

**LEICESTERSHIRE STRATEGIC SENIOR OFFICERS' GROUP**

**31 OCTOBER 2007**

**PARTNERSHIP MANAGEMENT**

**REPORT OF LEICESTERSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**

**Purpose**

1. To update SSOG on work being undertaken to develop a self assessment toolkit for partnerships, in particular those delivering the Local Area Agreement.

**Background**

2. At its August meeting, SSOG was briefed on the need to review the existing assessment arrangements for partnerships, both in terms of general guidance, and through the provision of a self assessment toolkit. It agreed to take the lead role in overseeing the performance of partnerships in the Leicestershire Together structure and that all partnerships should undertake a review on a 2 year cycle.
3. Substantial work has gone into developing improved guidance and Version 1 of this is now published on the Leicestershire Together website and can be viewed by following this link: ([http://www.leicestershiretogether.org/guidance\\_for\\_partnership\\_working.pdf](http://www.leicestershiretogether.org/guidance_for_partnership_working.pdf)). Over time, further development will take place to make the information easier to navigate and feedback from users will be encouraged.

**Current Self Assessment Toolkit**

4. A self assessment toolkit has existed for almost 2 years which sought to explore areas of potential weakness within partnerships based upon the views of partnership members. Initial technical problems made viewing any submission difficult but following resolution of these problems, it became clear very few surveys had actually been completed. While there were insufficient numbers to fully ascertain the effectiveness, or otherwise, of the existing system, a number of potential weakness were identified, these include duplication of questions, inability to save or print progress, lack of IT support and lack of appropriate systems to monitor submissions.
5. A review of toolkits used by different organisations identified a number of key characteristics for successful delivery:
  - (a) **Purpose** – To be clear of the reason why a toolkit is provided and the benefit to partners by completing it.

- (b) **Administration** – the need for a clear administrative support process to ensure submissions are logged, assessed and responded to.
- (c) **Guidance** – following assessment of a submission, guidance on improvement planning should be available, both to provide an incentive to partnerships to use it and to ensure active follow up.
- (d) **Simplicity** – the form needs to be easily accessible, with clear questions broken in to relevant sections.

### **New Self Assessment Toolkit**

5. The proposed new Self Assessment Toolkit seeks to have learnt from existing models and has categorised questions into headings in order to aid completion and analysis. The proposed survey has 50 statements across nine sections which require a judgement as to what extent they agree with that statement. The headings are:

vision	governance
service delivery and performance	risk management
planning and resources	learning
evidence of need/consultation	dissolution
communication	

6. The headings and questions have been selected to cover all aspects required under both CPA and CAA (as far as can be judged at present) while also taking into consideration the conclusions of the Peer Challenge undertaken in March 2006.
7. The survey has been designed using SNAP software which means it is simple in format and easily updated and requires little technical skills for maintenance. A users manual will be created so any administrator can quickly understand what is required. Using a standard software package should also minimise IT access issues as was the case with the previous survey.
8. Each partnership will be contacted and the lead agency asked to co-ordinate the completion of the survey amongst the partnerships members. A minimum number of partners (depending on the size of the partnership) will be required to ensure a representative sample.
9. Once the required number of surveys are submitted for each partnership, analysis will take place to look at potential areas of weakness. This will be used to generate some guidance along with some additional web links to support tools that focus on those areas of weakness. This guidance will be based on the aggregate of all the submissions. The guidance will

be sent to all individuals who submitted a survey even though the results may not relate specifically to their individual responses.

10. The survey can be viewed by clicking on the following link  
[http://194.217.173.115/leicestershire\\_together\\_partnership\\_self\\_assessment/self\\_assessment.htm](http://194.217.173.115/leicestershire_together_partnership_self_assessment/self_assessment.htm)

### **User Testing and Results**

11. While the survey is now operational, a period of user testing will take place before all the partnerships are asked to undertake the self assessment. The Stronger Communities Board has been approached to pilot the process and their feedback will be used to adjust the system where necessary.
12. A summary report of all submissions will be provided to SSOG in Spring 2008.

### **Recommendations**

13. It is RECOMMENDED:-
  - (i) that SSOG notes the content of the report;
  - (ii) that SSOG approve the use of the proposed survey, subject to user feedback.

#### Officer to Contact:

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