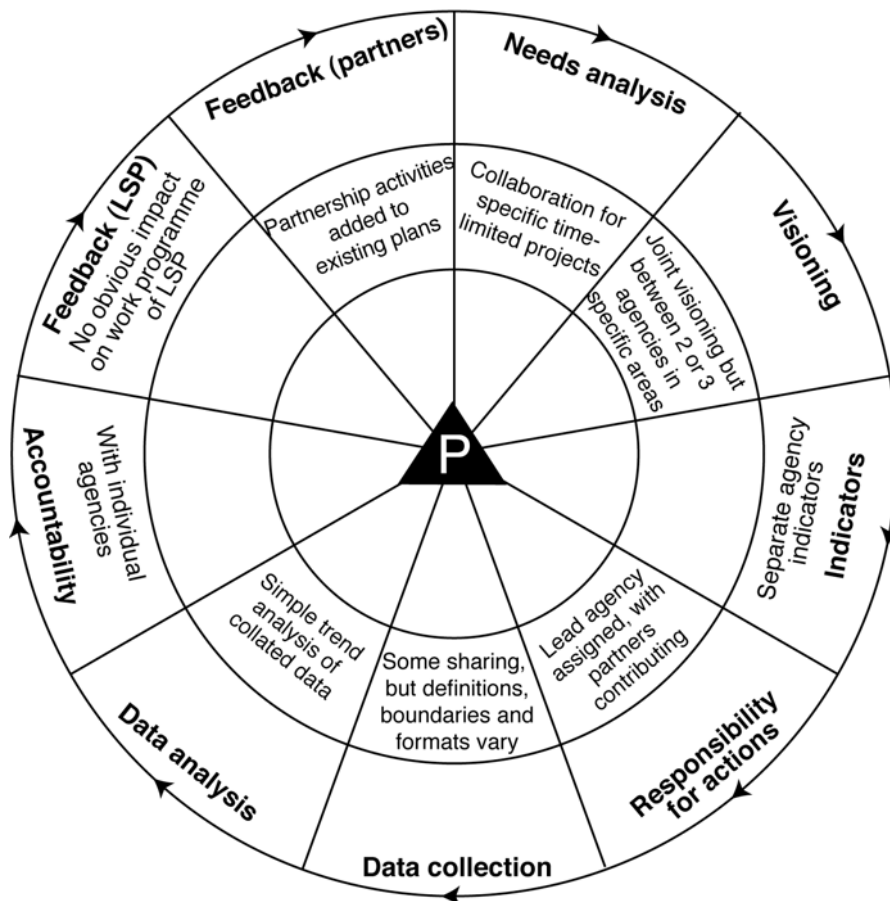
NRU accreditation criteria for NRF LSPs requires member agencies to have aligned their performance management systems, aims and objectives, criteria and processes to the aims and objectives of the LSP (see previous section). A number of case study interviewees commented that it is not entirely clear what is meant by alignment. Several claimed that full alignment of performance management systems was either unnecessary to meet the needs of the partnership, or impossible to achieve in practice. The 2001 national guidance does not use the word 'alignment' and LSPs appear to find it less problematic.

The majority of case study participants were aiming to do something they considered less ambitious than this. They were aiming to develop an integrated performance management system that would enable the LSP to monitor those shared or commonly owned targets that were included in the strategies and plans owned by the LSP and its various sub-partnerships and groups. Even this more limited task was widely acknowledged to be complex and difficult. Identifying, developing, and monitoring shared indicators and targets at partnership level in the context of differing and sometimes competing demands on agencies from central government and local people was considered to be extremely challenging. This activity was widely considered to be harder for agencies in some policy areas than others. For instance the considerable pressure on health agencies to meet central Government targets was regarded as a significant barrier to joint working at the level of the LSP.

Several interviewees felt that requiring LSP partners to align their indicators and performance management systems in the absence of similar attempts to join these up at a national level was unreasonable. The perceived lack of alignment in the indicators imposed on localities by central government departments is a commonly voiced concern amongst localities, but we did not assess the evidence for it and we are aware that there are efforts centrally to align indicators across departments.

Despite their reputations for having made significant progress, it was clear from the case studies that performance management is still very much work in progress. Several partnerships had only recently published their Community Strategy and some had not yet completed theirs. Of those that had completed Strategies, some were still using process indicators relating to the partnership – for example 'ensure adequate representation of [particular groups] on the LSP', or output milestones relating to key projects –for instance 'setting up a youth centre'. Case study participants clearly identified performance management as an important priority for the development of the LSP. However they were also clear that performance management needs to be regarded as an ongoing, iterative, process that will improve gradually over time.

It seems clear that progress to date has not been linear – i.e. a straightforward progression from agencies working in isolation to a fully performance managed partnership. Rather we found progress to be surprisingly patchy, even within individual case studies. In terms of the model outlined above, for example, some partnerships had sophisticated ICT systems for analysing data, but they had not agreed shared definitions for all indicators and the LSP was not yet able to challenge poor performance.



**Figure 4. Illustration of typical progress towards integrated performance management**

One of the reasons for patchy progress appeared to be that responsibility for furthering various component parts of the LSP's performance management framework lay with different agencies and progress was not always being made in a joined up fashion.

When one looks below the level of the LSP itself, it is clear that some sub-partnerships or groups are making more progress than others in using indicators to effectively performance manage their work. Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships appear to be making particular progress. This is perhaps not surprising: the partnerships are statutory requirements and have been established across the country since 1998; crime and disorder is a priority for the Government and for local people, the police have robust systems for data collection in place; and outcomes may be easier to measure in this than in some other areas of policy. Surrey's SCADIS project (see box on p. 24) is a good example of progress in this area.

## **Visioning**

The majority of case study participants reported that LSP partners had begun their work together by engaging local people in consultation exercises in order to develop a common vision and priorities for the future. The nature and extent of public consultation, and its impact on the selection of indicators, appeared to vary across the case studies we conducted. In North East Lincolnshire, for example, public concerns over the appearance of the local area and about safe and healthy lifestyles for young people found their way into the Strategy. In another case study, concerns about the environment revealed through consultation led directly to the inclusion of the environment as a key theme in the Community Strategy. However in other instances, public consultation appears to have been used more to check and confirm priorities that the LSP had suggested or existing sub-partnerships were already working to.

Visioning exercises appear to have varied across the case studies. In some instances, the vision developed was fairly generic, and might have applied to any number of different areas in the country (thus, it was argued, allowing existing agency plans to be slotted in underneath). In others, considerable effort was put into developing a detailed long-term vision for the area that would give a clear steer for partnership initiatives.

### **Surrey's approach to visioning**

In its response to AGENDA 21, the Sustainable Surrey Forum (forerunner to the LSP) produced the Common Agenda, a vision for the area set out under seven key themes. Although useful, this is generally regarded as too generic and not sufficiently rooted in the particular Surrey context. Whilst offering a set of useful principles, it does not offer the LSP and the organisations that are represented on it a tangible and common sense of direction.

The LSP is therefore beginning work on the development of a more specific and meaningful vision for the future of the area that will guide partnership working over the next 15-20 years. Consultants have been hired to assist the partnership in developing the vision through adopting and adapting scenario planning techniques that are already commonly used by large commercial organisations. The programme of work involves public consultation exercises (using open space techniques), expert interviews and a programme of focus groups that will generate key issues and aspirations for the region. A second phase of workshops will probe and explore areas of commonality, unusual but potentially valid views and areas of disagreement. A final stage will then map out a range of possible scenarios for the future of Surrey, one of which will be the preferred vision for Surrey.

This work will provide the Surrey Strategic Partnership and the individual organisations represented on it with a clear strategic direction that will help to inform the actions they should take together both as partners and within their own organisations.

The vision will be developed over the coming year, with the final version available by March 2004. It is hoped that the highly consultative fashion in which the vision is developed will help to build ownership amongst partner agencies and district councils.

## **Indicators**

### **Process for choosing indicators**

All but one of the LSPs we consulted had developed or were in the process of developing their Community Strategy under five to seven key themes – for example, economic prosperity, the environment, a healthy city, etc..

Under each of these themes, many of the LSPs appeared to have begun work by collating together high-level indicators from each of the partner agencies or sub-partnerships that were responsible for furthering these themes. In some cases, this left them with a very long list of indicators to monitor: over a hundred different indicators in some instances. The majority of case study participants we consulted recognised that monitoring such a large number of indicators would be problematic, and some had begun the process of prioritising and stripping out superfluous ones. However, the process of cutting out indicators had clearly been difficult, with individual agencies, sub-partnerships and groups unwilling to lose indicators that were important to their own areas of work.

In addition to collating a range of existing indicators, many case studies had already defined or were in the process of defining some higher-level 'pulse of the city' type indicators. Some of these had been selected from national indicator sets (Audit Commission Quality of Life, Agenda 21 etc). Others had been developed specifically for the local context. Some of these indicators had been developed as a direct result of public consultation. However, several interviewees pointed out that consultation exercises were better focused on the development of priorities rather than the selection of indicators, as the suggestions made by the public were sometimes impossible to measure.

#### **Selecting indicators in Liverpool's Strategic Housing Partnership**

Liverpool Strategic Housing Partnership's approach to selecting indicators was regarded as particularly successful, with the partnership managing to avoid many of the pitfalls outlined above. The Housing SIP established a sub-group to carry out this work, chaired by a Registered Social Landlord Chief Executive and facilitated by LPG Team members. The sub-group started from the bottom up, identifying what they wanted housing to look like in 10 years time, and then identifying which 3-4 indicators would enable them to track progress toward this end. The fact that the partnership was well established, had in place effective ways of working, and had strong links to other LSP groups, were all identified as important success factors.

#### **The impact of consultation on choice of indicators in Middlesbrough**

The Corporate Information Team in the Council has taken the lead in developing performance indicators, collecting and assimilating data, reporting and evaluating performance. The extensive community engagement process that took place to inform the development of the Community Strategy also helped clarify which indicators should be used. It was clear, for example, that residents were keen for fear of crime to be measured as well as the actual crime rate, as there

were concerns about the level of presence that the Police were able to provide on the streets in some neighbourhoods.

The majority of case study participants agreed that, at present, the links between Community Strategy themes, thematic indicators, and higher-level 'pulse of the city' indicators were not sufficiently robust. Many of those interviewed recognised that the construction of a simple hierarchy of indicators where higher order indicators were pasted on top of thematic indicators (which were largely drawn from the pool of existing agency indicators) was not satisfactory. Several claimed that their LSP's next major task was to explore in more depth the interrelationships between themes, targets and indicators in order to refine them and achieve a closer fit.

### **Wigan Leaders' Forum's web of objectives**

Wigan's Leaders' Forum has invested considerable effort in exploring the linkages between the actions, objectives and goals set out in the Community Plan. Under the three vision themes sit 8 goals and 34 objectives. A mapping exercise was carried out to determine the interrelationships between these. The first step in this process comprised a day long 'revolving door' workshop hosted by the Council. All parties with an interest in a particular goal were invited to discuss the range of factors that might contribute to achieving it. Data from this workshop was then further refined and some 40 key strategies and plans were identified as feeding into the achievement of the goals. The Head of Policy and Performance Management Data then met with the owners of these plans individually, to discuss and test out the causal links between existing strategies and actions, objectives and goals in the Community Plan. The mapping exercise revealed that rather than a simple hierarchy of goals and objectives these were better understood as a network or web, with the achievement of some goals and objectives linked to the achievement of others.

In order to try to avoid some of the pitfalls of the 'collation of plans and indicators approach', North East Lincolnshire structured its Community Strategy around key life stages rather than the thematic approach taken elsewhere.

### **North East Lincolnshire's life stage approach**

North East Lincolnshire LSP was committed to adding value to the plans and activities that were already under way in the region. There was a feeling that if they adopted a more 'traditional' thematic approach to the Community Strategy they would end up with a higher-level version of the strategies and plans that already existed. It was felt that such a strategy would confirm existing relationships and partnerships, rather than challenge them. From the point at which the LSP adopted the life stages approach, workshops and meetings focused on people, rather than services. Once priorities had been established through consultation, and outcomes and indicators defined, LSP members worked to establish the part they would play in delivering those outcomes. As the outcomes were not service based, in several cases it meant the establishment of new collaborative relationships between partners who had not necessarily worked closely together before. In other cases, it meant that existing partners have been required to think differently about how they work together to respond to the needs of a particular life stage. Finally,

it was felt that the life stage focus has more resonance with the community, who can recognise how the strategy applies to them and their families.

### **Indicator sets**

Case studies were using a mix of indicators including:

- Floor targets (Public Service Agreement targets)
- Local PSA targets
- Best Value Performance Indicators
- Audit Commission Quality of Life indicators
- Locally determined indicators.

We were told that national indicators can be usefully employed in many instances – with the availability of existing definitions and data sets helping to reduce work and allow fruitful comparisons to be made across the country. However, national indicators were thought to have some shortfalls. Coverage of some areas – including economic regeneration, issues relating to younger and older people, leisure/culture, images of the local area, and participation/civic engagement – was thought to be particularly thin. Several interviewees expressed concerns about the infrequency with which data for some national indicators was collected. And a number of participants commented on frequent changes in indicator sets – particularly in the area of crime and safety – arguing that this made monitoring and evaluation of initiatives far more difficult.

### **Developing locally specific indicators in Liverpool**

The Audit Commission's Quality of Life indicators include 'Affordability of housing'. However, this was not considered to be an important issue for Liverpool where a large amount of housing is of low value (therefore relatively 'affordable'), but of poor quality and so not desirable. The aim for the city is to raise standards and develop a broader mix of housing. It is hoped that one of the outcomes of this strategy will be an increase in average house prices. For this reason, the 'affordability' indicator was not considered suitable. Instead, the Strategic Housing Partnership chose an indicator measuring the proportion of domestic council-tax-banded A & B properties to those banded C to H with the aim to increase the proportion of properties in the higher bands.

Several interviewees felt that they should have more freedom to select indicators that were suitable for their local area and the particular issues they faced, rather than having 'the next new indicator set foisted on them' by central Government. Most of the case studies we consulted were in the process of developing new local indicators. Reflecting the gaps identified in national indicator sets, these tended to cluster around images and perceptions of the area/city, issues around civic engagement, and in particular, engagement of and activities for young people.

However, it was clear from the examples we have seen that it is not easy to define indicators which reflect local priorities but which are both valid and measurable. Pointers to good practice in this area include:

- Always look first to see if there is an existing national indicator, which will have been developed by people with specialist expertise in the area and thoroughly tested, and for which comparisons will be available, before concluding that local circumstances are so special that a new indicator is required
- If there is no suitable national indicator, find out if other localities have already developed and have experience of measures that could be borrowed (the appendices in the case study papers include some indicators, although these are of variable quality)
- Make a critical assessment of the availability and quality of data on which the indicator will be based. Will the data have to be collected specially and if so at what cost? If the data already exists, how accurate and reliable is it? (Data collected for operational purposes may be subject to all sorts of measurement errors, as well as variations in definitions between organisations collecting the data.) How stable is the data - is it subject to wide fluctuations over time, and if so are these significant or simply 'noise'? Is the data subject to seasonal variations? Is there an underlying trend, which you need to be aware of?
- Ensure that the data really measures what you are interested in – how valid is the measure? How can you be sure of this? This is a crucial assumption, which may need to be tested by some research.
- Beware of using ratio indicators where movement may be dominated by changes in the denominator. (For instance, one case study uses the ratio of long term unemployed to all unemployed as an indicator of long term unemployment. But this measure will reflect movement in general unemployment, which is larger and more volatile than long term unemployment; an event such as a large factory closure will cause the ratio to fall, apparently 'improving' long term unemployment.)

## **Responsibility for action**

In many instances, LSPs have assigned a lead agency for each indicator in the Community Strategy and identified a number of contributing partners. In some cases, Strategies have been published with contact details for key and contributing partners and information about sub-partnership and agency plans that feed into each target.

### **Assigning responsibility for delivering results in North East Lincolnshire**

The LSP has agreed that the organisation/partnership leads/joint leads for each indicator should identify a Project Manager, who is responsible and accountable for delivery of the target and an Information Manager, who is in charge of data collection and management. There are plans for these people to attend workshops to discuss any reporting issues, including conflicts between agency and partnership reporting systems.

## **Data collection and analysis**

Data collection across many LSPs was proving to be a challenging task – due to varying interpretations of indicators themselves, differences in reporting cycles, and data being stored in multiple locations and formats. For some agencies - in particular health and social services – there were also real concerns about the data protection issues relating to the sharing of information with partners.

However, some of the case studies had invested considerable time and resources in collecting data. The need to collect and analyse a mix of quantitative and qualitative performance data was mentioned in the majority of case study interviews. Some interviewees also discussed the importance of recognising the different timescales involved in managing performance in different areas and a number of LSPs were using or in the process of establishing some longer term surveys or studies to try to gain a better understanding of longer-term trends.

### **Middlesbrough's longitudinal evaluative study**

The aim of this study is to explore quality of life in Middlesbrough and to try to unpack how and why this is changing over time. The study will focus on change, as well as citizens' perceptions of change. Interviewers will visit a representative sample of households across Middlesbrough and use semi-structured interview protocols to explore relevant issues. The longitudinal study is being funded by the Middlesbrough Partnership using NRF money. Early findings are showing that the statistical profile of the town is reflected in people's perceptions of their neighbourhoods. One specific finding to date is that although people are appreciative of the work that is taking place to reduce crime and anti-social behaviour, there is some confusion about the roles of the Police and the Council's street wardens.

### **Collecting performance data and building capacity in Coventry**

As part of its NRS activity, Coventry is establishing a new programme to develop and train community researchers. A research fellow is being employed to recruit, train and employ community researchers in seven priority areas and up to three communities of interest. The trainees will be involved in identifying information requirements of priority neighbourhoods/communities and feeding requirements into the design of the household survey. They will develop 'communities in profile' reports, which will give a picture of the neighbourhood. They will undertake research on key local issues, and once trained will be available to undertake evaluative studies into service quality, projects etc. They will be trained in a range of techniques including impact assessment, and will be a resource that partners can employ. It is hoped that this joined up approach to research will help to limit consultation fatigue and improve the quality of information available for planning by adding qualitative information to help explain or explore further the statistical information that is collected against the key indicators.

In many instances, Council LSP liaison teams are collecting data on behalf of the various partner agencies. For the most part, this process involves officers requesting static data on disk to fit with LSP reporting cycles. Several interviewees reported difficulties with ensuring that partners send

appropriate data on time. In many cases, data was held on simple spreadsheets. A number of participants discussed plans to develop sophisticated data systems that could enable automatic updating of information from partners' systems. However, it was acknowledged that this development was some way off due to the cost and data protection issues involved.

If the LSP is to add value, it needs to develop more sophisticated approaches to data analysis so that the linkages between policy areas can be explored. To date, there was not very much evidence of this kind of practice. However, there were one or two exceptions detailed below.

### **Wigan's performance management software**

The Council's sophisticated performance management software package was adopted for use by the Leaders Forum in 2002. This software allows the Forum to track progress down to the level of each individual task. It uses a traffic light system to track progress against up to nine plan lines. Target parameters are configured by users, but will typically be +/-5-10%. The parameters include guidance on which direction of travel is desirable. Traffic light symbols can also be displayed as summaries of performance for each objective in a causal map. In that instance, the symbol displayed is for the objective's status – a weighted average of the measures for that objective used as a kind of index value.

Standard reports can be set up in simple 'briefing books'. The PerformancePlus™ software enables standard views such as scorecards, tables, graphs and impact to be set up. Briefing books can also contain linked documents and report outputs from other systems.

PerformancePlus™ runs a Microsoft SQL database in the background so any standard report writer can be used for non-standard reports.

Views within the system enable drill-down to lower levels. For example, a user can drill down from a scorecard to an impact view to a time series in only a few clicks of a mouse. Briefing books can be published in a matter of seconds to web sites or intranets to allow more people access to reporting views, but these web pages do not allow drill-downs.

It is hoped that careful monitoring indicators through this system will reveal patterns to emerge that will help to further refine the casual maps already developed through the community planning process. However, it is recognised that, ultimately, all computer generated information will still require good judgement to interpret it.

### **Surrey's SCADIS project**

Surrey has already made significant progress toward developing an integrated performance management database in the areas of crime and disorder. The SCADIS database provides integrated performance management data to 11 community safety partnerships throughout Surrey. It has been in development since March 2002 and was formally launched two weeks ago. The SCADIS team are now holding training sessions for users.

The database supports a secure extranet, which can be accessed through partners' PCs, and features different levels of access. The database can display both tabular information (e.g. numbers of crime x by ward y) and graphic representation of crime hot spots by geographical

area. Because geographical boundaries change, the SCADIS team has developed a data cleaning process whereby data is associated with an ordinance survey grid reference, allowing a highly specific geographical picture to be built up. The database is also sufficiently sophisticated to allow the partnership to explore how crime rates alter by particular time of day.

Although police data forms the majority of the information on the system, it also holds data on a range of other data on probation service and YOT team clients, school exclusion numbers and so on. Crime data can therefore be analysed alongside important social and economic risk factors. Over time, it is hoped that the SCADIS database can be expanded to incorporate data on environmental health, violent crime information from A&E departments, noise complaints and other anti-social behaviour issues. However, this is likely to take some time, as data is held by a number of different partner organisations that define and collect data in different ways. In some cases, especially with health, data protection issues make sharing data very difficult. In other areas, data is not even held electronically. Whilst collecting data from county-wide agencies has proved fairly straightforward, as data is collected consistently, collection from district councils have proved more difficult. Information on abandoned vehicles for example is collected differently by each of the 11 district councils. whilst some attempt can be made to clean up data – this is regarded as a big challenge that the team may not be able to resolve entirely.

At the moment, partner agencies provide monthly static updates, which are then cleaned by the SCADIS team. In the future, it is hoped that partners will begin to change the way that they collect data, so that uploading information is less time consuming and expensive. However, the team recognises that it also needs to develop tools to make this as easy for partners as possible – for example by creating a system that automatically inserts full address data and grid references as their data is entered into their own systems.

It is considered too early to tell what difference SCADIS is making on the ground. However, it is hoped that the data will serve to back up professional judgements and expertise with a firmer evidence base and allow swifter and more accurate evaluation exercises to be carried out.

The potential for SCADIS to evolve into a broader shared database for the whole LSP is recognised. However, this kind of development will require further strategic thinking and planning and a considerable injection of new finance. The team is planning an event in September to explore the potential and support for taking this work forward.

## **Accountability for performance**

The Community Strategies of the LSPs we consulted were at different stages of development. Most of those that had developed their strategy were still in the early stages of preparing performance reports against indicators.

LSPs had developed a range of different types of processes for monitoring and challenging performance. A number of LSPs reported having developed a traffic light system to track indicators – with green indicating that progress was continuing as planned, amber that the indicator needed to be watched carefully and red denoting a performance problem.

### **Reporting progress in North East Lincolnshire**

The LSP has distinguished between priority and non-priority outcomes, and it plans to focus the bulk of its effort performance managing the 7 priority outcomes. Lead agencies for priority outcomes will be required to deliver a presentation to the LSP at one of its five annual meetings setting out the desired outcome, key indicators, baseline data, progress to date (highlighting any areas for concern where other members of the LSP could assist), and the impact that achievement of the targets will have on the people of the area. Non-priority actions will be monitored using a traffic light reporting system, with progress reports every 6 months.

Despite the development of these and other mechanisms for tracking performance, several case study participants expressed concerns that the Board would just rubber stamp performance reports placed in front of them. Reasons for this included the sheer number of indicators being tracked and the time that effective scrutiny would therefore take, as well as anxieties about the standing that LSP members have to challenge the performance of other members.

A number of case study participants talked about the need to develop new challenge processes that would help LSP members to hold each other to account.

### **Active performance management in Manchester**

Manchester LSP has a dedicated performance management group, with membership drawn from each of the thematic partnerships. The group is thought to be working well – with six-weekly meetings providing a good opportunity for the newer partnerships to learn more about performance management systems and indicators from the more mature partnerships. However, it is recognised that the group now needs to work on developing a more challenging approach to performance management - using information to hold each other to account for performance.

A number of interviewees agreed that effort might need to be focused especially on strengthening accountability for delivery amongst contributing partners, as the majority of lead agencies are already committed to delivering strategy indicators through other means (i.e. their own agency plans and targets).

Several case study participants stated that the LSPA was helping to facilitate cross-agency collaboration in many areas, with financial reward acting as a powerful incentive for successful partnership working.

### **Surrey's approach to the LPSA**

Surrey County Council is currently developing a formula that will allow financial rewards for achieving LPSA targets to be handed on to partner agencies, in proportion to the contribution made and the stretch in target achieved. It is hoped that this will help to build ownership and commitment amongst partners to achieving the targets.

## **Closing the loop (LSP and partner agencies)**

To date, there does not appear to be very much evidence that LSPs are acting on performance management intelligence and altering either their short term activities or longer term planning. Clearly it is early days. However, unless LSPs can begin to close this loop, and demonstrate the usefulness of the data collected, there is a danger that important messages will be missed and performance management will continue to be viewed as an unnecessary burden.

Progress is being made in some areas – though unsurprisingly, this appears to be at sub-partnership level, where there has been a longer history of cross-agency working.

### **Middlesbrough's Crime and Safety group**

In the area of crime and safety in Middlesbrough, significant progress has been made to close the feedback loop. Protocols have been signed covering the sharing of information and, on a weekly basis, the police supply the Corporate Information team with a disk containing crime data for the whole of Middlesbrough, disaggregated by type of crime and location. This data is used alongside the Council's own data on anti-social behaviour in a weekly meeting with the Mayor, senior police officers, and officials from the Council. The availability of this data has resulted in real change on the ground. It has enabled the 93 street wardens to adjust their activities from week to week in response to the latest available information. In the past year, Middlesbrough has reduced crime by 25per cent, with this new system considered to be a significant contributing factor in this success. Progress towards integrated performance management in the area of crime and disorder has been attributed to the personal commitment of the elected Mayor, who is a former Head of Middlesbrough CID, and to the priority accorded to this area by LSP partners.

Several case studies reported that Community Strategy priorities were now beginning to be reflected in agencies' own planning documents. However, given differences in planning cycles, incorporation was taking place gradually over a period of time.

## Conclusions

These conclusions draw not only on the case studies referred to in this paper, but also on the wider research into LSPs being carried out for ODPM of which this work on PIs forms a part.

LSPs are new institutions and performance management arrangements are clearly in their infancy. Given the complexity of performance managing in a partnership context, and the fact that partners themselves are at very different stages in the development of performance management approaches, it seems reasonable to suggest that this may take some years to evolve. It is noteworthy that the greatest progress seems to have been made in sub-partnerships that are well established, relatively well resourced and have a clear remit defined in statute.

If the LSP is genuinely to add value it cannot afford to have weak performance management arrangements, but neither should it become yet another site to performance manage partner agencies. Defining the precise focus and scope for performance management by the partnership is not easy. Some partnerships are still struggling with a plethora of indicators derived from the plans of partners and sub-partnerships; others have made a determined effort to focus on specific areas where the partnership can add value. Over time, the LSP needs to develop a performance management framework that will enable partners to monitor, evaluate, and plan joint work in such a way that they are held to account for their individual actions and collectively they achieve better results than they would by working alone. This is not easy, and progress has been patchy. Work on measuring the value added by the LSP itself is proving particularly difficult.

One clear message that emerges is that indicators are not everything. Indicators are only as good as the performance management system that they are embedded in. Investing considerable resources in developing a new indicator, then being unable to collect data against it, to interpret the resulting information within the context of an analysis of causal influences, or to encourage partners to change their actions as a result, will clearly not be worthwhile.

Although some LSPs and their partners have developed sophisticated ICT systems for storing and analysing data, there are some dangers in associating performance management too closely with these kinds of technical developments. Ultimately, performance management hinges on a shared understanding of goals, an ability to prioritise, willingness to share information and data, the judgement and skill required to draw meaningful interpretations from data and a commitment to acting on these interpretations in pursuit of continual improvement. It is clear that much progress can be achieved on these fronts without the need for a 'high tech' system.

Some of the problems LSPs are encountering in developing shared indicators are symptomatic of the issues they are facing more generally. These include defining the focus and remit of the partnership, especially the relationship with the plans and activities of partner agencies and sub-partnerships, and identifying how best the LSP can add value. Performance management and the use of shared indicators at the level of the LSP is of little value if similar approaches are not adopted in the sub-partnerships which are typically responsible for delivering outcomes. Resourcing is also an issue: it is apparent that the development of a sophisticated and effective

performance management system requires significant investment and ongoing commitment of resources from partners. But LSPs are not well resourced, and this is not necessarily seen as a priority.

Other issues are specific to the arena of performance measurement and management. Many of the most difficult challenges in developing and using shared indicators are not technical, but behavioural and structural. Partners need to develop an appreciation of the value of performance management and the use of indicators as a diagnostic and learning mechanism. Effective challenge – to turn performance monitoring into true performance management – is proving difficult. There are also cultural as well as technical barriers to data sharing.

Good performance management needs to be integral to the LSP's work – not an add-on at the end. It requires considerable (senior level) commitment on the part of members, a deep understanding of the competing and divergent pressures that partners are subject to, and trust in order to challenge the performance of other agencies in a constructive fashion. Undertaken in this spirit, performance management is a vehicle for building the partnership – creating an opportunity for partners to learn about each other, confirm their vision and priorities, and enhance and sustain morale through providing clear evidence of results.

## **Appendix: data collection protocol**

### **General background**

1. What is the LSP's general approach to using performance indicators and targets? For example
  - do they have a performance management system in place?
  - briefly describe this system
  - have they agreed a set of PIs?
  - do these cover the work of sub-partnerships or just the LSP as a whole?
2. How have indicators and targets been chosen, grouped and agreed locally in relation to priorities?
  - which organisations were involved and how?
  - what difficulties were encountered?
  - was this done as part of the Community Strategy process, if not how does it relate?
  - how do the targets relate to other plans/PIs of partners (have they just used existing silo-based PIs or adopted/selected to reflect partnership priorities?)
  - would they use a similar process next time, how will they improve on it?
3. Which indicators have been chosen (get details of indicator sets and targets).
  - are there any that have proved particularly useful or which they think other localities might learn from?
  - any that have been tried and dropped (why?)
  - any particular issues in the choice of indicators they think others could learn from?
4. How are targets measured / monitored? How do information/data systems operate across the LSP/partners? What are the key lessons in this respect?
5. What are the roles, responsibilities and accountability arrangements between partners:
  - how are accountabilities organised ( for example is there a lead organisation for each PI? shared accountability? how does this work in practice?)
  - what happens if targets are not achieved? – how are partners held to account?
  - what issues have been encountered and what solutions have been found?
6. Is this work linked to or does it influence planning and resource allocation? How?

### **In relation to the specific area that has been identified as good practice (if any)**

7. Describe what it is [*probe*]
8. What supporting documentation is there (*make sure we have all that is relevant*)?
9. Benefits – what do they consider to be the benefits of this practice?
10. What factors have helped them with this practice?
11. What has made it more difficult?
12. What (if anything) is further planned locally in development of this practice?
13. Has there been any evaluation (local, regional or other) of this practice in the case study? With what results?
14. What lessons have been learned?
15. Any other pertinent information.

### **Process**

16. Contact details for any possible follow up work.
17. Is there anyone else we really ought to speak to about this?
18. Can we come back to them with follow up questions?
19. Confirm process for drafting and checking.