

## **PUBLIC SERVICE PARTNERSHIPS' INNOVATION FRAMEWORK**

Leaders of partnerships can use this Framework to review whether there is more they might do to create a more effective strategic context for achieving major innovations.



### **Central Focus**

- Are local residents' and service users' concerns central to the partnership's approach to innovation?

### **Key Drivers**

- Is the partnership's overall vision, and its priorities for innovation, clear?
- Are leaders and managers leading for innovation?
- Does the partnership have a strategic approach to innovation?

### **Key Enablers**

- Do all the organisations' cultures promote innovation?
- Are employees motivated and skilled for innovation?
- Does the partnership have effective, disciplined, delivery mechanisms for innovations?

## **More Detailed Questions for Reflections**

### **1. Are local residents' and service users' concerns central to the partnership's approach to innovation?**

For example, in the innovation priority areas, could the partnership do more to:

- Understand service users' aspirations, needs and priorities more deeply?
- Develop innovations with service users, and other local residents, to get their support, and to help to change their expectations and behaviours?
- Unlock and develop more capacity for innovation within local communities?

### **2. Is the partnership's overall vision, and its priorities for innovation, clear?**

For example:

- Is the vision ambitious and inspiring, but attainable, in the unfolding strategic context?
- Have politicians/board members agreed the innovation priority areas in the medium and long-term?
- Are politicians/board members prepared for experimentation, considered risk taking and necessary failures?

### **3. Are leaders and managers leading for innovation?**

For example, are leaders and managers:

- Bold, forward-looking and united?
- Focusing enough time and effort on innovation?
- Convincing communicators?
- Involving all key stakeholders, including middle managers, in discussing critical future issues, and plans for innovations?
- Listening and responding to feedback, including from critics and mavericks?
- Devolving decision-making appropriately?
- Moving forward at a brisk, but sustainable, pace?
- Persisting until innovations are delivered?

### **4. Does the partnership have a strategic approach to innovation?**

For example, does the partnership have:

- Clear plans and accountability for innovations, and effective project leaders?
- Sufficient resources and time devoted to innovations?
- Innovation processes being given sufficient freedom to experiment (and not being held back by cumbersome bureaucratic barriers)?
- The flexibility to seize new opportunities, and to adapt when experiments fail?
- The expertise to fully exploit the latest new technologies?

## **5. Do all the organisations' cultures promote innovation?**

For example, is innovation promoted through:

- Leaders' and managers' everyday behaviours, practices and stories?
- Values, norms and working practices?
- Safeguarding time for reflection and creative thinking?
- Healthy debates, and challenging and testing accepted assumptions?
- Pro-actively looking elsewhere for fresh ideas (including from abroad)?
- Celebrating innovations?

## **6. Are employees motivated and skilled for innovation?**

For example, do the organisations:

- Have enough employees with the attitudes and skills needed to deliver innovations?
- Encourage employees to develop better ways of doing things?
- Involve frontline employees in innovation processes?
- Recognise and reward employees for innovating?
- Respond to employees' concerns about innovations?
- Deal with job losses or role changes fairly?

## **7. Does the partnership have effective, disciplined, delivery mechanisms for innovations?**

For example, does the partnership have:

- Effective ways of tracking and delivering innovations?
- Sufficient innovation expertise to support delivery of major innovations?
- A straightforward approach to evaluating and learning from successful and unsuccessful innovations?

## **Background to the Framework**

This Framework builds on the Local Councils' Innovation Framework.

It has been developed from recent research with local councils, including: individual interviews with 24 chief executives and 12 council leaders; 19 focus groups with front line employees; and 17 focus groups with middle managers. Many of the councils have been developing innovations through public service partnerships.

The research with chief executives and frontline employees was supported by City University London's Centre for Creativity. The research with council leaders was conducted in partnership with the Local Government Association. The research with middle managers was promoted through the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives.

The Framework has also been informed by previous research conducted by the Improvement and Development Agency for Local Government, on topics such as integrating workforce strategies across local public services, cultural change, employee engagement and increasing organisational productivity.

The Framework will be tested and developed in 2014. We welcome feedback from partnerships that use the Framework.

### **Other materials about innovation in local government**

The Local Government Innovation Framework is available here:

<http://tinyurl.com/innovationcouncils1>

A presentation setting out the findings from the research with chief executives is available here: <http://www.slideshare.net/ppma/joan-munro-fostering-innovation-in-local-councils-ppma-seminar-april-2012-12758720>

The 'Council Leaders: Key Actions for Innovation' is available here, along with a presentation that can be used as the basis for a members' discussion on how to encourage more innovation: [www.tinyurl.com/leaderinnovation2](http://www.tinyurl.com/leaderinnovation2) and [www.tinyurl.com/leaderinnovation1](http://www.tinyurl.com/leaderinnovation1)

A presentation, contrasting the findings from the research with chief executives, council leaders and frontline employees, is available here:

<http://www.slideshare.net/joanmunro/accelerating-innovation-in-local-government-three-perspectives>

### **More Details**

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