

Public sector

Questions pullout

October 2005

# Governing partnerships

Bridging the accountability gap

## Questions for public bodies about their internal arrangements for partnership working

- 1 What policies do you have about getting involved in partnerships? And about disengaging from partnerships?
- 2 How do you assess the costs and benefits of engaging in different forms of partnership working against other ways of achieving the same ends (for example, formal contracts or bilateral arrangements)?
- 3 How do you decide when simple collaboration or liaison should become a formal partnership?
- 4 How do your partnerships differ in size, scope and impact?
- 5 Which formal partnerships are you involved in? Who takes responsibility for them?
- 6 How do you monitor and mitigate the risks associated with working across a wide variety of partnerships? Is your monitoring proportionate, as well as effective?
- 7 How do you know that your own organisational governance arrangements are adequate both to support and to manage the risks of working in partnerships?

## Questions about specific partnerships for public bodies to consider both individually and collectively with their partners

- 1 Rationale for the partnership (paragraphs 43-47 in Chapter 1 and paragraphs 136-143 in Chapter 5):
  - a Why does this partnership exist?
  - b What are its agreed aims?

- c Where have they been published?
- d Can you identify a better way of serving the public?

## 2 Added value from the partnership:

- a How does this partnership add value?  
(Paragraphs 67-71 in Chapter 2.)
- b How do you demonstrate this added value to the public?  
(Table 1 in Chapter 3.)
- c How do you know whether funds are being well spent?  
(Case study 2 in Chapter 2 and paragraphs 101-104 in Chapter 3.)
- d How does the public know that partnership funds are being well spent?  
(Table 1 in Chapter 3.)

## 3 Governance arrangements:

- a How do your partnership's corporate governance arrangements link to those of individual partners?  
(Paragraphs 72-74 and Table 1 in Chapter 3, and paragraphs 140-143 in Chapter 5.)
- b How are decisions made?
- c How are they recorded?
- d Who makes sure that they are acted on?
- e Who scrutinises them?
- f To whom are they reported?  
(Paragraphs 75-79 and Case study 4 in Chapter 3.)

## 4 Performance management (Paragraphs 94-100, and Case study 7 in Chapter 3):

- a How do you know which partnership targets you are meeting and which you are failing to meet?
- b Who manages and reports progress?

**5** Financial management  
(Chapter 3):

- a Who provides the money?
- b Who decides how to spend it?
- c Can the money be reallocated?
- d What are the financial reporting arrangements?

**6** Risk management:

- a How do you know when things are going wrong?
- b Who can take action when things are going wrong?  
(Chapter 1, Chapter 3 and Chapter 5.)
- c How do you resolve conflicts of interest?  
(Paragraph 80 in Chapter 3)

**7** Termination arrangements  
(Paragraphs 136-139 in Chapter 5):

- a What are the arrangements if this partnership comes to an end?
- b Or if you decide no longer to be involved?
- c How will resources be reallocated back to partners?

**8** Serving the public  
(Table 1 in Chapter 3 and paragraphs 127-132 in Chapter 4):

- a How effectively does this partnership communicate with the public?
- b How can the public and service users obtain redress when things go wrong?
- c Is there a complaints and suggestions process the public can use?