Cardiff Partnership Feedback Questionnaire: One Year On

Introduction

Cardiff was the first area in Wales to have rationalised its partnership structures and, following the publication of Welsh Government’s ‘Shared Purpose-Shared Delivery’, which directs all areas to follow the approach, could be described as ‘ahead of the game’. In December 2012, with the one-year anniversary of Cardiff’s integrated partnership approaching, a short questionnaire was produced seeking opinions on the model’s success and its areas for improvement. In turn, the responses would be used to help inform the ongoing development of partnership working in the city and ensure that real outcomes and value for money are delivered.

Key Findings

Responses to the questionnaire were extremely positive, with the vast majority agreeing that the Partnership Model has raised awareness of issues facing the city, helped to coordinate joint working, increased accountability and provided partners with a broader overview of partnership activity.

Areas for improvement include:

- increasing the effective use of the high quality business intelligence throughout the partnership
- Improving channels of communication between workstreams and programmes
- Achieving visible leadership from senior officers to hold people to account
- Further embedding partnership working across all agencies, at all levels, to ensure operational change.

The first two issues will be addressed through a communication and engagement plan currently being developed for the Cardiff Partnership. The other two issues will require the consideration of the board.

Results

In total just 18 responses (15 completed online and 3 via paper copies) to the questionnaire were received and, although the total number of people asked to take part in the survey is difficult to quantify, this can be seen as a very low response rate. Consequently, confidence levels for the survey results will be very low, with very wide confidence intervals – or margins of error – preventing meaningful analysis.
This should be taken into account if attempting to use the survey findings as an evidence-base for policy changes or initiatives.

Some of the respondents did not provide an answer to all ten questions. Therefore, the percentages quoted in this report have been calculated using the number of valid responses to each question. The number of responses used to calculate the percentages are highlighted for each question.

Q1. Has the new Partnership Model in Cardiff raised awareness of the issues facing the city?

All 18 (100.0%) respondents said that the new Partnership Model in Cardiff had raised awareness of the issues facing the city.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Q1. Has the new Partnership Model in Cardiff raised awareness of the issues facing the city? (18 Responses)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Comments

Positive:

- I believe the new model has raised awareness to other organisations regarding what the Council is trying to do in Partnership.
- Needs assessment been very powerful, people more data focussed than previously, more consistent views about the issues. Increase in awareness of variations across the city.
- Communications have improved, some good briefings available, networks have developed from various events, some good cross organisational activity and team working. Neighbourhood management developments are healthy.
- Developed a more holistic approach.
- It brings different agencies together to have a mutual understanding and agree joint priorities.
• A more holistic strategic overview has allowed for a more connected visionary approach.
• I think the new Neighbourhood Management Teams have allowed local partners to identify and focus on issues specific to their areas and to look at tailored solutions.

Areas for improvement:
• Certainly amongst those engaged in the 'system'. For members of the public however, I doubt it.
• At a strategic level; not yet obvious that this is true of the general population.
Q2. Has the new partnership arrangements helped coordinate joint working around shared priorities?

More than four-fifths (83.3%) of the 18 respondents felt that the new partnership arrangements had helped to coordinate joint working around shared priorities, while the remaining 16.7% said that there had been no change.

![Pie chart showing responses to Q2]

Comments

Positive:
- Easier to understand what is going on across the partnership and join up activities.
- It has and continues to refocus how we organisationally address issues on a joined up basis.
- Cuts bureaucracy.
- The single needs assessment has underpinned the priorities which of course are all connected to policing, some directly and some indirectly. Expanding our capacity as a service in a workforce that is reducing can only be achieved through tactical partnership delivery and shared leadership which is evident across the workstreams.
- Whilst it is still early days and new working relationship take time to establish, I think the neighbourhood model has the potential to bring partners to the table who may not previously have worked together.

Areas for improvement:
- In some areas this has worked well but there are still challenges and a long way to go to ensure complete buy-in from key partners.
• In part, yes. When joint priorities are followed through, however lack of third sector input and subsequent resources from the LHB invest to save bids does not demonstrate sufficient understanding or commitment to the role of the thirds sector.
• Some initial difficulties in contacting the right people when the existing groups ceased to meet.
• Workstream for Urban environment started off well with some momentum but several meetings have been postponed or cancelled. Topic headings remain valid but need to agree more realistic work plans which recognises pressures on operational delivery teams in all organisations.

Q3. Has the new partnership arrangements provided you with a broader overview of partnership activities?

Almost nine-tenths (88.9%) of the 18 respondents indicated that the new partnership arrangements had provided them with a broader overview of partnership activities. The remaining 11.1% all said that there had been no change.

![Chart showing responses to Q3](chart.png)

**Comments**

**Positive:**
• The sharing of senior responsible officers and other leads below that has improved communication.
• Yes, although at time the enormity/size of the programme can be a little overwhelming.

**Areas for improvement:**
• Again though there is still a long way to go regarding understanding each other’s core business.
• However I only see a very limited part and it would be good to see regular minutes.

Q4. Has the level of accountability for partnership working increased?

Over three-fifths (62.5%) of the 16 respondents to the question stated that the level of accountability for partnership working had increased. However, 6.3% disagreed with this, while 31.3% felt that it had not changed.

![Chart showing percentage of respondents' views on increased accountability.]

Comments

Positive:
• It would appear so from my relatively short term on the board.
• Clear leads for workstreams.
• A single business intelligence unit with access to data has improved transparency and due to the better connected nature of our business with our partners, there is a greater knowledge personally which provides for more accountability.

Areas for improvement:
• My view is there has been more 'local' accountability and an understanding - partnerships in particular need to evolve, building capacity and structures that ensure partners are accountable to each other while addressing the needs of their respective stakeholder groups.
• People at a senior level are still not showing visible leadership/responsibility and holding people to account.
• Not demonstrable change.
• Certainly there is more transparency as to do whose responsibility it is for leading on a workstream, and for those involved in delivering on it. However,
as to whether they actually take responsibility (and dare I say it know their responsibility), the jury is out on that one.

- Mostly left to the lead offices to coordinate along with day jobs, which means things do not get completed. Also a huge element of trust that things will be done.
- Appreciate this is a new area of working for Partnership but it is vital to reenergise this aspect if progress is to be made in future.
- This has proved problematic. Capturing outcomes over relatively short periods of time is always a challenge and cascading this information in a meaningful way to senior decision makers is difficult.

Q5. Has partnership performance reporting become more effective?

Of the 16 responses received to this question, more than four-fifths (81.3%) indicated that partnership performance reporting had become more effective. The remaining 18.8% all stated that this had stayed the same.

Comments

Positive:

- I think the introduction of RBA has helped a great deal and can only improve as RBA becomes embedded and more widely used.
- Highlight reports are improving reporting and increasing flow from Programme Boards to CPB.
- Both C3SC and Vale Council for Voluntary Service have been very committed to sharing information often in difficult circumstances and without adequate resource to do the work.
- A lot better clear line of site.
• RBA is not a system that South Wales Police uses; however, our data feeds the process and no matter what method of reporting is used, as long as data is clear, performance reporting is effective.
• Certainly in relation to RBA scorecards there is an effectiveness in that process, particularly in tracking progress. As to whether actions to address lack of 'curve' happen quick enough, this has yet to be witnessed.

Areas for improvement:
• Overall, however there seems to be little tie-up to the SLA process and our role as a member of the partnership and no obvious feed through to issues of sustainability within the third sector generally.
• Not sure – see above (i.e. This has proved problematic. Capturing outcomes over relatively short periods of time is always a challenge and cascading this information in a meaningful way to senior decision makers is difficult.)

Q6. Has the use of ‘intelligence’ improved across the partnership?

Almost three-fifths of the 17 respondents to the question stated that the use of ‘intelligence’ had improved across the partnership. However, 5.9% disagreed with this, while more than a third (35.3%) said that it had stayed the same.

![Q6. Has the use of ‘intelligence’ improved across the partnership? (17 Responses)](chart)

Comments

Positive:
• Virtual team is established and feeding into Welfare Reform Group and also NEETs Group.
• Neighbourhood management, Wynne Campaign are good examples.
• The quality of intelligence now gathered is impressive and relatively user friendly. The challenge is to use this data effectively.
Areas for improvement:
- There are still some communication issues to address.
- Improved use of intelligence still needs time to embed.
- Yes, but could develop further.
- Very little ‘flow’ of business intelligence. Certainly there is a process of the Unit finding information, but as to that information flowing down and across (and informing new work or stopping work) I see little evidence of that.

Q7. Has the new structure made it easier for you to resolve partnership issues and ‘blockages’?

Of the 18 respondents, 61.1% thought that the new structure had made it easier for partnership issues and ‘blockages’ to be resolved. However, over of tenth (11.1%) disagreed with this, while 27.8% indicated that there had been no change.

Comments

Positive:
- Yes, framework has identified clear escalation routes.

Areas for improvement:
- To a point; I am conscious that I am a newer member of the CPB but we seem to receive a lot of information with limited discussion, action points or follow up.
- Still some evidence of some service areas and some aspects of organisational culture that needs work to improve integration and joint working.
- It is difficult to get to the Partnership Board to raise issues.
• However there can be time delays.
• The same old issues of departments still doing it ‘their way’ and not moving from that position. At partnership level and strategic level we work well together, but when it gets to the ‘coal face’ very little difference.
• Whilst the new programme arrangements satisfy a need to demonstrate linkages between partners, the formal arrangements have not helped address any blockages. In practice, partners are unlikely to take genuine or sensitive issues to the Partnership Board.
• Although there are always ‘sensitivities’ in taking a problematic item to the next level.

Q8. In your opinion, has partnership working become more embedded in ‘the day job’ under the new model?

Around three-fifths (61.1%) of the 18 respondents felt that partnership working had become more embedded in ‘the day job’ under the new model. However, 16.7% disagreed with this, while 2.2% did not think that there had been a change.

![Graph showing Q8 response]

**Comments**

**Positive:**
• Yes - What Matters definitely established as part of Council core work.
• Generally, on the ground and at middle tier management people have been working collaboratively for many years as part of the ‘day job’. The new partnership arrangement has given those working arrangements ‘more teeth’.
• Higher priority given to collaborative working.
• As commented previously the embedded nature of this business is directly reflective of the governance structure. There has also been some different
layering which existed under the old CSP and the results have improved dynamism.

Areas for improvement:
- But still a lot more to do to improve - Genuine partnerships are not an end in themselves – they need to be practiced and promoted in order to strengthen the capacity of the partners and ensure that the results of the partnership will be both relevant to target groups and sustainable in the long term.
- Again, to a point; cultures within sectors/organisations remain challenging; not all parts of particularly the statutory sector demonstrate this commitment; priorities are not always clearly defined and shared; the absence of consultation on funding and budgets can create the perspective of the voluntary and community sector being the 'invited guest' that is 'done to' rather than genuinely engaged and involved.
- Like most third sector organisations we simply do not have the resources to dedicate specific time to build into day job. Evidence is that Core funding that could be used to support the role of agencies in joint planning is been cut/reduced and although representations have been made about possibilities of ‘back filling’ key staff posts while engaged in this work, this has not materialised.
- Although the level of commitment required not always well understood by those in agencies who are less engaged.
- I am not convinced that the partnership working has been embedded across all agencies and although there may be commitment at senior levels this is not always replicated.
- You work with the people you need to work with whether in a partnership group or not. Some people don’t work in partnership end of and you can’t force them to.
- Always found officers in Council willing to work in partnership on operational issues but there is a lack of commitment/understanding of the Integrated Partnership plan.
- Personally, I cannot commit the time that is really required as much as I would like to. I do not work for the Council and unfortunately shall have to relinquish my position….in 2013.

Q9. Do you believe that the new arrangements are contributing to better delivery of outcomes for people in Cardiff?

Almost two-thirds (64.7%) of the 17 respondents to the question stated that the new arrangements were contributing to better delivery of outcomes for people in Cardiff. However, 5.9% disagreed and 29.4% felt that it had stayed the same.
Q9. Do you believe that the new arrangements are contributing to better delivery of outcomes for people in Cardiff? (17 Responses)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>64.7%</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29.4%</td>
<td>Stayed the Same</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.9%</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Comments

Positive:
- Delivery is more citizen focused.
- Overall I'd say yes, well certainly better than it was before.
- There has been a big effort…only time will tell!

Areas for improvement:
- In my opinion there are improvements but still a long way.
- In part but more needs to be done to focus on the voice and participation of service users and older people in service design/delivery.
- It’s hard to prove the tangible benefits after one year. There is a lot more coordination but a lot more bureaucracy but not a lot more accountability. People work to their own agendas whether sat on a workstream or not.
- Recognise the need to monitor and evaluate partnership working but 2013 should place more emphasis on delivering key projects rather than reporting to CPB.

Q10. In your view what are the main areas for improvement and how would you like partnership working to progress over the next year? Please include any additional comments you would like to make.

Comments
- I would like to see improved visible leadership from the CPB, promoting the value of partnership working more within the individual organisations and developing a stronger team culture.
- The partnership has had the opportunity to grow and is well placed to challenge itself to build on the successes achieved, this could be done by
looking at models of best practice in other areas and setting benchmarks against which to set the ambition for further growth and development.

- Where is the work on the community safety strand? Appears to have gone! Still have difficulty in engaging in some strands overall concern that the structure is costly, and ultimately unsustainable.
- It would be nice to see an update on progress in all the workstream areas.
- Greater involvement of managers at Chief Officer/Director level in the LA and officers within the UHB that have authority to make/take decisions that can support progress; Bi-annual review of achievements & areas where we still need to do better; Bite size communications so that we can see how each of the ‘programme boards’ are progressing (e.g. like the i paper!).
- More collaborative working to avoid duplication.
- This links to my response to question 8 and I think we need to ensure that partnership working is embedded within all organisations and perhaps the meetings at a high level need to be replicated at a lower level to ensure this happens.
- Better productive analysis and dissemination of information going to and from the Business Intelligence Unit. More integration of community services and 3rd sector services into the partnership model.
- There is far too much bureaucracy, reporting, papers etc... The workstreams need to be more flexible and change to the ever changing needs of the political agenda and community need. While there is high level buy in there seems to be not much link with operational change. For organisations to truly work together there needs to be a lot more operational coproduction/partnership working and freedom for this to evolve. There is a lot of change going on and it is only natural organisations concentrate on their own agendas first before then working in partnership. In theory this should increase partnership buy sharing resources but we are a long way away from this happening in reality.
- A clear focus on a smaller number of priorities. The partnership approach would benefit from the Cardiff Partnership Board focusing on a smaller number of key strategic priorities rather than spreading its resources across so many programme boards, often where there are already well established partnership mechanisms.
- Environment Agency Wales is fully supportive of Partnership as it provides an excellent framework to understand the issues facing our partners. However developing and maintaining momentum could be helped by setting diary sates for partnership group and Workstreams well in advance.
- Comments from one respondent:
  - In your personal experience how has partnership working changed since the introduction of the integrated model?
    - Higher expectation of cross-agency involvement.
    - Better connected strategic leadership team.
• Tactical delivery of partnership working is now daily business as opposed to added on initiative.
  • In your view what are the main areas for improvement?
    • Rapid mobilisation of partnership resources. Effective tactical deployment of those resources and early resolution of citizen complaint.
  • How would you like partnership working to progress over the next year?
    • Delivered through Neighbourhood Management with effective local leadership and elected member involvement.
  • Any other comments you would like to make?
    • I speak to colleagues in other parts of Wales and the UK, many of which have no worthwhile relationship with strategic partners and therefore I feel blessed to be part of such a wonderful team.