Aim of the Programme

To review the effectiveness of partnership working with the aim of developing an understanding of and commitment to priority areas. This would allow a number of different organisations in Cardiff addressing major issues facing the city to maximise the opportunities that working in partnership can create.

The workshop was attended by members of the Leadership Group, Cardiff Partnership Board and Operational Leads from across the programme boards,

The specific objectives of the programme were: -

1. To explore priority areas and agree mechanisms for the effective use of business intelligence to ensure that outcomes are demonstrable and achieved
2. Commit to the behavioural changes required to demonstrate visible leadership and accountability
3. Consider how each organisation and partnership ‘layer’ seamlessly integrates to ensure change occurs at the operational level and agree mechanism for managing blocks
4. Recognise and be willing to challenge politically or operationally sensitive issues including the management of competing agendas where stakeholder priority areas may be in conflict

Key Messages:

- Neighbourhood Management chairs should be recognised within their organisations; particularly given the demands on their time and the outcomes they deliver.
- Cardiff Partnership Board should be more visible in its leadership of joint working
- Overloaded Agendas- there is a need to prioritise a smaller number of issues so that they can be considered in greater detail
- Each partnership activity should have a clear outcome as well as clearly defined benefits to individual partners/service areas
- The principles of partnership working need to be cascaded and integrated through organisations so that it exists in mainstream activity and not in the margins
- Further integration is needed, across organisations, at an operational level
- Workstreams, Cabinet, NMTs need to be aware of how they can use the Cardiff Partnership to their advantage
The CPB and Programme Boards need to support those taking risks and making mistakes.

There needs to be greater discussion within the different programme boards to allow a more rigorous consideration of issues as well as a more open culture where any failures can be shared with the CPB.

Time is needed to assess who should be round the table with regard to partnership working. Space is needed to identify if the right people are in the right context.

**Actions:**

- Undertake a review of programme board membership. Membership may need to become more fluid to adapt and change with the priorities.
- Agree a multi-agency approach on how partners “disestablish” ineffective services.
- Agree more specific priorities within programme boards.
- Focus agendas on immediate priorities and not overload agendas.
- Identify areas for shared budgets.
- Develop a Communication and Engagement Plan to connect programmes and workstreams and cascade clear vision.
- Review reporting schedule to enable greater scrutiny of work.
- Individual organisations to more formally recognise the contribution of programme leads, the work demands and the benefit it provides.
- Consider options for a potential “Leadership Swap” across programme boards.
- Partnership to develop a model for joint commissioning.
**Priority Business Areas**

There was a general agreement on the priority areas, with the group satisfied that they were based on:

- sound business intelligences,
- statutory requirements,
- a consensus professional view and
- consultation with communities

It was recognised that a number of cross cutting issues impacted several of the programmes and workstreams. For example, all programmes have a role to play in responding to child poverty. This is because some issues permeate across all the programme boards and they should therefore factor these cross cutting issues in their decision making. This would also represent a way of ensuring that we do not end up with “programme silos”. Some of the cross-cutting issues identified were:

- Child Poverty
- NEETS,
- inequality,
- safeguarding,
- energy resilience and
- early identification and intervention

Future pressures were also discussed, particularly in the context of the Cardiff Local Development Plan which seeks to address the challenges of a growing city. Apart from the immediate financial pressures, all organisations in Cardiff would be a need to identify those areas which would face more acute challenges in coming years (with dementia cited as an example).

Given the strong focus on the NEET’s agenda the group felt that older people should also feature as a priority due to the demands of an aging population will place on key services. Good practice models based on co-production and co-delivery of services with older people within communities themselves was seen as a way of moving the agenda forward.

**Successes:**

The **Neighbourhood Management model** has been successful in bringing partners together at a local level. Two specific examples were mentioned, the Dusty Forge food banks and the NEET job club in Ely. The success of these schemes was attributed to the genuine participation and involvement of the local communities in which these schemes were being
Despite the current tough financial climate crime rates in Cardiff are at a 30 year low. This is due to the emphasis on a joined up approach and the commitment to early identification of need in all the workstreams within the **Safer and Cohesive Communities Programme**.

Discussion also revealed that whilst there was good business intelligence available to identify priorities, it was felt that more community and local knowledge was needed as part of the evidence base. This led to a broader discussion about community involvement in service delivery.

The need to include service users and community members in the process of developing services would demand more creative methods of engagement, such as the involvement of the Young Commissioners within the Families First Commissioning process.

It was noted that the structured approach offered through the CPB had worked well however it was recognised that individual personalities can make or break a partnership or project. Concerns were also raised around the level of “organisational buy-in” from some partners. The group therefore suggested that a consistent message should be maintained across organisations from front line staff to back office staff. This would ensure that shared strategic aims are fed into all partner organisations at every level.

**Action: Develop a Communication and Engagement Plan to connect programmes and workstreams**

The partnership was recognised as a formal structure which can offer support to develop and improve standards as well as achieving a more coordinated package of services. However, to deal more effectively with priorities, it was suggested that the partnership should agree a multi-agency approach on how partners “disestablish” ineffective services. This would give authority to individuals to re-deploy resources more effectively, particularly if it is not within their immediate remit to do so.

**Action: agree a multi-agency approach on how partners “disestablish” ineffective services**

There is still a tendency for agencies and the partnership to continue doing what’s always been done. More emphasis needs to be given to joint commissioning and shared priorities across Cardiff as well as regional collaboration with the Vale of Glamorgan.
Managing Competing Agendas

Discussion centred on the competing pressures between short term gain and long term sustainability. It is often difficult to identify smaller successes within the outcome focused model as the high level outcomes can only be impacted in the medium to long term.

A change in the way that people work is also required to allow managers and operational leads to make difficult decisions in a partnership environment without the fear of internal recourse from their own organisations, to which they are always more accountable to.

The Council centric nature of the partnership was considered, with Council and Health Board officers being particularly prevalent across all the programmes boards. To a significant extent this is determined by the scale, funding and level of responsibilities of these organisations however it is important that we are satisfied that all the right partners are represented.

Given that the programme boards have now been established for over a year, there is an opportunity to consider diversity of representation, appropriateness of representation and emphasise the importance of consistency of representation.

**Action: Undertake a review of programme board membership. Membership may need to become more fluid to adapt and change with the priorities.**

Further work to embed Partnership working in the day job was seen as being key to success. Managing potentially competing agendas and ensuring accountability is therefore rooted in ensuring shared understanding. Partners need to be clear about:

- the outcomes we collectively want to achieve
- the added value to individual organisations/service areas from being involved in joint working

There was also an agreement amongst all present that the current programme boards have overloaded agendas. Whilst this reflected the breadth of issues that need to be dealt with, it does not lend itself to a more rigorous consideration of the issue. The detailed agendas and supporting papers also detract from discussions as there is too much detail for partners from diverse areas to scrutinise in detail to enable more considered discussion.

It was proposed that each programme board agree immediate priorities to consider in greater detail for a 6 month period to enable a more thorough interrogation of issues as well as providing the “space” needed to consider solutions.
Action: Agree more specific priorities within programme boards
Action: Focus agendas on immediate priorities and not overload agendas
Action: Review reporting schedule to enable greater scrutiny of work

Budget constraints were considered the main restraint in every organisation and were sometimes a risk factor in organisations pulling back from true partnership working. Depleting resources (both financial and human) in individual organisations could sometimes hamper the ability to complete shared objectives, especially if these were “in addition to” or “outside the remit of” that particular organisation.

Partnership working needs to be able to foster an environment that allows brave decisions to be made. This conflicts with current climate where managers and officers are worried about the future and their own positions to experiment with new thinking. Collective partner endorsement of an action was therefore key to new working, with “the partnership” prepared to share success and accept any failure together.

It was hoped there would be more opportunities to develop aligned budgets, joint commissioning and co-locating and shared assets between partners will foster greater sharing of priorities and ensure accountability at every level. Currently, competing agendas with regard to funding can cause conflict, potentially between partner agencies. It was suggested that the partnership develop a commissioning model.

Action: Partnership to develop a model for joint commissioning
Action: Identify areas for shared budgets

Whilst accountability needs to be fostered, colleagues throughout the partnership need to avoid the blame culture. There was strong consensus that openness and honesty is paramount to the development of partnership working, throughout all ‘layers’. Safe environments will allow honest discussions on identifying the things that went wrong, and most importantly, how to learn from it.

There is still a need to ensure a common language between partners. Whilst this is improving, there are still instances of misunderstanding and difference use of terminology and outcome language. Each organisation still deal with a ‘different currency’.

Neighbourhood Management Chairs need more support, especially from their respective organisations. Communicating the benefits for both the partnership and the ‘day job’ therefore needs to be better communicated. There also needs to be more opportunities for Neighbourhood Management Chairs to share learning.
Successes:
The Alcohol Treatment Centre is a great example of how connections have been made between different services and the range of outcomes it affects. This coordinated approach needs to become embedded across the partnership agenda. The Centre has also demonstrated great use of shared resources; this is something other partnership work needs to build upon.

There was some concern that competing agendas are sometimes perceived and based on historical assumptions as opposed to reality. To prevent this, and in line with increasing communication throughout the partnership, there needs to be further clarity and understanding of what each organisation can do for each other. For maximum effectiveness, these conversations need to happen earlier so that plans and programmes are able to changed and improved.
Leadership and Accountability

A number of desirable behaviours that should be demonstrated by leaders, in order to further the partnership agenda, were identified through discussion:

- lead by example and model behaviour
- be open to suggestions
- active listener
- good communicator
- outward looking, actively seeking opportunities to work in partnership
- clear vision and idea of what success looks like
- outcome, not organisational, based approach
- supportive of innovative ways of working and risk taking
- Overview of the subject matter

A more visible leadership presence was seen as important, particularly from the Cardiff Partnership Board, but also the programme and workstream leads. Whilst members at board level are clearly identifiable, knowledge and awareness at programme and workstream level is not as evident. It was also suggested that the success of the Programme Lead in “the day job” should be heavily contingent upon the success of partnership working.

Suggestions were made in an effort to further develop the leadership of the partnership priority programmes and workstreams. A ‘Leadership swap’, whereby leaders throughout the partnership would move around sharing their expertise with other service areas and programmes was suggested. Consideration by leaders should also be given to identifying the most appropriate partners, rather than turning to the ‘usual suspects’.

**Action: Consider options for a potential “Leadership Swap” across programme boards.**

Leaders need to be supported in identifying ineffective practices and have the ability to use objective methodology, to decommission work where appropriate. There also needs to be an opportunity to investigate failures that have occurred through partnership working to ensure that mistakes can be avoided in the future.

It was acknowledged that there was increased pressure on programme, workstream and neighbourhood management leads that was in addition to that of their ‘day job’. These leads need more support and recognition of the benefits of partnership working needs to be provided internally within organisations.
Action: Individual organisations to more formally recognise the contribution of programme leads, the work demands and the benefit it provides.

Recognition was given to the fact that accountability will always be stronger within an individual’s organisation. In order to strengthen partnership accountability, identified leads need the permission and authority to delegate outside of their organisational managerial framework where appropriate.

In order to improve accountability within the partnership it was suggested that the commitment to partnership working should be included within all public sector job descriptions. This will ensure that partnership working is embedded throughout all functions of partner organisations and that shared working is recognised as a key function to all roles.

Problems that are identified within programmes and workstreams are frequently resolved before being raised to board level; this can often be down to individuals rather than systematic change. This can sometimes lead to managing around programmes rather than issues being dealt with head on.

The implications and benefits that each partner can contribute to shared delivery needs to be clearly demonstrated, which will allow the benefits of shared working to be realised throughout the partnership. Success stories and best practice needs to be shared on a regular basis with communication within the partnership functioning on a two way basis between the CPB, programme boards and workstreams.

**Successes:**

The **Welfare Reform Task Group** is an excellent example of the partnership effectively responding to an identified need. Those in leadership roles are required to provide the opportunity for emerging issues to be raised, and be supportive of solution focused approaches to be taken.