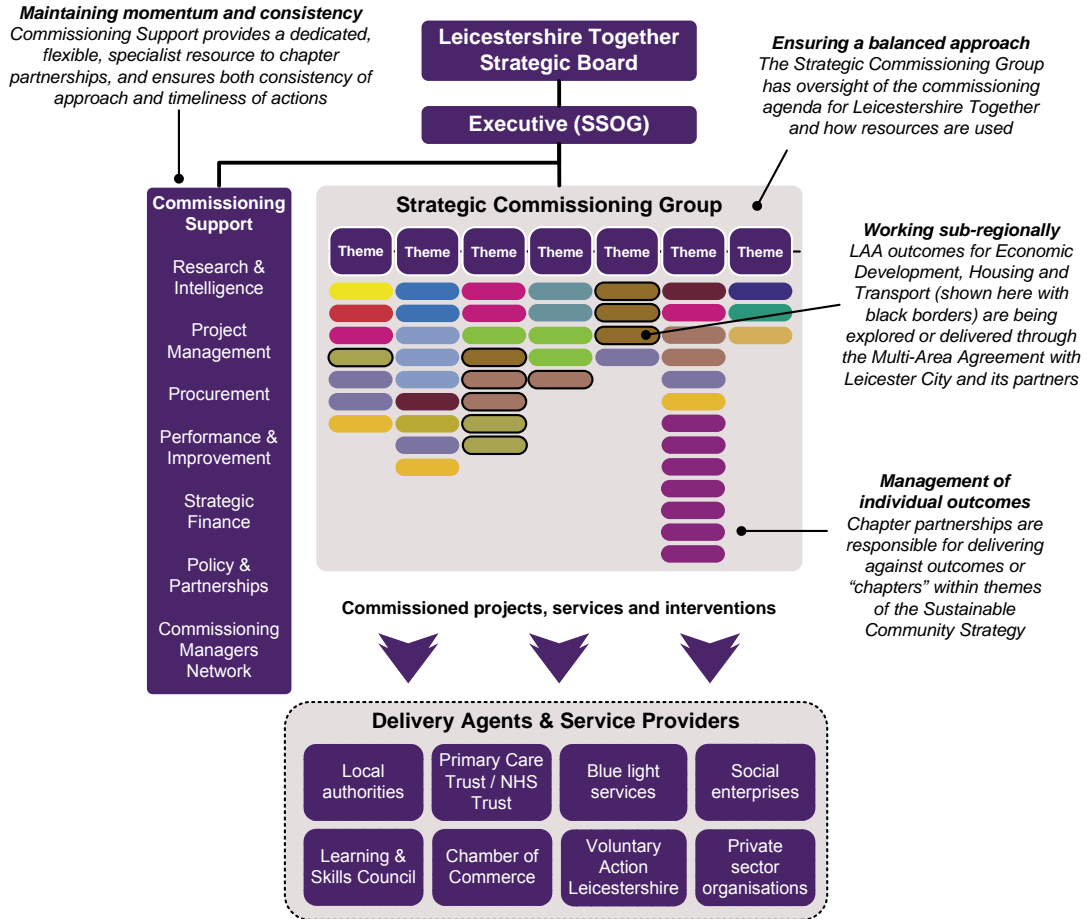


APPENDIX 2



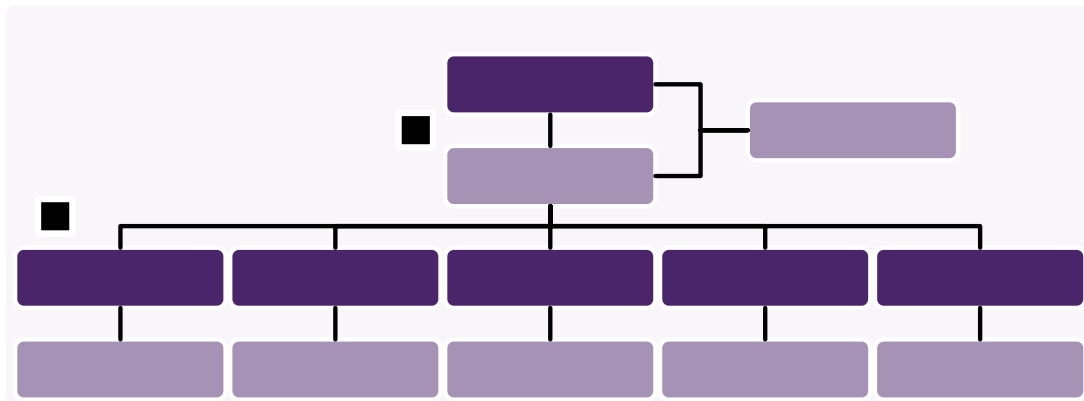
Governance of strategic commissioning in Leicestershire Together

Commissioning Support

What is it?

Leicestershire Together has established a network of Commissioning Support to provide expertise to chapter partnerships in their role as the primary commissioning agents of Leicestershire Together. This resource is designed to be flexible and responsive to commissioners' specific needs at different points, and through its work ensure co-ordination and consistency between chapter partnerships in the ongoing management and delivery of commissioning activities.

Commissioning Support is made up of a core of dedicated staff, with additional expertise provided by a number of specialist units within Leicestershire County Council, including Research & Intelligence, Policy & Partnerships, Procurement, Finance, and Performance & Improvement. Links into these units are co-ordinated by specific lead officers, who work together with Commissioning Support staff to help guide, advise, control, run and co-ordinate different activities and stages of the strategic commissioning cycle. Commissioning Support therefore represents a vital resource for Leicestershire Together to ensure joint strategic commissioning happens, and happens effectively.



Commissioning Support comprises (1) a core team of dedicated staff, with (2) links into specialist units that provide chapter partnerships with tailored expertise

In addition to its role providing specialist support, Commissioning Support also helps to co-ordinate the reporting and monitoring of Leicestershire Together's strategic commissioning approach to the Strategic Commissioning Group and Executive, including:

- Progress with the timetable for commissioning across chapters and thematic areas;
- Successes and areas of strength within the partnership that can be more widely shared and built upon;
- Key areas and themes for greater targeted support to successfully meet Leicestershire Together's strategic outcomes.

What type of support can it provide?

The principal role of Commissioning Support is to support the delivery of the strategic commissioning process. Within this role it is the key link between the lead chapter partnerships, the Strategic Commissioning Group, and providers in the public, private and voluntary sectors. At different stages of the commissioning cycle, chapter partnerships will require various types of specialist support to ensure activities are delivered effectively, in a timely manner, and with appropriate co-ordination across different agencies. This section is intended to give an outline of the type of resource Commissioning Support can provide for chapter partnerships, across various stages of the commissioning cycle.

Analyse

Research & Analysis Support

A key skill to ensure successful completion of the Analyse stage of joint strategic commissioning, specialist research and analysis can be provided to chapter partnerships through Commissioning Support. This might include:

- Collating and continually maintaining an evidence base across a wide range of sources, that can be utilised to inform commissioning priorities;
- Gathering research for priority outcomes and potential commissioning initiatives across particular service users, customer groups, or thematic areas such as economic development, community safety or environmental sustainability;
- Carrying out consultation exercises and focus groups with citizens and service providers, to assess current levels of satisfaction.

In addition to support provided from within the Research & Intelligence Unit of Leicestershire County Council, additional joining-up and co-ordination of research and analysis activities is provided through the work of the sub-regional Strategic Research Partnership. This group is the lead body within Leicestershire Together for research and intelligence, and has succeeded the previous partnership research group, the Statistical Analysis Research Consultation Group (SARCOG).

Plan

Policy Advice

Commissioning agents may frequently require expertise in policy and strategy development to interpret research and analysis, and inform the development of joint strategic priorities. The policy advice function of Commissioning Support helps chapter partnerships to move from the Analyse stage into the Plan stage of the commissioning cycle by working with relevant groups to interpret evidence bases such as needs analysis and citizen consultation. From this it can then help to define sets of robust and relevant outcomes that are consistent across the themes of the SCS and its chapters. Using these priorities, commissioning plans for tailored services and interventions can then be developed as part of the Plan stage.

Strategic Finance Support

Ensuring that commissioned services are both affordable and sustainable in the medium term requires rigorous and robust financial input to the planning process. Through Commissioning Support, strategic finance staff will ensure sound financial management guidance and advice is available to chapter partnerships and accountable finance officers in relation to commissioning budgets and activity. Examples of the types of input that Commissioning Support can provide are:

- Inter-agency financial planning, forecasting and analysis of budgets to ensure budget heads are joined up, do not replicate and to align and pool funds;
- Through the Strategic Finance Group, assessment of the totality of resources being deployed in Leicestershire, and how these can best be used to support commissioned activity;
- Ensuring high level financial reporting to the Strategic Commissioning Group, Executive and accountable bodies to support strategic commissioning.

Do

Procurement Support

Procurement expertise within Commissioning Support is led by the Corporate Procurement Unit of Leicestershire County Council. By providing focused procurement capacity for the joint strategic commissioning process, Commissioning Support will enable the delivery of procurement efficiency savings and promote good procurement practice. This will ensure that value for money is achieved from commissioning and procurement activity in Leicestershire, and that the long-term benefits of sustainable commissioning and procurement are generated for its community. Examples of the types of procurement expertise that Commissioning Support can provide to chapter partnerships are:

- Applying technical procurement knowledge and expertise at the point in the strategic commissioning cycle where goods or services are acquired;
- Supporting chapter partnerships and lead agencies through the tendering process as they acquire services from the market, and helping them understand and comply with national and EU procurement guidelines and regulations;
- Helping to facilitate joint procurement between Leicestershire Together partners when opportunities are identified;
- Undertaking dialogue with providers in the market to cultivate relationships, and to help secure value for money contracts in the future;
- Ensuring that Leicestershire Together gets best value from any goods or services purchased through joint strategic commissioning.

As part of this support, the Corporate Procurement Unit will work with the Eastern Shires Purchasing Organisation (ESPO), and the Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Procurement Forum, both of which offer a range of technical skills in the procurement process, and wider knowledge of markets. To ensure an early understanding of when procurement professionals need to be engaged, by whom and in what capacity, procurement support will also liaise with other units of Commissioning Support and maintain an overview of the outcomes prioritised by chapter partnerships, along with their progress along the strategic commissioning cycle.

Review

Performance Support

Through the Performance & Partnerships function of Leicestershire County Council, Commissioning Support is able to work closely with performance managers across different chapter partnerships and thematic areas and provide specialist support, advice and guidance at all stages of the commissioning cycle. This might include the following activities:

- Identification of key performance information to form part of the evidence base;
- Analysing comparative performance data and conducting benchmarking for the purpose of setting commissioning targets and monitoring progress;
- Providing support and brokerage with the Regional Government office and Government in relation to national commissioning target negotiations;
- Quarterly monitoring of commissioning plans and indicators and progress and outcomes;
- A local performance management system to allow for data inputting and theme/indicator reporting;
- Improvement and delivery planning advice and support;
- Performance analysis and challenge to commissioning delivery plans;
- Annual progress reporting and full annual report to key stakeholders.

In addition to the above, the Performance Team will also actively inform the Review stage of strategic commissioning, supporting assessments of the operational and strategic success of joint commissioning initiatives for chapter partnerships and the Strategic Commissioning Group.

Governance

Project management support

In addition to specialist technical and professional support to the strategic commissioning process, Commissioning Support also has a number of dedicated officers to provide project management support to chapter partnerships. This might include, but is not limited to:

- Facilitation of key milestone events, such as delivery planning workshops, or the definition of priority outcomes for a chapter or thematic area;
- Monitoring the progress of chapter partnerships with joint strategic commissioning activity, co-ordinated against a standard timeline that takes into account the internal processes of Leicestershire Together partners;
- Supporting chapter partnerships to resolve risks and issues, and escalate them to the Strategic Commissioning Group and Executive where relevant for guidance;
- Assisting with the development of commissioning plans to meet specific outcomes, and ensuring consistency between chapter partnerships;

- Providing standard templates for chapter partnerships to report on progress to the Strategic Commissioning Group and Executive, as well as evaluate the operational and strategic success of commissioned initiatives;
- Acting as a point of co-ordination for specialist support in the areas of research and analysis, policy, finance, procurement, and performance.

Cross-chapter support

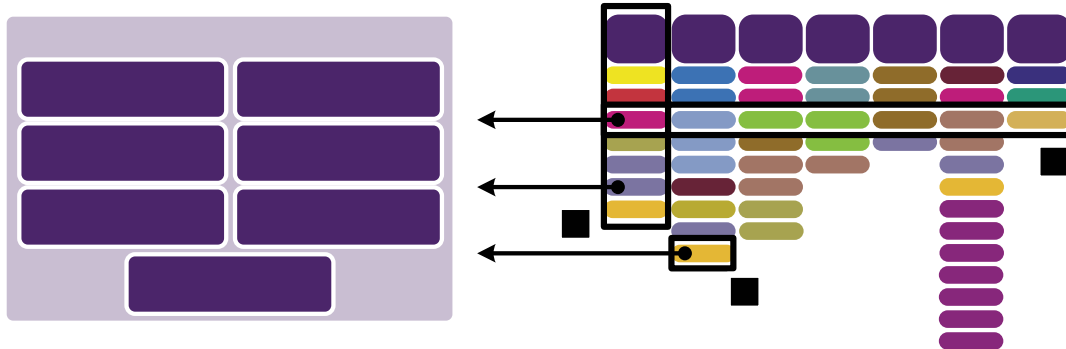
In addition to providing expertise around specific skills-sets relating to strategic commissioning, Commissioning Support also convenes a Commissioning Managers Network comprising officers with responsibility for commissioning from across Leicestershire Together. This network brings together commissioning expertise from across the partnership to develop and share best practice and experiences, as well as enhance joint working across the theme and chapter partnerships. The Commissioning Managers Network provides an additional level of expertise and assurance within the strategic commissioning cycle through:

- Providing additional resource to Commissioning Support at critical points where it may be required, such as the point at which commissioning plans need to be developed and submitted for approval;
- Acting as a critical friend to chapter partnerships where required, sharing their experiences of joint strategic commissioning and providing quality assurance on commissioning plans throughout the process;
- Reporting with Commissioning Support to the Strategic Commissioning Group and Executive where required, outlining progress with commissioning within particular chapters or against specific cross-cutting outcomes;
- Providing strategic commissioning training to other officers across the partnership where relevant, to help build capacity across the partnership and transfer skills.

What are its roles and responsibilities for joint strategic commissioning?

The role of Commissioning Support is to provide a core of dedicated technical and professional skills and capacity that can be utilised by chapter partnerships at each stage of the strategic commissioning cycle as and when required. In doing so, it helps Leicestershire Together and its partners to co-ordinate the joint commissioning agenda in two key ways:

- Helping chapter partnerships to understand how different strategic outcomes interrelate, and supporting them to work together to develop joint commissioning plans;
- Developing a balanced portfolio of specifications for commissioned services across each of the seven themes of the SCS, that impacts on multiple outcomes.



The specific responsibilities of Commissioning Support will vary according to the particular outcomes, chapter or theme it might be working across, and also according to the type and level of support it provides at different stages of the commissioning process. However, its primary responsibilities are:

- Ensuring that Leicestershire Together has a sound and consistent evidence base to inform the joint strategic commissioning process;
- Providing policy and strategy support across the seven themes of the SCS to ensure the key findings of needs analysis and engagement are translated into priority commissioning outcomes, and that these are consistent across chapter partnerships' individual theme strategies;
- Co-ordinating the process of delivery planning against commissioning priorities, for example through delivery planning workshops across each of the seven themes of the SCS, facilitating ideas generation exercises, assessing current delivery models and market capability, and supporting chapter partnerships to develop commissioning plans;
- Streamlining the process of strategic commissioning through the provision of tailored, flexible support targeted against the specific needs of chapter partnerships at each stage of the process;
- Communicating a timeline of commissioning activity set against partners' budget and financial planning processes, as well as timescales for allocating funding pots¹;
- Supporting chapter partnerships to acquire services and interventions through active market development and cost-effective procurement;
- Ensuring the availability of performance management advice and support to underpin effective outcome-focused delivery, and providing monitoring information and reports to chapter partnerships;
- Working with the chapter partnerships to resolve issues and manage duplication and conflicts of interest, escalating to the Strategic Commissioning Group and Executive where required.
- Communicating and sharing outputs and discussions across different themes and chapter partnerships, as well as disseminating commissioning priorities and outcomes on behalf of Leicestershire Together to service providers and the wider community;
- Updating the Strategic Commissioning Group and Executive at regular intervals on Leicestershire Together's progress with strategic commissioning, highlighting areas of strength, as well as current issues and risks faced by the partnership in attempting to identify and deliver against priorities.

¹ A version of this timetable has been included within the Strategic Commissioning Handbook.