

# Evaluation of the Core Skills Development Partnership

**Part 3 – Planning for outcomes**

**a 'How to' guide, and toolkit**

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## **Background**

This is the 3<sup>rd</sup> (and final) part of a 3 part evaluation study. The first part was completed in 2001 as an assessment of the then 3<sup>rd</sup> party evaluations that had been done. The second part is an assessment of Value for Money and lessons learned.

This, third part is a guide to outcome related planning – providing some suggestions on how to be an ‘intelligent organisation’ (as explained on the Core Skills Development Partnership (CSDP) www site.<sup>1</sup>).

The history of the partnership has been told by its co-ordinator, Geoff Bateson, and can be heard from the www site<sup>2</sup>. In the narrative of ‘Moving the Mountain’, Geoff

- Outlines key events in the development of the CSDP
- Reflects on the progress to the current position
- Looks back on the past 7 years, and
- Looks forward to the next 7 – 10 years

## **Objectives and method**

The objectives of this final piece of evaluation activity were:

- To augment evaluation work that has been undertaken to date
- To assess the Value for Money of business plan activities and the scheme overall
- To explore the evidence of what works in the Core Skills Development Partnership approach to changing main stream practice
- To distil a set of lessons for the wider dissemination of effective practice

## **Structure of the evaluation activities**

There were 3 strands to this evaluation work:

<b>Strand of evaluation</b>	<b>Tasks</b>
Activity assessment of Value for Money	Discussions with project activity managers Review of secondary materials (appraisal documents and monitoring reports) Comparative assessment with other activities and schemes from elsewhere
Scheme assessment of Value for Money	Discussions with members of the Board of the Partnership and senior managers within partners Assessment of plans

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.coreskills.co.uk/activities/whatweknow/intelligentorg.html>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.coreskills.co.uk/audio/index.html>

<b>Strand of evaluation</b>	<b>Tasks</b>
	Comparative assessment against other schemes with comparable objectives and business processes
Development of a 'how to' guide	Discussions with cross section of activity managers, Board members and senior managers Case study development Review of the activity "write ups"

Essentially, the purpose of this part of the evaluation was to

- Gather evidence on what the 'business processes' within the CSDP had been which helped to explain its VFM
- Provide examples of the types of 'tools' and techniques that had been used in practice to help support the implementation of the 'business processes'


The field work was carried out during a period from January – December 2003.

### **Structure of part 3**

This part of the evaluation study is based around seven main sections. These are:

<b>Section of report</b>	<b>Detail</b>
Background to the study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Objectives</li> <li>- Structure of report</li> <li>- Programme structure</li> </ul>
Executive Summary & checklist	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Summary of the key features of the business processes used by the CSDP</li> <li>- Outline of the critical lessons learned about outcome related planning</li> <li>- Checklist of the key activities that add up to the approach to outcome related implementation of change, as practiced by the CSDP</li> </ul>
Theories of change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Discussion of the different theories of change that have informed the activities and approach of the CSDP during the past 7 years</li> </ul>
Strategic management and policy interpretation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Discussion of perspectives on and approaches to strategic planning and management, trying to unpick what makes up the "core skills approach" so that it could be used in other settings</li> </ul>
Activity design and project management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Discussion of perspectives on and approaches to activity design &amp;</li> </ul>

<b>Section of report</b>	<b>Detail</b>
	development, planning and management, showing how annual business planning process can feed into the commissioning of activity
Programme management and co-ordination arrangements	- This section unpacks the management and co-ordination practices of the CSDP, which have helped to achieve the vfm and results discussed in part 2.
Appendices – toolbox of techniques and approaches	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- A collection of the tools and techniques that have been used by CSDP which could be used by other agencies in order to implement strategy.</li> <li>- The materials are organised into four sections to cover direction (and change) setting, planning, activities and management.</li> </ul>

Where there is a symbol  in the text of sections 1 – 4 it indicates that there will be an example of the tools techniques used by the CSDP either in the appendices, or on their www site.

The diagram on the next page shows the inter relationship of the different elements in this document, with the theories of change as the central, driving consideration.

**Strategic Planning practices**

Partner agreement on priorities  
Sustaining the focus  
Tying plans together

**Strategic Management practices**

Scanning the horizons  
Keeping the target – stretch  
Adding new priorities (where evidence is clear)

**Theory of change**

Baselines  
Obstacles / blockages  
Trends & lessons  
Changes in practice  
System wide learning  
Neighbourhood change

**Activity planning practices**

Commissioning changes through partners  
Iterative planning of activity  
What will add value?

**Activity management practices**

Simple agreements  
Active re-profiling  
Annual activity agreements

**Activity development practices**

Iterative development process  
Using evidence  
Pushing for vfm

**Toolbox of techniques & approaches**

Thinking tools, planning tools, administration tools, monitoring and contracting approaches

## **Executive summary and checklist**

This Executive Summary is written from a particular view point. It is designed to help you put into practice programmes of activity which will make a lasting difference to baselines - in this case in core & basic skills, but the principles could apply in a wide range of settings.

The findings, therefore, lead to evidence-based suggestions about the critical things that need to be done in order to

- improve the likelihood of achieving outcomes
- reduce the risks of a partnership's programme of activity having little impact on the mainstream practices of its member organisations; and
- secure high levels of vfm<sup>3</sup>

## **Checklist – headline findings and lessons**

So what does the experience of the CSDP suggest you need to do to plan more effectively, for outcomes?

- In the first instance, you need to get the thinking straight (*strategy*)
- Secondly, you need to be sure of your ground, and have practical tactics for implementation of the strategy (*activity*)
- Thirdly, you need to be able to follow through convincingly, keeping momentum going, bearing in mind that the strategy is to deliver change through a partnership (*co-ordination*)

All of these dimensions need to be consistent with one another and mutually reinforcing and self re-inforcing.

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<sup>3</sup> The CSDP vfm policy is reproduced in the appendices to Part 2 of this evaluation.

### **You need to get your thinking straight**

Headline finding & lesson:	<b>You need to have thought through (and shared) <u>theories of change</u> underpinning the strategic decisions made by the partnership.</b>
Evidence summary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- CSDP used several different theories of change to help model their core purpose</li> <li>- <u>Several</u> theories of change helped, because of the range of interests that needed to be engaged, and the changes in the context for the partnership over 7+ years</li> <li>- Having several theories (not at the outset) but over the 7+ years, helped to keep the strategic focus relevant and credible to all the partners</li> </ul>

Headline finding & lesson:	<b>Baseline 2 things – under lying conditions and the state of health in partners’ planning &amp; delivery systems.</b>
Evidence summary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Baselineing the under lying conditions for core and basic skills was vitally important.</li> <li>- Equally significant was the explicit assessment (by the Board and Senior Managers group) of the changes needed in partners’ service delivery systems in order to shift the under lying conditions.</li> <li>- The CSDP experience suggests that you need to match these up with one another so that change in systems drives changes in baseline conditions (outcomes)</li> </ul>

Headline finding & lesson:	<b>Develop the partnership with delivering change and making a difference to outcomes in mind</b>
Evidence summary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The CSDP was not afraid to challenge itself and its members. ‘Storming’ – albeit agreeable debate - was a feature of the annual cycle of needs’ assessment and planning.</li> <li>- The Executive Team saw that part of its role was to ‘raise the game’ of the whole delivery system.</li> <li>- Membership of the mechanisms which the CSDP set up was by invitation, based on contribution to the overall strategy.</li> <li>- The Executive personnel involved in the partnership were all in developmental roles, and regarded by informed observers as ‘more than project managers’; combining high quality project management skills and credible grasp of the relevant policy agenda.</li> </ul>

**You need to get your tactics consistent with your thinking**

Headline finding & lesson:	<b>You increase the likelihood of adding value if you concentrate your activities on <u>changing professional practice for the better</u>.</b>
Evidence summary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Delivery chain analysis and improvement was one of the core business processes that the partnership used in its operations.</li> <li>- You need to absolutely recognise the fact that 'buy in' from the leading professionals working within the delivery systems you aim to change is a precondition for success.</li> </ul>

Headline finding & lesson:	<b>You need to recognise that there is a continuous process of interpretation and translation...</b>
Evidence summary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Change was 'part of the message'; <u>change and improvement</u> was the message</li> <li>- There was extensive use made of evidence and policy digests</li> <li>- Value of very large scale investment in professional development and updating</li> <li>- You need to take account of the need to change thinking &amp; behaviour, and recognise that this is a continuous process: there is never an end to the need to interpret and communicate change and service improvement.</li> </ul>

Headline finding & lesson:	<b>Create your infrastructure <u>within</u> the planning and delivery systems of your partners, whose practice you intend to change</b>
Evidence summary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Strategic investment in supply side (e.g. voluntary sector, business advice organisations, Connexions' Service)</li> <li>- Use of virtual teams within partner organisations, who collaborated both on delivery activities, and development of plans</li> <li>- Investment by the partnership in staff who worked on the CSDP agenda in partner organisations as 'development attachments'</li> <li>- Your plan is to re-shape their (your partners') plans, rather than have them join in with yours</li> <li>- Join 'their' networks (i.e. the networks of those people you want to influence)</li> <li>- Use your know how and influence to help them achieve their objectives</li> </ul>

Headline finding & lesson:	<b>Innovate and be flexible; maintain a space within in which experimentation can be done</b>
Evidence summary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The approach to project development was based on the view that there were no 'magic bullet' solutions to core and basic skills improvement.</li> <li>- Principles of rapid prototyping were used with many many interventions taking place within any one year, within the framework of an annual business plan, to which partners were committed in the expectation of delivering measurable change</li> <li>- Very high quality back office systems meant that there was confidence in the integrity of the partnership's project management and control systems. This created the space within which experimentation was feasible.</li> <li>- Very high level champions and advocates of the partnership helped to maintain the focus on development of services.</li> <li>- There was scrupulous use of evidence as the basis for either testing hypotheses, or rolling out practice (on a larger scale) which had been demonstrated as effective (on a smaller scale)</li> </ul>

***You need to follow through and keep the momentum going***

Headline finding & lesson:	<b>Make change the message, or at least a significant part of the message</b>
Evidence summary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Help people by interpreting national (sometimes international) trends and developments in the light of local needs and priorities</li> <li>- Plan with outcomes in mind</li> <li>- Have a message about change in order to be 'on message' getting your language right, hearts and minds</li> <li>- Be sure that you can describe the change you have in mind in a form which is easily understood by, and engaging to partners</li> <li>- Sometimes it helps to be different (if plausible) in your actions, if not radical: If the evidence fits this stance, don't hesitate to stress the fact that you are working at the 'leading edge'</li> </ul>

Headline finding & lesson:	<b><u>Actively</u> support implementation of activity to deliver outcomes</b>
Evidence summary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Treat appraisal of activity as part of the process of project development</li> <li>- Regular re-profiling of resources against projects in the light of an overview of how they are delivering against other projects</li> <li>- Have a networking strategy in order to develop and maintain key relationships within which you influence the practice of partners</li> <li>- The scale of resources that could be invested were proportionate to the changes in the baseline</li> </ul>

Headline finding &	<b>Keep on stretching</b>
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lesson:	
Evidence summary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Report on performance: part of the habitual communication was around 'how are we doing?'</li><li>- Up the ante, raise the game: focus investment on developing the standards to which systems are delivering. The partnership mixed a 'hard nosed' interest in what was being achieved with an aspiration to see standards of delivery raised.</li><li>- Telling the story about progress against strategy, linking what is happening now to the long term goals you have in mind.</li></ul>

## **Section 1**

# **What do we plan to achieve?**

*(Theories of change)*

## **Section 1 Theories of change**

### **Introduction: the CSDP approach to theories of change**

Straight away in the field work, it became clear that there was a strong sense of shared purpose amongst the partners. It was based on the view that the CSDP was there to “change things.” We asked the interviewees what underpinned this focus on change, other than the view that “something had to be done” about basic skills.

In those discussions, four distinct but related perspectives on change emerged. We think that these perspectives, and the interplay between them, helped to shape the culture of the CSDP, and enable it to perform as well as it does.

- **Whole systems’ change analysis, national and local**
- **Mainstream service change and related changes in working practices**
- **Partners’ learning and development**
- **Supply chain/delivery chain development**

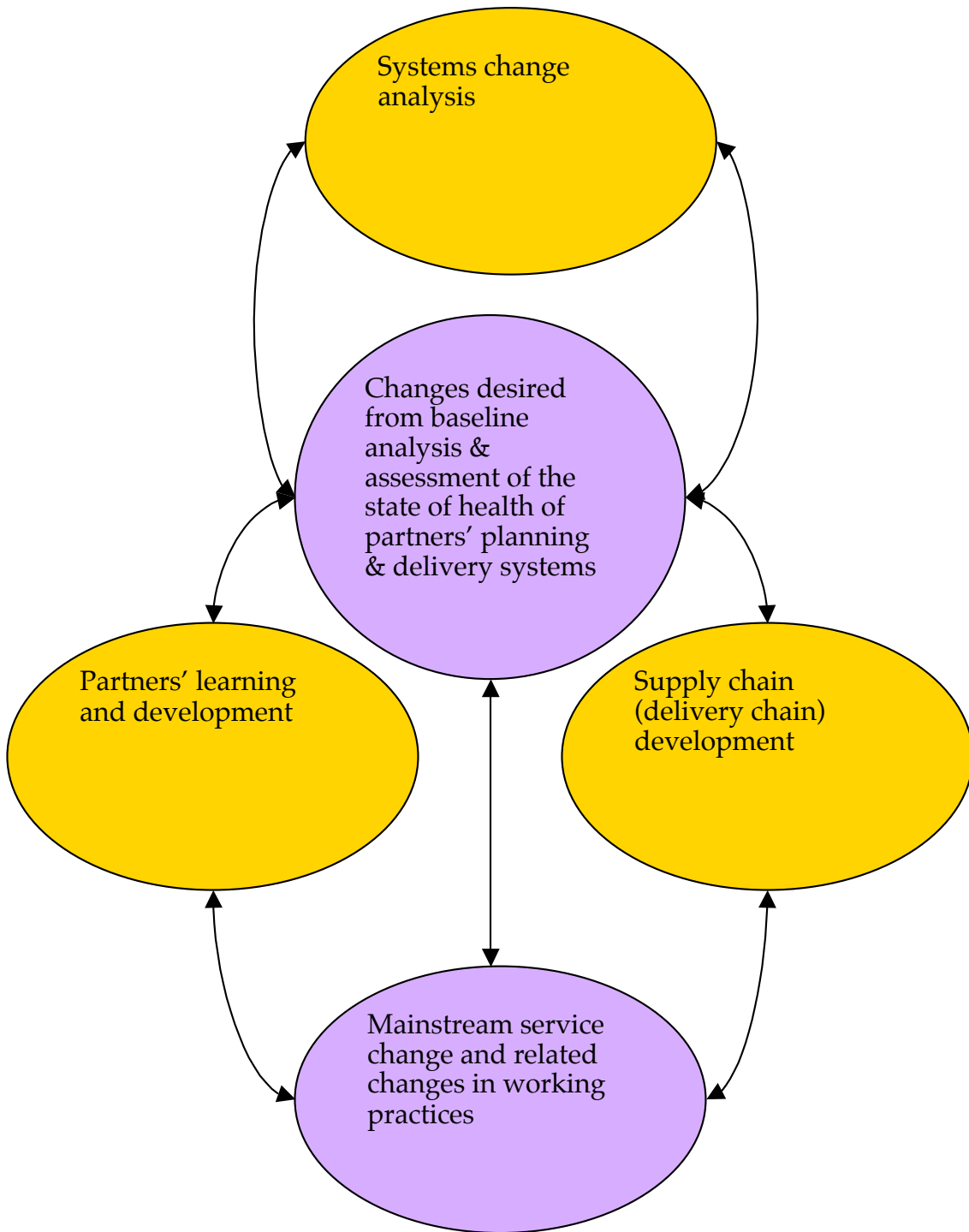
The emphasis on changes in working practices is central.

In the operation of the CSDP, change played an explicit role in priority setting, planning, and activity design. It was based on a picture of the partners’ activities in core and basic skills education as a “whole system”. The partners took the view that the whole of the scheme was already ‘developmental’, but the focus on change was not yet fully articulated – it was implied in the strategy and the development framework, and in the judgments that went into business planning and activity development processes.

An essential part of the story of the CSDP was that “we are aiming to change things with you”...and ....“through you...” This attitude reflected a shared understanding of

- the baseline conditions, and
  - the state of health of partners’ planning and delivery systems
- in order to identify desirable changes.

As such, the stance of “*working with and through you*” was a reflection of one of the under lying values in the theories of change applied by the partnership.



The partnership was set up to make changes, and this is a guiding principle in all its major decisions.

Putting this guiding principle into practice in this as in other settings means:

- Establishing and then maintaining the role and plausibility of the baselining of achievement, conditions and partners' delivery systems as part of the planning of priorities;
- Consulting people through existing system networks within the 'whole' system for the planning and provision of core skills services;
- Managing the balance between political representation and professional perspectives in the steering and management of the partnership (an area of tension that often bedevils regeneration partnerships); yet
- Doggedly challenging professional orthodoxies about how things need to be done - both in the delivery of core skills services, and in the operation of a regeneration partnership.
- Accepting there may be some 'trench warfare' about the way of doing things, and the interpretation of evidence of what works is part of the necessary dogged challenging. These may be small, but far reaching, examples of the guiding principle of change. The focus has to be on winning over hearts and minds to the need for change, and to the unfolding story about the progress being made.

### **Working on the details and the big picture – micro and macro levels**

This change-perspective is maintained both in small details and in the major emphases of the partnership's operations.

On the micro level, this means:

- the *development of professional practice* amongst large numbers of people working in the delivery of core skills services in Birmingham;
- making sure *knowledge and effective practice are disseminated* through the partnership' involvement in networks and the business processes of activity development
- a *differentiated approach to parts of the system and individual institutions* (for example have a distinct approach to the improvement of maths at Key Stages 3 and 4, which took into account different barriers and drivers than the approach to supporting literacy at Key Stage 2.)
- recognizing the significance of *getting the 'back office' functions right* in the administration of SRB funding

The macro dimensions include:

- *national trends reflected in city wide and regional strategic plans*, interpreted from both a local and national perspective. Discussions with the activity managers (considered in detail in Part Two of this evaluation)

made clear that they looked to the Core Skill Development Partnership to help them to make sense of national trends in policy;

- *research conducted on a city wide basis and fed into the networking* and professional updating transactions of the partnership with other partnerships;
- *drive for change concentrated on mainstream service providers*, broadly defined by the baseline needs of the city. During the life of the SRB funded life of the partnership, this grew to include the voluntary sector, the Probation Service, the Housing Department, and Social Services, in addition to those that one would have expected (Learning & Skills Council, Local Education Authority, Connexions, Job Centre Plus).

In the remainder of this section, we describe the use of the four different approaches to change, four different theories, each of which has contributed to the success of the CSDP.

- Whole systems' change analysis (national and local)
- Mainstream service change and (related) changes in working practices
- Partners' learning and development
- Supply chain (delivery chain) development

## Whole systems change

The partnership prepared the ground for its approach to ‘whole systems’ change through two key processes

- the scanning of policy, and
- the baselining of service delivery systems (especially planning processes).

The following policy scanning processes helped achieve the CSDP’s success:

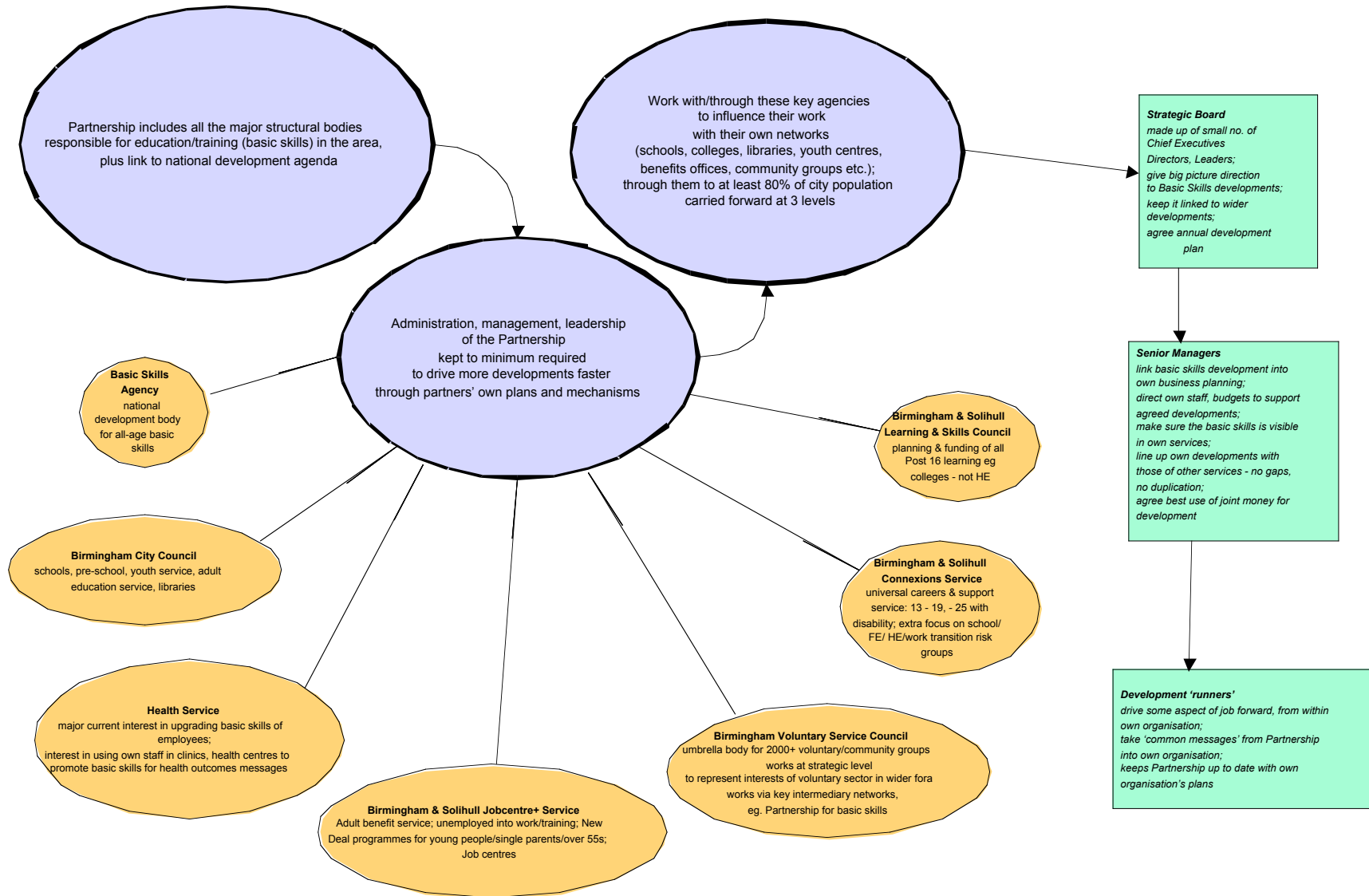
- tracking changes in policies, through an active and systematic checking of what was being written, and debated in academic and public policy arenas. The focus was on trying to identify how the conditions for improving outcomes could be established;
- interpreting (in advance of the changes) what *might / will be* the changes of national policy, which helped prepare groups of professionals involved in the systems of delivery for the (possible) changes, and also enhanced the credibility of the partnership;
- employing people who were ‘more than’ project managers – ‘more than’ because of their policy knowledge and expertise
- commitment to the application of effective practice
- emphasising the local application of national changes, *and* the local application of what is known about what works best. The effect of this approach was to link knowledge of emerging policy with effective practice, on the ground.

The baselining of service delivery systems involved:




- assessing the state of health of the delivery system (where are the blockages and shortcomings in the existing systems which are preventing progress on the outcomes?)
- prioritizing service *development*, and an aspect of that was the development of the systems which supported service delivery. These included systems of research, professional development, advice & guidance, inter agency networking, planning, project development etc.
- the strategic board and the senior manager groups sharing a responsibility for assessing how well delivery systems were performing, and how to improve their efficiency and impact through the annual business planning priorities.
- allowing the funded attachments to inform and influence the planning of service system improvements.

The structure of the CSDP – the picture which was held in view – developed over time in order to include within it all of the key components in the ‘whole system’, from both a supply and a demand point of view. The Executive Team saw it as a set of inter-related parts in a whole system delivering desirable outcomes.

The diagram on the next page is a summary of the ‘whole system’.




The main thinking and planning tools which the 'whole system' theory of change was conceptualised and managed were the:

-  <sup>4</sup> **Vision**
-  **Development framework**
-  **Use of attachments**

The experience of the CSPD suggests that these could be readily adapted to help with public service improvement in a wide range of settings.

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<sup>4</sup> Wherever you see a 'thumbs up'  you will find a working example of the thinking and planning tool it refers to either in the remainder of this section of Part3, in the Appendices, or on the CSPD www site.

### **Mainstream service change model**

The CSDP has faced a dilemma at various stages in its lifetime. As an SRB scheme it had very limited user involvement – viewed as technocratic by some and exclusive by others. The Board and the Executive team were very clear, however, that the focus of involvement should be service planners and designers, working on the principles of delivery chain development. Service users are involved in the partner's systems, not in the partnership itself.

Opinions differ over the transferability of the lessons from this aspect of the CSDP experience. There is no doubt, however, that the majority of activity managers saw this emphasis as part of the explanation for the relatively successful impact in mainstream service change.

There appear to be a range of practices and behaviours on the part of the CSDP which helped create the conditions for mainstream service change. These included:

- Expertise in and relish for tinkering with / developing business processes / delivery processes that fostered mainstream service change
- Harnessing the energies and commitment of practitioners and service managers / planners through involvement in their networks, the senior managers group, and the very straightforward experience of the 'back office' functions within the CSDP
- Working through partners, making sure that the CSDP was adding value to their delivery systems, making sure that certain conditions (about change) were met
- Recognition of the significance in practical planning and service development of learning & development processes, especially different ways of thinking and considering priorities

There have been two main aspects to the CSDP approach to mainstream service change. These were

- Investment in changes in working practices; and
- Something very similar to 'neighbourhood service planning & improvement'.

## **Investment in changes in working practices and behaviours**

The investments in activity by the CSDP were largely designed to ensure that

- working practices with core skills' delivery systems were designed and re-designed to support change; and
- changes in practice were used to underpin and reinforce other types of change.

The model on the following page describes the five dimensions of change in working practice. These were change in

- Strategic practice
- Partnership development
- Programme development, and
- Programme management.

Changes in the practice of each of these were directly influenced and shaped by a fifth dimension, changes in values, vocabulary and ethos. Through these changes the view was developed that 'the story of the CSDP is change'.

The CSDP developed its own practice in how it communicated its strategy and work. It was – in a number of respects- relatively low profile, yet in others highly influential. It made a point of recruiting people who were (in the eyes of interviewees) "more than project managers".

It was active – often through its partners – in national networking and policy influencing. These qualities and messages were stated and reinforced through its language, vocabulary and ethos. Key ways of looking at things, talking about things, dealing with people, reinforced through phrases used to establish a working culture in which mainstream service change was the drive.

The textbox that follows outlines the main messages that add up to this communication strategy.

**Language, vocabulary, ethos**

- “make sure we’re well positioned in shifting landscapes”
- “how do we compare with how we were, and with how others are doing?”
- “everybody knows the rules well, and complies with them”
- “lots of small interventions which add up to the impact, to the distance travelled”
- “promote change as opportunity, communicating a compelling purpose for change”
- “inspire trust, through behaviour”
- “have we adequate resources, deployed in agreed framework? = focus on developments”
- “keep track - record changes brought about”
- “work through partners, supporting collaboration across agencies”
- “know when we’re getting there”
- “use strategies that are clear yet flexible to use in context”
- “rehearse ‘bigger picture’ regularly, and update it”
- “have we got the right mix of leadership and management?”
- “be a critical friend – challenge and support”

The tables that follow the model provide a summary of the key actions under each of these dimensions of change in practice.

**Strategic** factors for change, acting outside the partnership, and influencing different partners in different ways.

**Partnership development** factors for change, largely made up of facilitating, & intermediary actions by CSDP to improve the conditions for change.

Values, language, vocabulary, messages, ethos.

**‘The story is change’**

**Programme development** factors for change, acting internal to the partnership, but linking in with the planning mechanisms of partners.

**Programme management** factors for change, acting internal to the partnership, and reaching into the working practices of delivery partners.

Features of change	Tools and ways of working
<p><b><u>Strategic factors driving change</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Developments:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- in national strategy</li> <li>- in local partners' Development Plans and Strategies;</li> </ul> </li> <li>- Build up of external events that precipitate sudden change within partners</li> <li>- Contractual commitments still to be met in order to reach outcomes</li> <li>- Insights gained from internal/external reviews</li> <li>- Development of understanding of baselines</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- turn any national and local reviews, reports and evaluations into a checklist of action points re changes to be made within own activities</li> <li>- regularly scan horizons for changes and update (e.g. checking internet 'latest'; ensuring local receipt of key documents; securing appropriate involvement in national and local key groups)</li> <li>- read the 'waves'; know what is coming e.g. re changes in local and national arrangements and strategies</li> <li>- keep capacity for rapid reaction and repositioning of resources</li> <li>- cover changed emphases through short term team attachments; new 'project development' activity; close financial monitoring and redeployment of resources to best effect</li> <li>- set times for outcome/vision focusing: identify 'distance still to be travelled'</li> <li>- target setting; action planning</li> </ul>

Features of change	Tools and ways of working
<p><b><u>Programme development</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Leverage on partners through a 3 level matrix of influence - ('strategy' level; 'programme management' level and 'activity doing' level), the Partnership is able to impact on:</li> <li>- Staffing capacity for change within partners</li> <li>- Leadership for change within partners</li> <li>- Culture/language of change within partners</li> <li>- Inter-relationships between partners</li> <li>- Quality of basic skills planning within partners</li> <li>- Effectiveness of operational mechanisms within partners</li> <li>- Use of partners own resources</li> <li>- Quality standards in partners' own provider networks</li> <li>- Establishing and maintaining the reputation of partners i.e. the partners' capacity to implement change</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Agree annually with partners what their next developments, activities are going to be (and how feasible and cost-effective these are)</li> <li>- Monitor progress quarterly - keep momentum going</li> <li>- Track back to identify the remaining 'gap to outcome' – stress 'getting there' re strategic objectives</li> <li>- Work back from target numbers – focus on numbers still to be worked with in order to get 'whole system' progress</li> <li>- Review at level of broad development activities</li> <li>- 'Whole system' query rather than worry about small activity detail</li> <li>- Keep central structures small, and make sure things are done right, so that energies can go on 'futures thinking'</li> <li>- Actively re-profile every quarter</li> <li>- Develop mental models and schema to help with analysis and planning and setting priorities</li> </ul>

## ***Neighbourhood service planning and improvement***

The CSDP was – from its establishment – a city wide initiative. During its SRB funded lifetime, however, there were both local and national policy trends which encourage the development of a more neighbourhood focus.

Nationally the most significant policy trends at a neighbourhood level have been:

- The National Strategy for Neighbourhood renewal
- The concept of floor targets and closing the gap

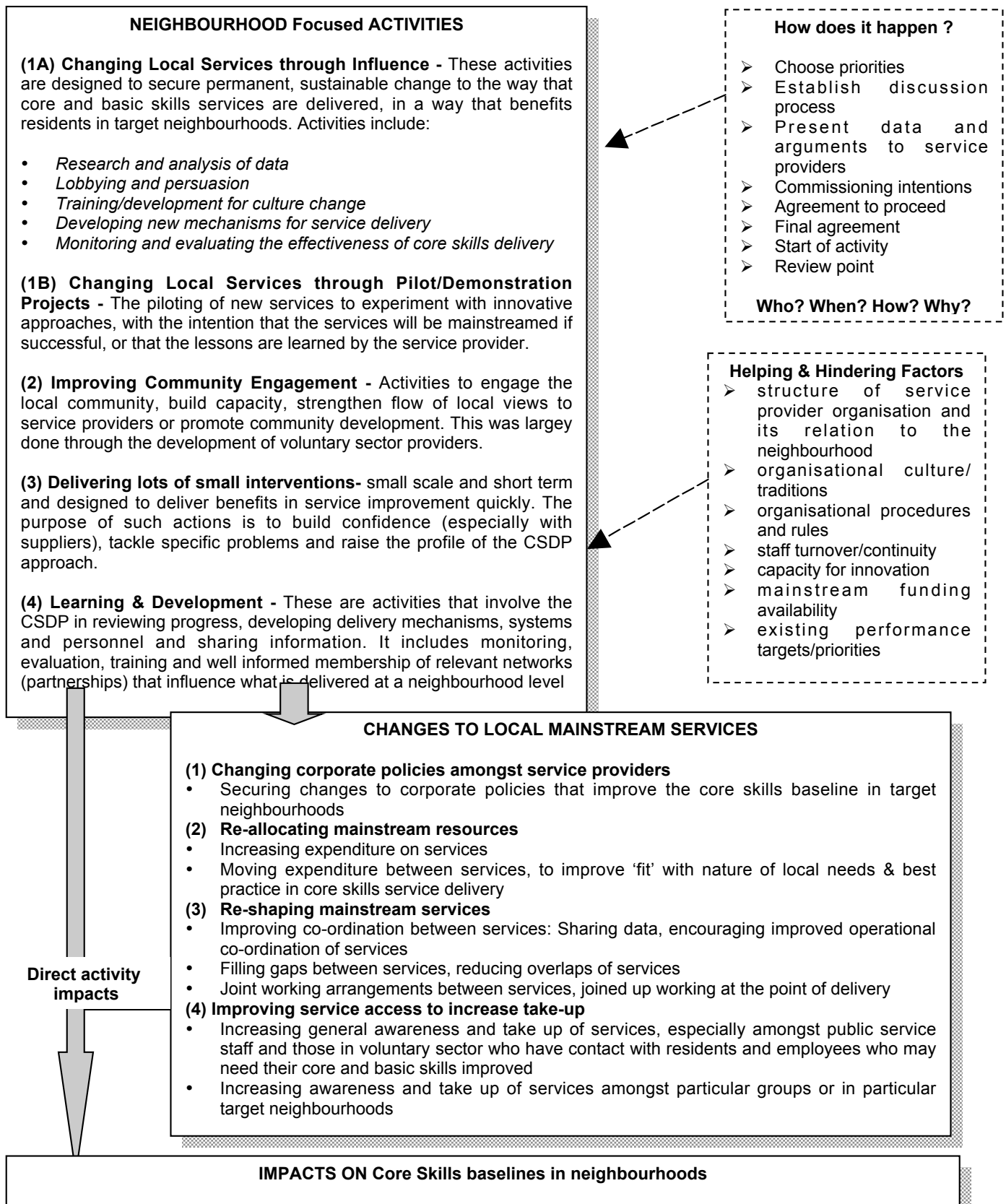
Locally the most significant trends have been:

- the Highbury 3 initiative in Birmingham which helped to develop the policy of ‘flourishing neighbourhoods’
- linked to that, Birmingham City Council’s instigation of ambitious plans to devolve some aspects of governance and localise the planning and delivery of some services, through District Strategic Partnerships
- the development of floor target planning for core skills in Birmingham, as part of the Basic Skills Strategy, although nationally there are no floor targets for basic skills.

Some of the CSDP procurement practices inevitably had a disproportionate impact as a neighbourhood level. These included:

- The development of the Voluntary Sector as a strategic supplier of core skills services
- Investment in activity at schools, especially work with parents. Naturally, schools are firmly rooted in neighbourhoods
- Investment in the work of the libraries’ service.






The CSDP did not spell out its model as a way of neighbourhood working – it arose as a by product of the fact that many of the mainstream services it was seeking to influence were already delivered through neighbourhood outlets.



The model on the previous page describes the processes and types of activities that the Core Skills Development Partnership has worked on. It is based on a model developed through the Neighbourhood Management national evaluation<sup>5</sup>. This tool provides a descriptive model for the approach adopted. The critical features of the approach include:

- Use of data at neighbourhood level: the drive to produce floor targets for wards within the City has meant that planning of absolute volumes of provision is plausible
- Focus on improving the impact of existing service providers, adding in new provision and providers where needed: the use of the voluntary sector and creative planning with the Probation Service, Job Centre Plus, and Social Services has meant that highly specific needs can be met
- Differentiating the needs: the principle of 'spiky profiles' and related differentiation of needs has been built into the planning systems of the CSDP. This is one of the ways in which experimentation with and use of effective practice has been anchored in targeted provision.


The main thinking and planning tools which the 'changing mainstream practice' theory of change was conceptualised and managed were the :

-  <sup>6</sup> **Vision**
-  **Development framework**
-  **Use of attachments**
-  **Floor targets for core & basic skills**
-  **Role of voluntary sector in accessing hard to reach groups**

Examples of each of these approaches follow, or can be found in the Appendices

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<sup>5</sup> This model is based on one developed by SQW & members of the national evaluation team, (including GFA Consulting)

<sup>6</sup> Wherever you see a 'thumbs up'  you will find a working example of the thinking and planning tool it refers to either in the remainder of this section of Part 3, in the Appendices, or on the www site.

## **Learning processes within partnership and change**

The CSDP is a developmental partnership, with its sights firmly set on developing its member organisations, and their services. The Board recognizes that learning is an integral part of creating the conditions under which things would change, and changes would stick.

Practical tools and process through which learning has been encouraged include:

- Conscious use of feedback loops in working with other partnerships: going to their meetings, yet not expecting them to go to the CSDPs
- Continuous interpretation and re-interpretation of practice, and data: reading the 'landscape' to see what are the emergent priorities
- Actively locating thinking about practice and future needs in the context of the City - 'what does this mean for us, here in Birmingham? Or here, in this part of our delivery system..?'
- The policy of trying to embed CSPD priorities in partners' own strategic and business plans through the CSDP process of annual business planning

The effect of these approaches is to mix clout, credibility and know how in a combination which fosters institutional and individual learning in pursuit of change and service improvement.

The learning for change processes within the CSDP can be summarised in four main forms – these are:

- Board learning
- Development of understanding and skills
- SRB scheme management and 'back office'
- Evaluation

### **Board learning**

The Board provided a model approach in its activities. It

- was consciously there to steer the programme. The seniority, and shared purpose of the members of the Board helped to ensure that there was a strong, consistent focus on learning and development.
- held meetings wide ranging in their scope and reflective in their approach, some Board members commenting (during the research for part 2 of this evaluation) that they sorted through issues, and learnt things themselves which could be used in other settings
- had an effect on Board members, attending with the intention of leading change in their own organisations, and related systems of planning and delivery

## **Developing understanding and skills**

The research that we did for Part 2 of this evaluation indicated that some 40% of the £29m SRB scheme was invested in professional development, updating and practice change of one kind or another. Face to face activity was on a very considerable scale, and augmented by

- Briefing notes
- The regular bulletin & www site
- The 'Moving the Mountains' lecture and related recording
- Involvement in national and international networks
- Employment of people in the Executive Team who were 'more than project managers' with a policy interest and expertise
- The funding of 'attachments' by the CSDP to work on core skills priorities in partner organisations

## **SRB scheme related points**

It is sometimes easy to forget that the CSDP was an SRB scheme, when one compares its effectiveness with typical SRB experience. The ways in which the scheme was managed helped to create the conditions under which learning and development could flourish. Some of these features of scheme management included:

- The fact that the scheme was divided into 4 multi annual, large scale strategic projects
- The relative ease of administration and light touch that the Executive Team were able to maintain because they maintained scrupulous standards of timely project management in their back office functions
- The activity appraisal processes were dynamic and relatively free from onerous paperwork, since they were conducted within the ethos of change, commissioning activity to make a difference to the baseline etc.
- Quarterly re-profiling regularly led to funds being switched between activities which were performing below expectations into those which were working more effectively

## **Evaluation and review**

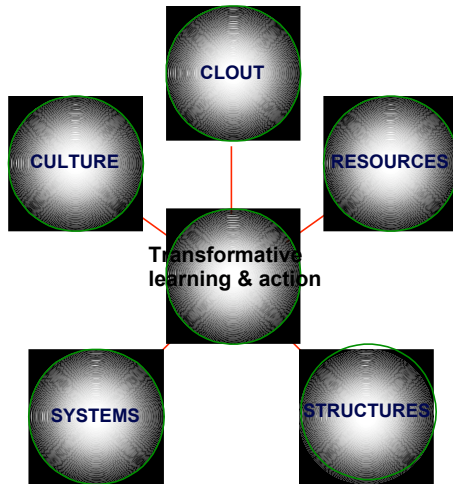
Formal evaluation was relatively small scale, bearing in mind the scale of the scheme. However, evaluation and review activity was built into a wide range of the partnership's business processes.

- 'Learning lessons' was a regular feature of the CSDP partnership's approach to its involvement with other networks

- Activity updates were written and provided by activity managers for circulation between them
- There was an willingness to encourage a personal and organisational focus
- Resilience – strong sense of ‘where we have come from and why; where we are going’. This is evident from the ‘Moving the Mountains’ lecture. The story is clearly described, and widely told

The model that follows depicts the unusual mix of qualities that have encouraged the development of transformative learning and action. These qualities are principally aspects of:

- Clout
- Structure
- Resources
- Systems
- Culture



**Clout**

- mandate to drive development/ change
- confident & respected partners
- skills and knowledge needed to deliver change
- credible, experienced project management

**Culture**

- shared vision & values
- trust & inter-dependence
- customer/ outcomes-focus
- collaboration where it adds value

**Resources**

- positive approach to change
- people, money, intelligence, know-how
- understanding partner contributions
- critical mass

**Transformative learning & action**

- ability to influence & engage stakeholders, for real
- feedback loops: strategy informed by practice
- leadership towards outcomes
- joint planning, review, consultations

**Systems**

- performance management
- right momentum

**Structures**

- fit for purpose, consciously designed
- effective co-ordination/ partner alignment
- capable of adaptation, subject to performance

The main thinking and planning tools which the ‘partnership learning and development’<sup>7</sup> theory of change was conceptualised and managed were the:

- 👍 Business Planning: Briefing notes
- 👍 Appraisal process
- 👍 Re-profiling

Examples of each of these follow, or can be found in the Appendices

**Delivery chain management**

Another instructive way of viewing the theories of change under pinning the CSDP is delivery chain management.

<sup>7</sup> Wherever you see a ‘thumbs up’ 👍 you will find a working example of the thinking and planning tool it refers to either in the remainder of this section of Part 3, in the Appendices, or on the www site.

One could interpret the core and basic skills “systems” of delivery as supply chains – delivering resources, learning opportunities, trained tutors, access to ICT etc to the learners, and to the schools, colleges and community organisations that are their principle suppliers – along the supply chain, so to speak.

This terminology (as we mentioned in relation to neighbourhood services’ planning and improvement) was not used – as such – by the partnership. The concepts and practices of delivery chain management exactly describe some aspects of the CSDP approach to change. As such, this is an illuminating a powerful model for prioritizing actions that will strengthen the key characteristics of the delivery chain.

There is a vast array of literature and analysis of how to view *supply chains*. The conclusions from much of this material can apply equally to delivery<sup>8</sup> chains. In the discussion which follows, however, we have synthesized a simple model which considers the:

- Challenge (facing suppliers and the related problems)
- The solutions (to the problems that obstruct progress towards the challenge)
- The benefits (of solving the problems)

The table that follows assesses the evidence from the CSDP of the application of these principles.

Aspect of delivery chain management	CSDP evidence		
	Evident	Emergent	Absent
<b>Challenge</b>	✓✓✓		
<i>Time to market:</i> uninterrupted supply highly reliant on information about changing needs	✓✓		
<i>Cost:</i> reducing the costs of supply and making development of improvements cheaper enables more to be supplied for the same cost	✓✓		
<i>Reducing design-cycle times:</i> this enable services to change more promptly in response to “real time” understanding of changing needs	✓✓		
<b>Solutions</b>	✓		

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<sup>8</sup> In our judgement, ‘delivery’ is simply a more acceptable term for ‘supply’ in the field of public sector service delivery. As such, there are direct parallels between the body of knowledge on effective practice in supply chain management, and the change-business of the CSDP.

Aspect of delivery chain management	CSDP evidence		
	Evident	Emergent	Absent
<i>Integrating all partners:</i> in the various strands of the supply chains that make up the system	✓		
<i>Sharing dynamic and static information:</i> in order to facilitate improvements in service and learning within and between links in the chain	✓		
<i>Conducting transactions:</i> reducing the costs, and increasing the effectiveness of the “linking” in the chain	✓✓		
<i>Establishing communities of interest:</i> between groupings of similar types of suppliers and those at similar stages of development	✓✓		
<b>Benefits</b>	✓		
<i>Cost reductions:</i> through scale and improved processes	✓✓		
<i>Enhanced customer / partner satisfaction:</i> through better, more timely meeting of needs	✓		
<i>Money goes further:</i> as a result of improved efficiency of supply	✓✓		
<i>Reduced service cycle times:</i> processes of feedback and development are improved		✓✓	
<i>Sustainability and resilience:</i> the supply chain is more resilient and better able to adapt to unexpected changes that might threaten its sustained operation		✓✓	

A delivery chain based view of change (and change leadership / management) is part of the explanation for the lack of involvement of service users in the leadership and activities of the CSDP. Their involvement properly comes through engagement with the service providers, along the delivery chain from the CSDP. 🖱️ Activities like INSPIRE demonstrate these principles vividly.

### The strategic role of suppliers

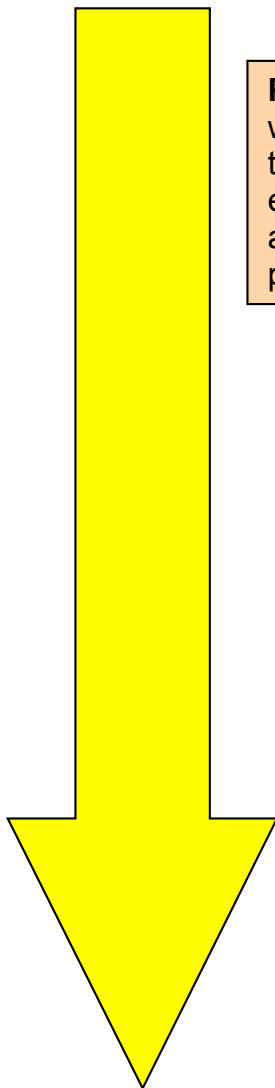
Clearly under such a model, suppliers are critically important. Who they are, how effective they are, who they involve, how efficiently they deliver which benefits – all of these factors count. However, the CSDP – during its first 6 years – deliberately extended the range of parties with whom it conducted joint

commissioning. This growing group of partners who were involved in joint commissioning included:

- The voluntary sector
- The Probation service
- Connexions
- JobCentre+
- The Housing Department and other Registered Social Landlords

These partners developed strategic procurement practices through the procurement framework of the annual business plan to get to joint commissioning. The direction of travel and features of each stage are reflected in the model which follows, where the preconditions for influence (once established) create the basis from which service development and joint commissioning can grow.

Direction of development of the CSDP delivery chain management during its lifetime



**Pre conditions for influencing core skills delivery chain.** What are these, and how will we know that we have established them in a reliable way? CSDP experience suggests that they include: building relationships between partners, ensuring that beneficiaries are engaged, gathering evidence, agreeing how we will measure performance, developing an agreed action plan, with clear targets (based on evidence that makes sense to the different parts of the delivery chain)

<i>Type of joint working</i>	<i>Definition</i>	<i>Conditions/benefits</i>
<b>Influencing</b>	Exchanging information for mutual benefit Principally used to help with planning Coordination of activities & services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• promotions/awareness of potential benefits</li> <li>• catalyst to bring people together (requiring facilitation / organisation and incentives)</li> <li>• loose structure, with limited commitment from the majority</li> <li>• requires some role models or “champions“ to move to next stage (‘attachments significant here)</li> </ul>
<b>Service development</b>	Co-ordination plus sharing resources in pursuit of common purpose Co-operation on joint activity and services Stage of pre commissioning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• recognition of common purpose, and scope for shared benefits</li> <li>• complementarity clear between some parties</li> <li>• based around services, resources, agreed needs, shared problems</li> <li>• high chance of perceived learning</li> </ul>
<b>Joint commissioning</b>	Co-operation plus altering own activities and enhancing the capacities of other parties	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• well established relationships</li> <li>• some success already</li> <li>• high likelihood of tangible benefits</li> <li>• likely to be close to joint venture</li> <li>• small, self selecting groups involved</li> </ul>

**Sections 2 & 3**

# **How do we plan to achieve the changes?**

## **Introduction to Sections 2 and 3**

Section 1 dealt with theories of change – the ‘what’ in what are we going to achieve.

Sections 2, 3 and 4 are concerned with the how; the planning and the design considerations.

In effect this involves exploring ways of translating theories of change into the changed working practices – especially *planning working practices* – of partners.

This description of the planning processes and other systematic activities makes up the **capacity** of the CSDP – that elusive thing that people call the “core skills approach”. There clearly is such a thing – as is evident from the interviews with partners. The capacity of the CSDP is a function of the

- capacity of individuals
- capacity of partner organisations, and the
- capacity of the ‘whole system’

The **3 dimensions of capacity** which we consider in the next 3 sections are:

- Strategic management and policy interpretation (in section 2)
- Activity design and project development (in section 3)
- Programme management and co-ordination arrangements (in section 4)

These sections will look at strategic management, policy interpretation and useful forms of activity design and management, as put into practice in the CSDP, but transferable to your own project.

## **Section 2 Strategic management and policy interpretation**

What did the CSDP do to help create the conditions for effective strategic management? There are 7 significant factors:

- Structure of partnership 10 year + perspective
- The core business of the partnership & its profile
- Membership
- Development framework
- Annual business planning
- Approach to networking
- Approach to evaluation

Some of the transferable lessons from the CSDP experience that you could adapt to your circumstances include:

- Structure of partnership & 10 year + perspective

From its foundation, the CSDP was clear about the ‘fitness for purpose’ of its structure. Its founding members ‘protected’ it from pressures to change its focus unproductively; and championed the rationale for the design of the structure (within their own organisations and with key supporting bodies like the Regional Office). The clarity of structure and related clarity of purpose meant that the CSDP could develop its plan and then look for the money to implement it.

- The core business of the partnership & profile

The core business of the partnership and its profile (as a strategic facilitator of change) were consistent with one another. The partnership kept its identity in the background (in Birmingham) and let partners’ corporate identities, and ‘credit’ for achievement come to the fore. Some Board members described the CSDP as ‘Birmingham’s best kept secret’, for example. Although this approach had its draw backs when compared with the typical mix of PR and self promotion that passes for profile building with regeneration partnerships, this stance helped to promote the CSDP as a ‘model’ approach within Government and policy making circles, but also meant that it was not perceived as a threat by local partners, whose professional practice and services it was aiming to change.

- Membership was confined to those who could implement the strategy

The CSDP deliberately had an ‘exclusive’ membership, responsible for the implementation of an ‘inclusive’ strategy. Several of the CSDP partners found this a difficult approach to accept since it did not conform to the orthodoxy of

partnership – where ‘inclusivity’ is a desirable (if hard to achieve) goal. There were times when the exclusivity of the membership had to be defended as an approach against charges of elitism.

As discussed in Section 1, however, one of the theories of change which informed the CSDP strategy was based around development of the capacity of the ‘delivery chain’. Under the principles of this theory of change, the membership of the partnership at each stage of the delivery change would be different because the purpose of each stage is different and membership needs to be ‘for for purpose’.

- Development framework and policy interpretation

The watchword of the Board was service ‘development development development’. As discussed within Section One, the focus on the development of partners’ plans, services and delivery arrangements was – in effect – a method for using interpretation of policy (on the part of the CSDP) to influence and develop partners’ strategies.

The objectives in the development framework expressed the changes in strategy and strategic capacity that the CSDP aimed to bring about in the core and basic skills delivery system in Birmingham. The development framework was implemented through the annual business planning round, the approach to networking and research and evaluation.

- The annual business planning was regular, rigorous and wide ranging in its scope.
- The partnership joined other partnerships and networked through established routes. It tended to join in with what was going on, rather than invite others to its own meetings - learning events were an exception to this rule
- As such it did not add to the stock of partnerships which people were involved in. It influenced others’ plans through what it joined in with
- Many many reviews of progress and impact were conducted, to assess impact and amplify understanding of the drivers of the baseline.
- The large number of relatively small scale reviews encouraged learning between activities.
- This learning was augmented by write ups and review by activity managers of their own activities from which others could learn

The tables which follow unpack some of the functions which the CSDP fulfilled in order to manage strategy and interpret policy in pursuit of improving outcomes.

**Strategic management and policy interpretation**

<b>Characteristic</b>	<b>Defining features</b>	<b>Model practices (planning tools etc)</b>	<b>Risks &amp; preconditions – what are the things that could get in the way; what are the things that need to be in place?</b>
Strategic leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strategic drive at Board level, expressed in Vision</li> <li>• Board priorities, and priorities from Partners' own plans, provide the Business Planning drivers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 10 year time frame, with Vision and Annual Plan/Report</li> <li>• Board sign off Business Plan, but do not approve projects</li> <li>• Annual targets for improvement in key indicators</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Government priorities change so rapidly, they may overtake priorities, with danger of 'displacement/deadweight'</li> <li>• Board composition held at Chief Executive/Leader level; keeps consistency of membership and 'level'</li> </ul>
Research / intelligence base	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Partnership recognised as key member of strategic networks</li> <li>• Up to date information gathered re what is emerging elsewhere</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Receipt of key documents; key Internet sites scanned weekly for updates</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Could feel need to be part of every network and attend every meeting</li> </ul>

<b>Characteristic</b>	<b>Defining features</b>	<b>Model practices (planning tools etc)</b>	<b>Risks &amp; preconditions – what are the things that could get in the way; what are the things that need to be in place?</b>
Credible personnel/ consistency of messages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Person who put proposals in place, also manages their implementation and continues as long as is successful</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Clarity around membership of Board and Strategic Managers Group</li> <li>Lead experts from partners attached to Partnership for fixed-time tasks</li> <li>Key statements re vision; development principles; strategic objectives etc are repeated in same format in all key documents</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lead experts can be drawn away from own organisation's structures/ own core purpose re change (can focus too much on the partnership as opposed to own partner's development)</li> </ul>
Developmental emphasis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Outcome focus business plan priorities = 'what needs to be different'</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Development framework</li> <li>Process baselines identifying the changes in how the systems work together</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Senior managers in Partners come and go –creates 'drift' away from people who signed up to original principles and purposes</li> </ul>

Characteristic	Defining features	Model practices (planning tools etc)	Risks & preconditions – what are the things that could get in the way; what are the things that need to be in place?
Whole systems' approach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Partnerships (e.g. Lifelong Learning Partnership) defined as networks of partnerships – i.e. focus is on delivering additionalities</li> <li>• This Partnership is the Basic Skills arm of Local Learning Partnership (which itself is the 'learning arm' of the City Strategic Partnership) i.e. direct link to whole-city Community Plan</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exchange of business/development plans at draft stage</li> <li>• 👍 Literacy/numeracy objective put within Community Plan</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trust re opening up own plan to scrutiny and advice</li> </ul>
Strategic networking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Multi sectoral</li> <li>• Investment in capacity of sector (esp. Voluntary Sector)</li> </ul>		

Characteristic	Defining features	Model practices (planning tools etc)	Risks & preconditions – what are the things that could get in the way; what are the things that need to be in place?
<b>Regional / national profile</b>			
Interaction with wider strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Involvement in Partners' key planning processes</li> <li>• Linkages deliberately created with national/ regional strategies</li> <li>• Time set aside for 'big picture' rehearsal 'What is it we were really trying to do, on a big scale?'</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 👍 'context' section of annual business plan emphasises need for constant renewal of thinking each year – keeps developments moving along</li> <li>• national reports/ reviews turned into checklist of 'best practice' points, which create action agenda re changes to be made locally via Partnerships own Business Plan</li> </ul>	

<b>Characteristic</b>	<b>Defining features</b>	<b>Model practices (planning tools etc)</b>	<b>Risks &amp; preconditions – what are the things that could get in the way; what are the things that need to be in place?</b>
Formative use made of lessons learnt	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evaluation done at different levels</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 👍 Annual review of progress being made against key objectives</li> <li>• 👍 Annual review of a significant aspect of the Partnerships operations</li> <li>• 👍 Evaluation at programme level rather than activity level</li> </ul>	

### Section 3 Activity design and management

How did the CSDP go about activity design and management?

In some respects the activity design and management practices of the partnership were – simply – reliable, high quality project management practices, the advantages of which would apply in all settings.

On the other hand, there were some distinctive features which could be replicated or adapted to your circumstances. For example,

- Whilst the project management methodology was – to some extent - prescribed (SRB), the actual practice of the CSDP met or exceeded industry standards, and was carried out with *a light touch*. Wherever possible, project management processes were designed to minimise costs and disruption to activity managers.
- The annual business planning cycle ensured that an iterative process of project development was followed under which project concepts grew from evidence of what worked in experience, and were widely and rapidly replicated throughout the relevant core skills' systems.
- Processes like '*rapid prototyping*' and concepts like the '*tipping point*' informed this approach, which was based on the philosophy that there is no 'magic bullet' solution waiting to be found (in this case, to raise the core skills baseline in Birmingham to acceptable levels).
- Outcomes are more likely to be achieved if those working in the system themselves test what will work and the partnership (having found out what works) replicates this on a large scale as widely as possible through the delivery systems.
- The partnership's approach to *activity (or project) appraisal* was part of this systemic learning. SRB schemes are often bedeviled by onerous, heavily documented appraisal processes. The process developed by the CSDP was highly interactive, and rigorously professional. The Executive Team and the development attachments working in partner organisations, collaborated with activity managers to develop project propositions, through a dynamic process of discussion, documented plans and propositions. The paperwork used as the actual evidence of appraisal was a record of previously made decisions about the planning of the activity, the rationale of which was well known to all of the parties. Without naming them, principles of project cycle management were applied. A comparable process – discussed in more detail in the next section – was

- true, also, of the re-profiling of activities that the partnership did every quarter.
- Few activities were contracted for more than one year, although some activities had multi year approvals. This practice enabled the partnership to actively monitor the performance of activities – expand some, kill others off - without controversy, especially bearing in mind that most of the activity agreements were with mainstream service organisations, for whom the partnership's funding (whilst important) was not a matter of life or death.
  - The context in which all of these practices could flourish was the project structure<sup>9</sup> of the SRB bid – four multi annual, multi million pound projects, under which activity was commissioned. It is hard to overstate how important this project structure has been in providing the CSDP with a framework within which it could operate effectively. In our view, this was a *necessary condition of the effectiveness of the CSDP activity*.

Features of activity design and project management you might want to use in your own project:

The table which follows outlines some transferable features of the activity design and management that have proved effective in planning for outcomes.

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<sup>9</sup> The project structure of the scheme is discussed in part 2 of this evaluation.

### Activity design and project management

Characteristic	Defining features	Model practices (planning tools etc)	Risks & preconditions – what are the things that could get in the way; what are the things that need to be in place?
Possible developments treated as a 'dialogue' not a 'bid'	Allows development of proposals, not pass/fail process	Initial ideas outlined ('one side of A4') on basis for dialogue i.e. not huge investment of time in things that aren't going in right direction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Development and approval processes could become too mixed together</li> </ul>
Membership of key networks of services managers	Developments arise out of common agendas not 'dreamt up'	Project Proposals, in simple standard format, not competitive bids	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Danger that the only developments that happen are ones that come from within a closed circle of agencies</li> <li>Expectation that others will have been included in development of proposal – made explicit at proposal stage ('we assume you have talked to other partners about this')</li> </ul>
Commissioning of activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Links back to consistent strategic objectives (what more needs to be done to raise Baseline? etc)</li> <li>Links to planned outcomes (eg. what needs to really happen to produce leap in exam results at age 16?)</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Needs visible relationship to partners' own plans</li> <li>Separately commissioned activities can become treated as discrete activities, not facets of wider enterprise (towards some planned outcomes)</li> </ul>

<b>Characteristic</b>	<b>Defining features</b>	<b>Model practices (planning tools etc)</b>	<b>Risks &amp; preconditions – what are the things that could get in the way; what are the things that need to be in place?</b>
Aiming for “whole system” coverage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Push to scale up activity to maximum deliverable</li> </ul>	Avoid small scale/ project language – ask ‘how many ... need this development?’	
Approach informed by “what works”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Allows some trialling – preferably on medium sized scale – in order to see how it works</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reviews seek to pull out broader insights rather than list case studies etc</li> <li>• Where little has been successful, supportive scepticism needed: anything can be claimed as being the one thing that works</li> </ul>
Activity development resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Specialist personnel</li> <li>• Secondments from partners</li> </ul>	‘Team’ seen as flexible task groups drawn from partners to bring about agreed shifts in systems	
Activity contracting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Simple Activity Agreement – not adding to bureaucratic burden</li> </ul>	Contract focuses on activity – contains finance agreement (but known that this may be varied by re-profiling)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• May not be robust/legal enough for some partners</li> <li>• Clarity of changes needed; activities to be delivered well defined at Activity Agreement stage</li> </ul>
Monitoring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monthly ledger summaries of spend</li> <li>• Spot checks on basis of deviation from agreement (i.e. monitoring by exception)</li> </ul>	Regular reports requested Milestones agreed and a sample checked	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Achieving milestones etc seen as something done for Partnership monitoring; rather than as part of internal management of progress</li> </ul>

<b>Characteristic</b>	<b>Defining features</b>	<b>Model practices (planning tools etc)</b>	<b>Risks &amp; preconditions – what are the things that could get in the way; what are the things that need to be in place?</b>
Re-profiling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Focus on ‘money really required to deliver outcomes’ not ‘fixed budget/allocation’</li> </ul>	Quarterly ‘requests for re-profiling’ formally recorded and responded to	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Most agencies work on a ‘spending of the annual budget’ model which prioritises the money over the activity. Hard to get people to say that money isn’t needed and is better used elsewhere</li> </ul>
Forward strategy support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Focus on ‘changes to be made to mainstream within timescale’ cf: continuation of activity</li> </ul>	Presuming that the Partnership is ‘only needed for the next x years to do the following developments ...’	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Funding is held to developments; establishing new ways of doing things or clearly ‘fixing’ a quantified ‘problem’ within timescale</li> </ul>
Administration support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Flexible; bought in; changed as needed</li> </ul>	Deliberate fostering of new skills; ‘bringing on’ staff Some can be done at a distance; electronically	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Employment regulations about part time and full time working etc are valued as a security net but also stifle flexibility</li> </ul>

## **Section 4**

**How are we going to make sure  
that everyone is kept on track?**

## **Section 4 – programme management and co-ordination arrangements**

### **Introduction**

Much of what we have discussed so far has been concerned with strategy and planning. But the lasting impact of the CSDP also depended on what it actually delivered, through partners. Keeping things on track and implementing according to plan was critically important to the delivery of outcomes.

How did the CSDP manage its programme of activity and keep things on track?

There were a number of distinctive features to the strategic management and co-ordination arrangements, principally based on the contributions of:

- The strategic board
- Senior Managers group
- Development attachments
- Executive team

### **Strategic board**

The Board was – genuinely – strategic. It was characterised by:

- The seniority and consistency of membership
- A small, tightly knit group which met infrequently
- Concentration on steering, not doing
- Working through partners (in effect through each other)
- Programming of change, not a bunch of projects
- Annual approval of a business plan, not of individual activities, in reference to the development framework

### **Senior Managers**

The senior managers of the partner organisations met regularly to translate the strategic direction of the Board into their own organisation's plans for service improvement and implementation. Their responsibility was to:

- Both shape and interpret the business plan
- Create and maintain the “fit” between the CSDP strategy and their organisations' corporate plans
- Fixing things, when problems arose

- Lining up developments – by reducing the gap between the CSDP strategy, and their organisation's capacity to deliver to that strategy
- Creating the conditions (in practice) for *joint* commissioning

### **Development attachments**

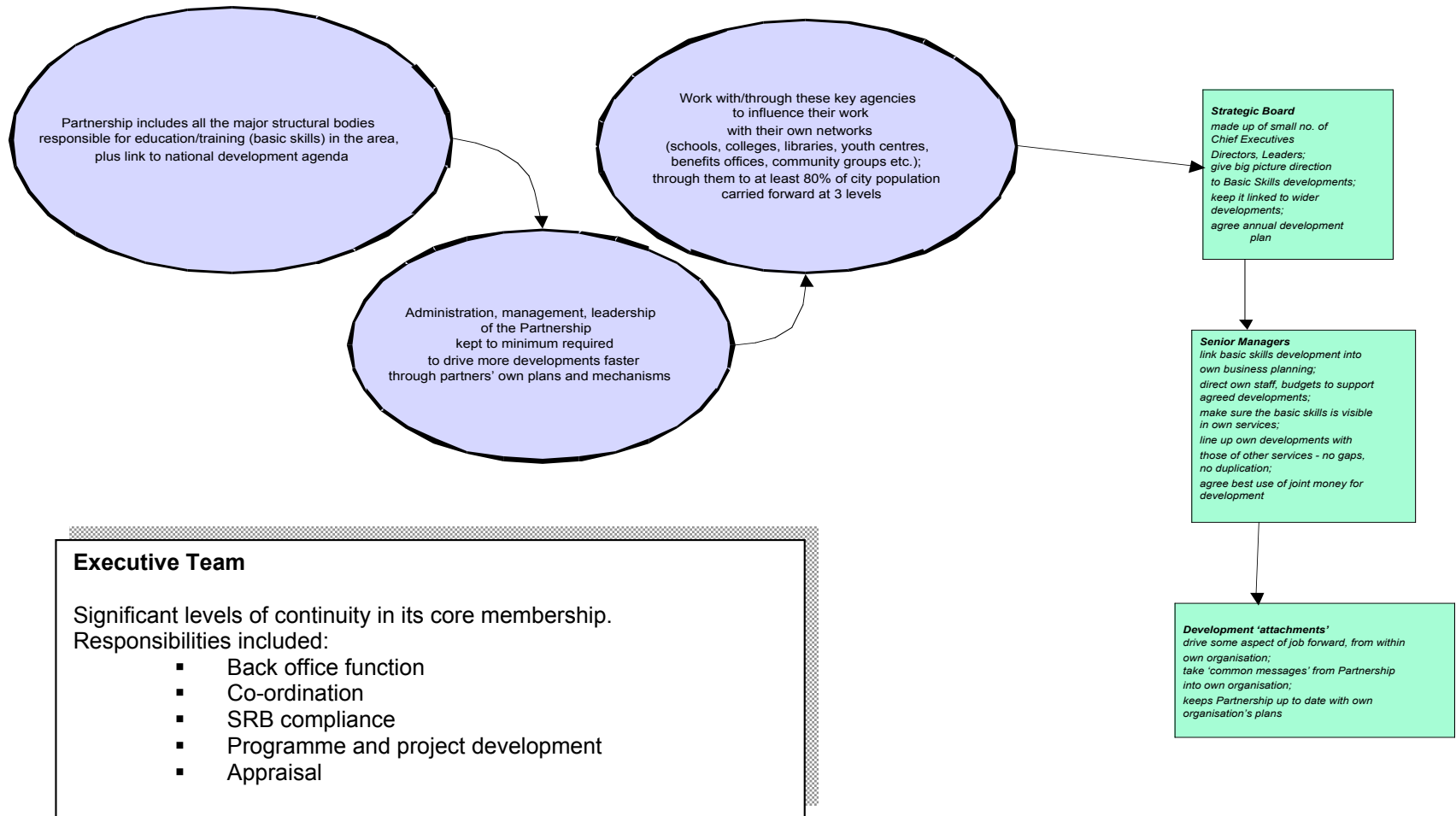
A wide range of commentators on the CSDP described the fact that its staff were *more than project officers*, mixing deep expertise in their own professional field with an interest in (and grasp of) policy developments. Some interviewees described this aspect of the CSDP's operations as 'reverse secondment'.

The CSDP called people in this role 'development attachments', to make clear that they were attached to the host partner, rather than the CSDP; but were there to *develop* the fit between the CSDP strategy and the partner organisation's capacity to deliver on strategy. As such, the development attachments were the 'right hand men and women' for the senior managers' group, working within the partner organisations.

This provided the partnership with the capacity to design, implement and learn from its activities in a way which is unusual amongst regeneration partnerships. These were politically neutral arrangements, with no doubt about who was working for whom on what.

Key things to learn from this experience include the importance of

- Valuing direct investment in the development of partner capacity in implementing your (the partnership's) strategy
- Stressing influence (in policy and approach, as well as professional practice)
- Feeding back into the partnership from their host organisation (aligning plans, budgets, working mechanisms)



## **Executive team**

The Executive Team has fulfilled a range of critical functions, as one might expect. There were some distinctive features to their approach, however. These included:

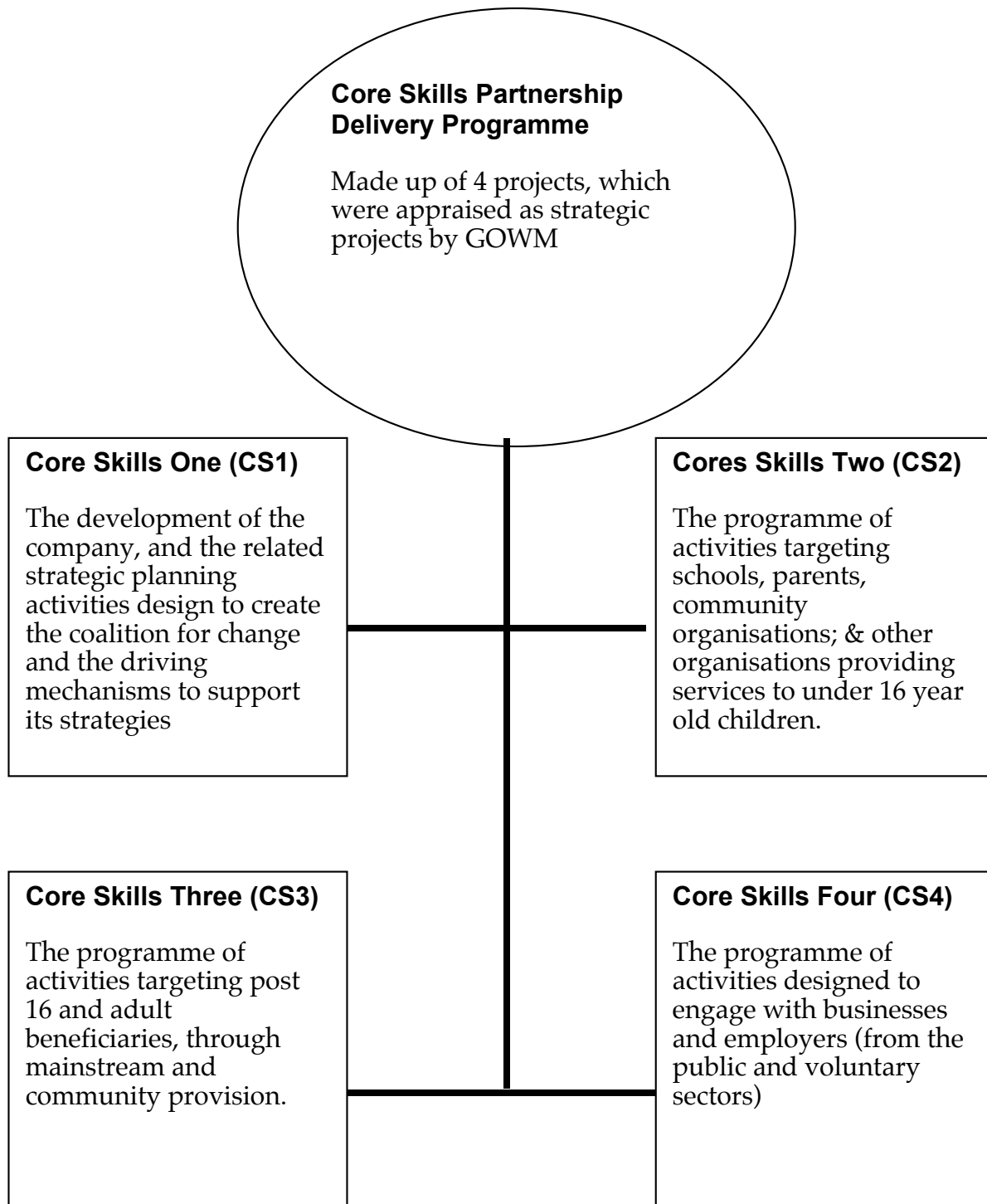
- The stream lined reliability of the back office functions
- The emphasis on co-ordination activity, informed by strategy and evidence
- High standards of compliance with SRB audit and monitoring standards
- Continuous process of iterative programme and activity development, and innovation and experimentation, which was small scale, but multi faceted
- Operation of an appraisal system which maintained objectivity, but was integrated into the programme and activity development processes

## **Executive Team activity analysis over 7 years**

In the tables which follow, there is an analysis of the activities of the Executive Team, in terms of:

- Attachment support
- Strategic networking and influencing
- Problem analysis and evidence development
- Activity design and appraisal
- Project management and corrective action

This is organised around the four SRB projects that made up the programme



**Project CS1 - The development of the company, and the related strategic planning activities design to create the coalition for change and the driving mechanisms to support its strategies**

**CS1 – Attachment support – partners & period of time**

Partnership Manager on 'permanent loan' from Education Department – to develop proposal/negotiate Partnership etc pre SRB scheme; to provide overall leadership, management, direction and focus 1996-2003; to continue directing partnership working post SRB (against next 7-year set of objectives).

**CS 1 - Strategic networking & influencing**

- Establishment of agreed structures/processes – Board; Strategic Managers Meetings; Ensuring that 'attachments' from partners link partnership thinking directly back into own network meetings/team meetings/organisational business plans – and pull ideas/plans from own organisations/networks on into the Partnership's operations and direction.
- Partnership is a member of key strategic networks – but only where, and for as long, as appropriate (e.g. LEA/TEC 14-19 Liaison Group; Lifelong Learning Partnership; LEA forward planning group around Education Development Plan ...)
- Early presentations to wider networks of organisations re purpose of Partnership; key principles; strategic objectives etc
- Regular issues of newsletter/annual report – both held at the level of big picture/overall direction/'Story so far'/progress being made on a broad front (across more than one funded development activity)
- Membership of 'SRB Managers Group' – later the 'Regeneration Managers Group', and the Regeneration network, which fed into e.g. City Pride activities.
- Linkages formed with national strategy processes; DfES etc.

### **CS 1 – Problem analysis and evidence development**

- Scrutiny of key documents, local reports, partner business plans, national reports, key web sites etc to keep a sense of ‘waves building in the distance’; evidence-base for potential practice; ‘hot spot/wicked issues/major puzzles’ etc.
- Reflection on local data and local data analysis; commissioning of baselining surveys (e.g. re levels of adult basic skills) all on ongoing basis.
- Updating ‘Schedule A’ progress from 1995/6 baseline towards 2003 outcomes (which were also the planned outcomes for relevant partners i.e. KS2 results in Education Development Plan and KS2 targets for partnership were not two separate figures/processes – in this sense the ‘ambition’ of the Partnership approach stretched each partner’s targets that bit more than they might individually have set). The Partnership was also able to change an administrative annual recording of targets into a ‘distance yet to be travelled’ to reach long term outcomes. (Having 7 year aspirational but realistic targets was novel to partners used to annual planning cycles).

### **CS 1 - Activity design, and appraisal**

- Some activity design work followed, via discussions with attached partner ‘experts’, from the small scale exploratory commissioning in CS2/CS3 (see below).
- Partners suggestions for ways forward (in light of ‘distance to be travelled this year’) shaped by a framework established at Board level – from the analysis of data/scanning horizon/pondering on evidence etc work done to identify the gaps. Board would list 10-12 areas for development e.g. Under 5s activities need to join up more; more on writing at KS1/KS2; support for trying out employer model etc. Partners would work up own various proposals as a mix of responses to these prompts plus ‘what we wanted to do anyway’ – the proposals would go through some internal checking within each partner and would then come (in simple but standard format: ‘a side of A4’ to Partnership for formal approval – results of which (usually a bit of clarification re what would really be done and often some reduction in costings and a bit of reshaping of the activity to get better alignments etc) went into Business Plan for endorsement by senior managers from partners – and then back to Board as Annual Business Plan.

### **CS 1 - Project management and corrective action**

- 👍 Activity Agreements phrased as ‘up to £x agreed’ for set of qualitative/quantitative changes to be strived for; with milestones (quarterly) where these might help keep momentum going – but trying to avoid over-reporting for its own sake (e.g. against 10 meaningless milestones).
- Quarterly checks on progress of Activity – what is realistically still to take place (or needed to be added in) – and what money might realistically be needed to do this – leading to re-profiling of money into new quarterly in-year agreements (keeps the developments ‘real’; prevents end of year stack-up of undoable actions and unspendable resources) – ‘unneeded’ resources reallocated to new developments via CS2/CS3 ‘Project Development’ capacity.
- [As an indication: usually partners were adamant that all of that year’s resources would be needed – by the end of the year around 20-27% of the resources had been recycled into developing new activity/additional activity – which sustained the momentum within each year, and across years].
- Having the SRB Projects signed off for all 7 years (which meant some robust early thinking, negotiation and planning to get projects that were specific enough to be able to describe to (then) GOWM exactly what would be developed but loose enough to allow annual development planning as the world changed around them) meant that they avoided all the usual delays in getting annual ‘projects’ agreed by GOWM/AWM or by the Board – activity could start (and start spending) on April 1<sup>st</sup> each year – no ‘stop/start’; more of a 7 year flow.
- Reports asked for quarterly; or picked up via minutes of steering groups (which Partnership didn’t need to go to, but always had a ‘place’ i.e. got agenda, reports, minutes and could always turn up if agenda item warranted it); or picked up via LEA committee reports etc - Partnership Manager usually responded congratulatory/with helpful queries.
- Having team attachments from partners; regularly meeting senior managers of partners, being linked into common networks – all meant that there was a series of ongoing ‘checks’ able to be made and corrective actions suggested as activities went along.

## Executive Team activity under projects CS2,3 & 4

### CS 2/3/4 – Attachment support – partners & period of time

CS2 – attachments for varying proportions of time (1 day/week to full time) for varying lengths of time (1-4 years) from:

Education Department - work with schools (well-connected and respected head teacher)  
- work with parents (LEA Officer responsible for parental engagement/family learning)

BVSC – specific attachment to build ‘core skills’ awareness and practice within voluntary sector activities.

Library Service – dynamic member of central Children and Young Persons team

Health Service – Senior Speech and Language Service manager attached to advise Partnership re children’s language development

CS3 – LSC – member of Access/Quality functions in TEC/LSC

Adult Education – freed someone from post to undertake service development work re ICT and adult basic skills

CS4 – LSC – development post created, and attached to Partnership, re stimulating work with employers.

### CS 2/3/4 - Strategic networking & influencing

The various attachees were, because of their employment position, already keyed in to for working groups, team meetings, planning processes, away-days etc within their own networks and organisations. This gave us the matrix of influence with (and on) the Board, with Senior Managers, and amongst key development people in partner organisations; and ensured:

(a) that ‘intelligence’ reached the Partnership down various routes as a way of cross referencing which developments were really needed, had strategic support etc.

(b) that their role in stretching partners to go that bit faster/deeper/wider was repeated in a variety of ways.

### CS 2/3/4 - Problem analysis and evidence development

- This was really part of the thinking (often back in the Partnership office, alongside the co-ordinator, alongside attachees from other organisations that they would not normally test ideas out with) that arise from the networking activities described in the above paragraph and led on to the activity design described below.
- There was also some commissioning of short-term exploratory ‘what if’ activities to test out ways forward (‘What if we take the best evidence-based bits re engaging parents and constructed them into one model and tried it out in more than 40 schools?’ ‘What if, in addition to the national strategy, schools were asked to suggest their ‘own solutions for under £600’ that would produce noticeable leaps in attainment for groups of underachieving pupils in the particular context of their own school?’ etc).

**CS 2/3/4 - Activity design, and appraisal**

Bringing ideas, initial proposals etc to the ‘team’, and then going back into own organisation with a wider view of what was possible, enabled others in their organisation to draw up more feasible, better thought-through activity proposals – which made my appraisal role that much clearer (much of the issue around project appraisal in general is that it collapses into using the appraisal process to teach people how to write better proposals).

**CS 2 - Project management and corrective action**

The networking, information exchange, cross referencing etc, described above, often meant that there was a close understanding and knowledge by team members of what was/was not happening re progress of the agreed activities i.e. didn’t have to wait for end of quarter monitoring to discover that all was not well. Corrective action could be out in place via team members’ day-to-day normal working – only in 1 or 2 exceptional cases was a letter needed from this office as a formal warning that things needed to be addressed.

## Appendix Toolkit of techniques & approaches

### Table of contents for toolkit

The toolkit is divided into three main sub sections. These are:

**What are we going to achieve?** in which there are examples of the strategic management tools and techniques used by the CSDP.

**How do we plan to achieve the changes?** in which there are examples of the activity planning & management tools and techniques used by the CSDP.

**How are we going to make sure that everyone is kept on track?** in which there are examples of the scheme-wide management and co-ordination tools and techniques used by the CSDP.

### Health warning

- Some of the tools and techniques (e.g. the business planning) will be relevant under several of the sub sections, although they only appear in one;
- The examples are included to illustrate what the CSDP has found effective – we recommend that you treat them as thinking tools and techniques that you can adapt to fit your circumstances best.

What needs to change? <i>Tools &amp; techniques</i>
Systems and policy tracking
Vision
Development framework
Annual report
Floor targets

### Systems change analysis

What could you use this for?
------------------------------

- tracking changes in policies
- interpreting (in advance of the changes) what *might / will be* the changes of national policy
- local application of national changes, *and*
- local application of what is known about what works best
- systems' focus (where are the blockages and shortcomings in the existing systems which are preventing progress on the outcomes?)

**National policy**

<b>Core Skills Development Partnership Project</b>	<b>National policy context at the establishment of the scheme</b>	<b>National policy changes during the life of the scheme</b>	<b>Consequences of these changes in national policy for the scheme</b>
<b>CS 1</b>			
<b>CS 2</b>			
<b>CS 3</b>			
<b>CS 4</b>			

**Local mainstream systems**

<b>Core Skills Development Partnership Project</b>	<b>Local systems – development priorities at the outset of the scheme</b>	<b>Local systems – changes in development priorities during the scheme</b>	<b>Current (2003/4) priorities for change in local systems</b>
<b>CS 1</b>			
<b>CS 2</b>			
<b>CS 3</b>			
<b>CS 4</b>			

**The Vision - example of working version (from 2002)**

Performance criteria	Baseline (1996)	Position (2002)	Anticipated outcome (by 2004)	Notes re key tasks still to be done
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>adults and young people have adequate literacy/numeracy skills to be able to participate in community, social and economic activity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>low baselines and KS2</li> <li>lower than national level at Yr 4/KS1</li> <li>low KS3/4</li> <li>long tail of underachievement</li> <li>wide gap between groups</li> <li>lower than national average – adult basic skills levels</li> <li>little shared view of adequacy</li> <li>literacy/numeracy levels seen as outcomes from school processes not inputs into community/social/ economic processes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Literacy/numeracy seen as key strategic theme</li> <li>Sense of progress having been made, with much still to be done</li> <li>‘3 year’ thinking in some partners – but as written ‘plans’ rather than implementation commitments</li> <li>focus on outcomes; but also more view of literacy/numeracy as prerequisite for wider processes – no real plans to embed these</li> </ul>	<p>2004 targets met or exceeded at:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> baseline</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> KS1 (L2+)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> KS2 (L4+)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> KS3 (L5+)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> GCSE English/Maths (adult target?) at Level 1 &amp; 2</li> </ul> <p>Strategic drives in place to meet any stretched targets at 2005 and beyond</p>	<p>Needs adult targets</p> <p>Needs pre 16 strategy network and post 16 strategy network</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>adults in employment have levels of communication/numeracy to do work tasks well and see opportunities for self-development</li> </ul>	<p>employers and core skills – from household survey – employers identify need, but no substantial processes in place to meet these needs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Getting into ‘capillaries’ of SMEs still a challenge</li> <li>Data on progress through work with employees hard to quantify</li> <li>Work with 3,900 employees</li> </ul>	<p>Basic skills support part of normal business support processes</p> <p>Number of employees worked with exceeds 5,000 per year</p>	<p>Needs benchmarks of what levels might be needed and estimates of volume (linked to LSC ‘up a level’)</p>

Performance criteria	Baseline (1996)	Position (2002)	Anticipated outcome (by 2004)	Notes re key tasks still to be done
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>employers and employees recognise a shared responsibility for continuing development of communication/number skills of employees and the workplace</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>few employers engaged in this work</li> <li>spasmodic/fragmentary work</li> <li>'one company at a time' approach</li> <li>only work is mainly with 1 or 2 large companies (Rover; Cadbury) – and then only spasmodic and with small sections of workforce; opportunities not seen as part of employee/company development (i.e. seen as 'remedial work')</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work moved beyond company by company; small numbers – basis of whole system model of work with employers</li> <li>Structural elements of model (work via Trade Unions; work to boost intermediaries etc)</li> <li>Large numbers/systems wide work seen as 'on the horizon' and do-able</li> </ul>	<p>Number of companies = ? (tbc)                      Number of SMEs = ? (tbc) (by sector)</p> <p>Employers 'buy in' to support services in substantial numbers</p> <p>Some mechanisms in place for setting indicative targets for basic skills levels of employed people</p>	<p>Needs benchmark of how many employers (and number of employees)</p> <p>Local structural mechanisms secured and aligned with national drive</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>those seeking employment have essential communication and number skills for employability</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>large numbers of young unemployed lack basic skills</li> <li>no plan to improve levels via 14-25 programmes</li> <li>little/no coherence 14-25; 'New Start' about to begin</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Collaborative proposals for alternative curriculum</li> <li>Learning Gateways established; good targeting of specific groups</li> <li>Few connections between different processes – leads to re-screening and little progress</li> <li>14-25 partners known and work together</li> <li>Plan to improve basic skills via New Deal etc</li> </ul>	<p>Targets set and met for each structural programme</p> <p>Smooth transitions (in meeting basic skills learning needs) between 'slices' of structural programmes</p> <p>System in place for setting indicative targets for basic skills levels of unemployed people</p>	<p>Needs benchmark of numbers of young people at levels and targets for improvement (by programme or by provider?)</p>

*Evaluation of the Core Skills Development Partnership  
Part 3 planning for outcomes – how to guide and toolkit (October 2004)*

<b>Performance criteria</b>	<b>Baseline (1996)</b>	<b>Position (2002)</b>	<b>Anticipated outcome (by 2004)</b>	<b>Notes re key tasks still to be done</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>pupils leave school having reached highest achievement levels in literacy/numeracy and confident with IT support for these</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>low levels of GCSE English/Maths (~19%?)</li> <li>no credible alternatives</li> <li>'one off projects' approach on basis of personal contact with no impact beyond few pupils in 1 or 2 schools</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Basic skills seen as central to all proposals</li> </ul>	<p>Basic skills part of 14-19 policy group</p> <p>LEA's PSA target/floor targets met</p>	<p>Test mapping of 'menu' to 'need'</p> <p>? how well do solutions align with problems?</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>children, young people and adults see themselves as able to be readers, writers, communicators in range of ways</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>12,000 of young people from target groups use library (25% meg)</li> <li>no development activities beyond library summer activity</li> <li>contact with writers; children as writers not in plans</li> <li>'reactive' approaches (worries re numbers of particular community who do not use library)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>23,850 young people from target groups (34% meg)</li> <li>Reader development models (Year of Reading/ Reading groups/SfW etc) but not connected, not mainstream</li> <li>Proactive outreach seen as key practice model</li> <li>Around 10 contacts with writers</li> <li>writing development proposals via library; CiFC; EBP etc but no implementation</li> </ul>	<p>Benchmarks (yet to be set for 2004/5) met or exceeded</p>	<p>Write up and repackage 'readership' and 'writership'</p> <p>Benchmarks set</p> <p>Counting mechanisms?</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>there is a strong culture of reinvesting literacy/numeracy skills for the benefit of others</li> </ul>	<p>small scale recruitment of parent volunteers in some areas: no clear links to literacy/numeracy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Scheme to recruit volunteers via library service and place in schools</li> <li>Two additional voluntary schemes in Birmingham</li> <li>Support materials, via</li> </ul>	<p>Target of 400 new adult volunteers per year is exceeded</p> <p>Coherent structure for schools to get volunteers</p>	<p>Placing all volunteering and businesses via 1 'portal' (EBC) all volunteering and community via BVSC?</p>

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Part 3 planning for outcomes – how to guide and toolkit (October 2004)*

<b>Performance criteria</b>	<b>Baseline (1996)</b>	<b>Position (2002)</b>	<b>Anticipated outcome (by 2004)</b>	<b>Notes re key tasks still to be done</b>
		BiTC, unlocking more business volunteers - Parallel processes moving closer. Original 'mechanics' need overhaul, to fit new structures - 1 or 2 areas operating in isolation from city wide developments		Funding via active community unit?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>parents are confident in own abilities to develop literacy/numeracy skills in children</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>legacy of one off projects – Bookstart/Books for Babies – with no feeling that must be built into 'layer of service'</li> <li>no focus on parents abilities to support classroom learning</li> <li>Leading to Reading campaign and preschool activity – but resulting in disconnected activities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bookstart nationally funded</li> <li>Layers of service – Bookstart/Flying Start/etc give potential for unified 0-5 support – but not universally acted upon</li> <li>Some other processes yet to be built into framework</li> <li>Nurseries/day nurseries worked with</li> <li>Inspire established as successful vehicle</li> </ul>	Period 2003-2004:  Reaching up to or >50% of parents of children 0-10 i.e. >65,000 parents  Parent work firmly structured into main programmes  Coherent and consistent messages going via different routes	Focus on language Writing  Adviser areas Bilingual/ESOL families
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>levels of literacy, numeracy and IT skills in Birmingham increase to exceed national target levels for pupils at Key Stages 1-4, and for adults</li> </ul>	Birmingham below national levels at all stages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>At Baseline, KS1, KS2, KS3, and GCSE Birmingham improving faster than national average i.e. coming up to near national - but still below that level</li> <li>For adults: low numbers</li> </ul>	Birmingham exceeds national levels at all stages  Comparable data available for Birmingham and other areas. Substantial inroads being	Detailed disaggregation of Birmingham cf: core cities cf: national  Needs mechanisms and

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<b>Performance criteria</b>	Baseline (1996)	Position (2002)	Anticipated outcome (by 2004)	Notes re key tasks still to be done
		participating and achieving; no standardisation; little impact in overall numbers 'in the pot'	made into total of adults with basic skills needs  Possible, aspirational 'floor targets' set for neighbourhoods	agreements around this –and link to Neighbourhood renewal

**Development Framework – working version from 2002**

Performance criteria	Baseline (1996)	Position in 2002	Anticipated outcome (by 2004)	Notes
<b>Strategic Elements:</b>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>links to the implementation of broader strategies</li> </ul>	literacy/numeracy just beginning to be recognised as a ‘strategic theme’ worth developing; history of fragmentary projects; idiosyncratic approaches <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- no connection to partners/national strategies (and these strategies often themselves missing)</li> <li>- little/no connected development across agencies – no ‘whole system’ approach to literacy/numeracy development</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work has fed into, and aligned with National literacy and numeracy primary strategies</li> <li>References made to Core Skills in a range of strategies – but unclear how far here is real dynamic between basic skills and these strategies</li> <li>Cross agency planning re Under 5s; 14-19; family literacy/numeracy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>One or two clear strategies identified that can still be driven forward by improving basic skills</li> <li>Others have tacit recognition of support played by improved basic skills</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sift out ‘real strategic linkages</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>adds value to mainstream activities by improving the quality and diversity of opportunities</li> </ul>	funding for development often required ‘innovation’; discouraged work that enhanced mainstream activity. Legacy of ‘retrenchment’ – little ‘development’ capacity (in terms of skills; resources or ‘will to improve’)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support sits behind partners plans (80%?) and also pushes partners further (20%?)</li> <li>Partners not seeing development as changing their mainstream – too much thinking still structured as ‘bids’ etc</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Partnership actively influence how partners deploy own budgets</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>‘hearts and minds’ job?</li> <li>Make 3 year ‘shifts’ explicit</li> </ul>

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<b>Performance criteria</b>	<b>Baseline (1996)</b>	<b>Position in 2002</b>	<b>Anticipated outcome (by 2004)</b>	<b>Notes</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>focuses on the needs of specific client groups, especially at identified critical transition times</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>little work being done on segmentation; differentiation; transition (except via guidance and record transfer re special needs)</li> <li>targeting work based on basis of failing organisation</li> <li>little/no use made of data, about existing/planned levels of performance, as basis for planning and development</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Good differentiated school data</li> <li>'ragged' adult data</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Robust, disaggregated data used to direct 'next step' developments</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Get more refined data and more robust data</li> <li>Challenge partners re 'gaps'</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>trains staff in appropriate ways of embedding basic and key skills in a wide range of mainstream programmes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>training undertaken with &gt;100 staff across all partners</li> <li>training linked more to special activity, less to mainstream activity</li> <li>little use of non traditional methods/models</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Trained staff in all schools</li> <li>All staff in colleges, adult education, private training providers etc trained in new adult standards and curriculum</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Trained staff in other organisations (health, probation, housing etc)</li> <li>All staff in alternative/support/complementary programmes trained</li> <li>All school and fe staff trained</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Needs structural routes into health?</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>enhances the existing professional development of staff to create whole-organisation approaches to core skills development</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>little activity outside classroom/learning situation</li> <li>professional development seen as individual employee development in own work setting; no 'whole package' work to lift level of operation of organisation/systems</li> <li>little analysis of what really works, and even less management commitment to</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Schools have whole organisation approach</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Whole company approaches</li> <li>All main structural organisations have 'whole organisation' basic skills systems in place</li> <li>Work completed via 100 voluntary/community organisations</li> <li>Work underway via networks/dispersed</li> </ul>	

*Evaluation of the Core Skills Development Partnership  
Part 3 planning for outcomes – how to guide and toolkit (October 2004)*

<b>Performance criteria</b>	<b>Baseline (1996)</b>	<b>Position in 2002</b>	<b>Anticipated outcome (by 2004)</b>	<b>Notes</b>
	build this in everywhere		systems	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>sustains the changes long-term by creating new ways of working that become independent of on-going financial support</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>approach is to seek ongoing, repeat funding to continue 'project' work</li> <li>restricted longer term sense of where Birmingham wants to be</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Work with schools/fe is changing ways of working</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Idea in place re work with employees and with voluntary sector organisations – but not structurally there in practice</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Still some 'project' thinking</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> This principle of real changed ways of working endorsed in future rounds of regeneration support</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> List examples of 'project' thinking and focus on shifting the</li> </ul>
<b>Activity/operational elements</b>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>is structured not just on pilots but on activity that has impact on whole structures</li> </ul>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>increases multi-agency approaches and joint planning, with differing roles clearly defined</li> </ul>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>assists organisations to identify what creates success and to make this the norm</li> </ul>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>has some targeting</li> </ul>				

*Evaluation of the Core Skills Development Partnership  
Part 3 planning for outcomes – how to guide and toolkit (October 2004)*

<b>Performance criteria</b>	<b>Baseline (1996)</b>	<b>Position in 2002</b>	<b>Anticipated outcome (by 2004)</b>	<b>Notes</b>
based on need, without defining people/organisations as failing				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>expands the use of appropriate technologies to accelerate learning</li> </ul>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>supports assessment and target setting, based upon disaggregated, reliable information</li> </ul>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>increases the volume of voluntary activity</li> </ul>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>contributes to planned outputs and contributes towards longer-term outcomes</li> </ul>				

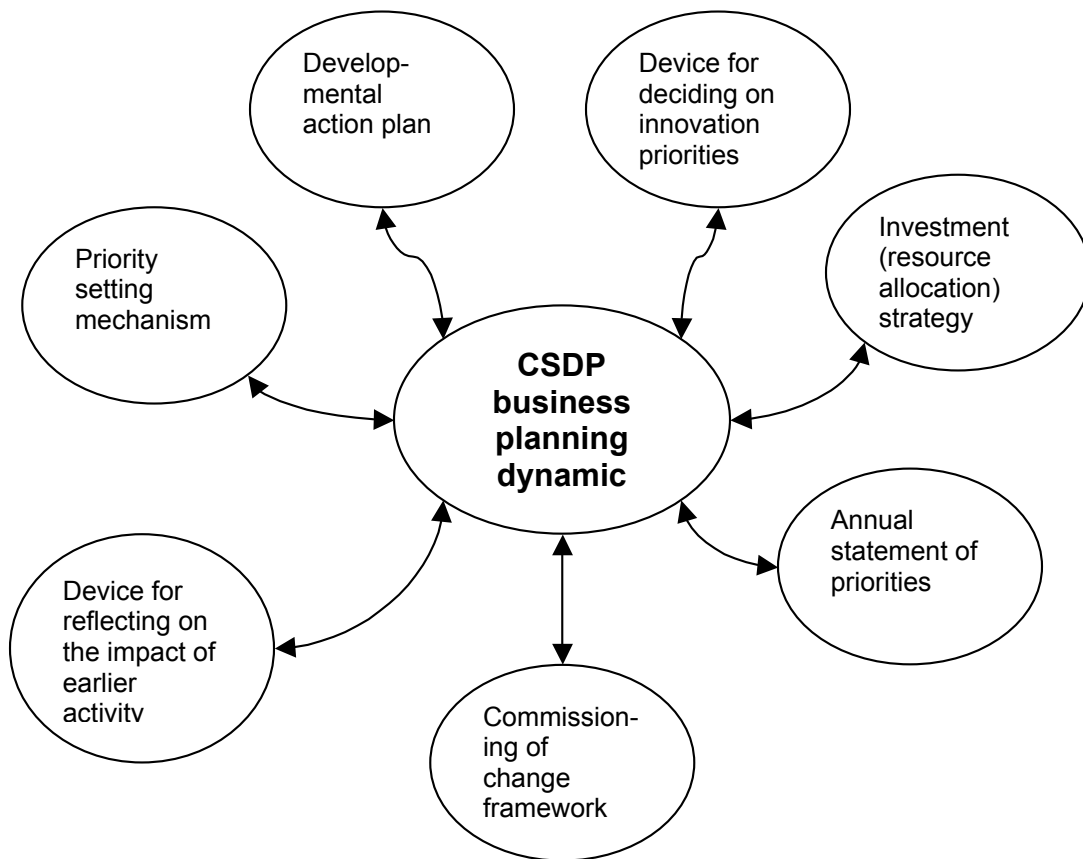
<b>How do we plan to achieve the changes?</b> <i>Tools &amp; techniques</i>
Annual report
Business Plan
Baselines
Target setting

## Business Planning system

The business planning system (critical to the strategy development, management and activity development systems) is described and analysed in this sub section. Essentially, the business planning as practised by the CSDP was a combination of

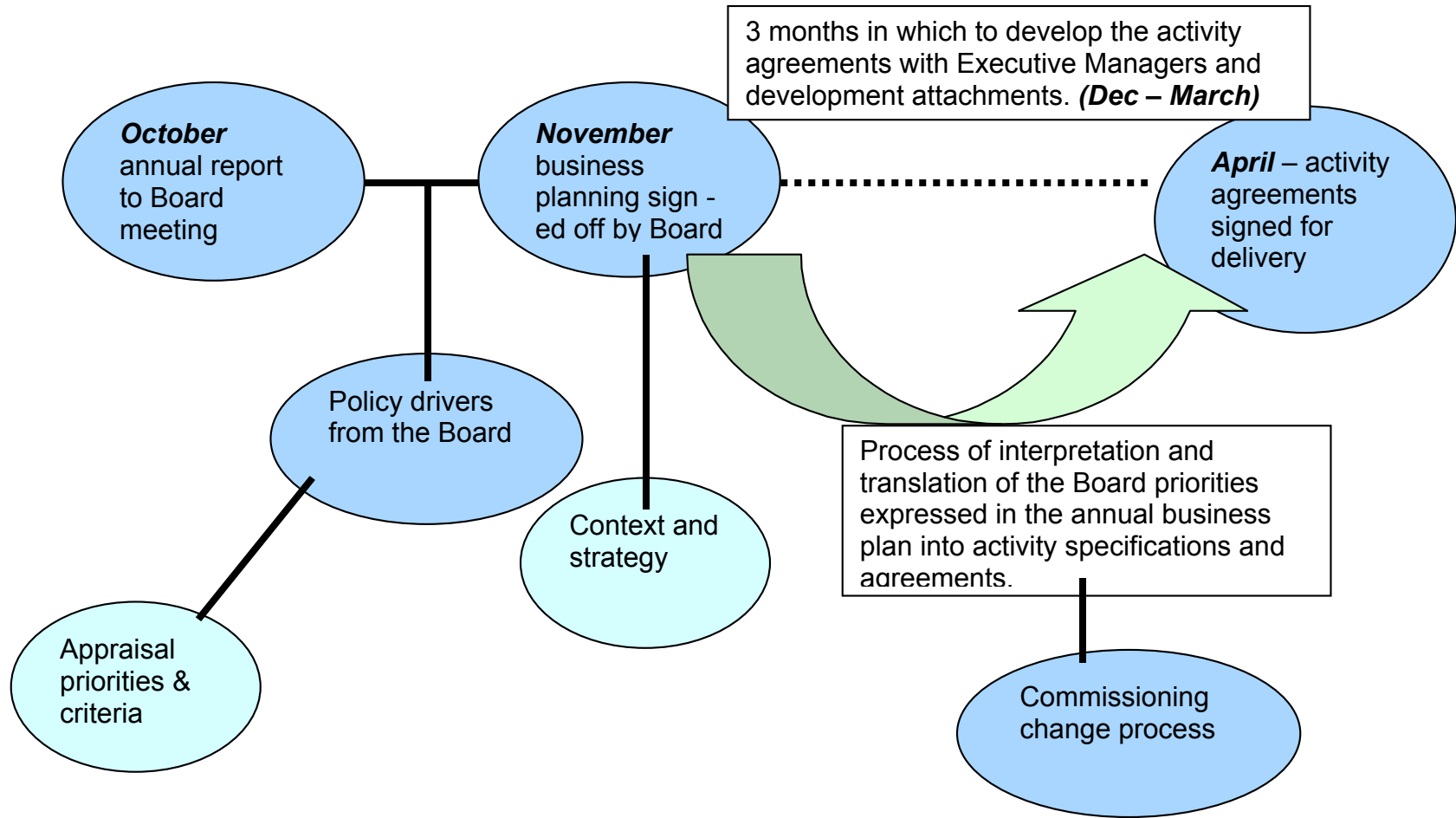
- Developmental action plan
- Priority setting mechanism
- Device for reflecting on the impact of earlier activity
- Device for deciding on innovation priorities
- Investment (resource allocation) strategy
- Commissioning framework
- Annual statement of priorities

The process was a mechanism through which collective thinking took place amongst the partners, so that there was a highly topical linking together of the activities of the CSDP and the institutional plans of the partners themselves.



In practice, the business planning process is a planning model rather than a scheduled set of activities. The factors in the diagram above inter-play with one another during the October – December phase of the annual activity planning cycle for the CSDP, during which time the following stages are worked through:

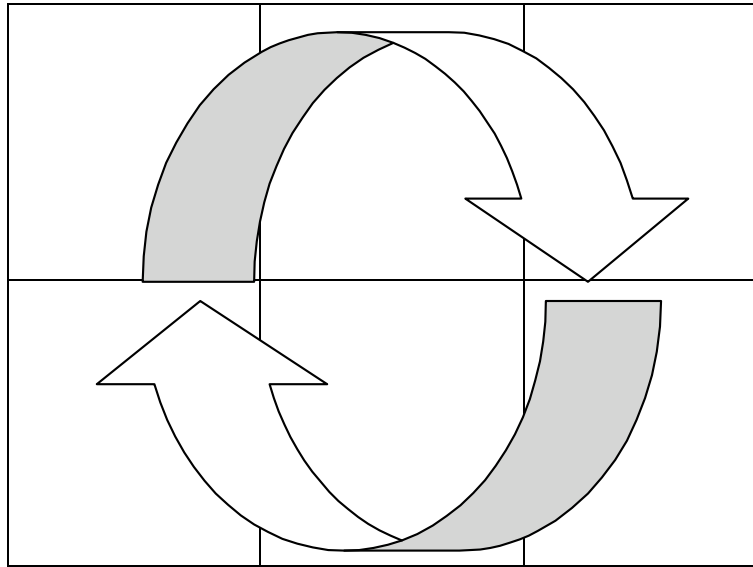
- Annual report on progress against last year's business plan
- Debate amongst Board over lessons from annual report, new developments in the operating context, and priorities for next planning period
- Development of draft of annual business plan for the next year, in order to provide the framework for the development of activity agreements
- Signing off of the annual business plan
- Development of activities, ending in the issuing of activity agreements in the following April



<b>What are we going to do? Tools &amp; techniques</b>
Activity proposals
Activity development
Activity appraisal
Activity agreements
Re-profiling

## Activity development process

The activity development and commissioning process was a cycle (both annually through the Business Planning, and shorter term, during the year). On the evidence of the assessment of activity managers, learning took place *during the journey*: adjustments in detail of activity design and implementation being made during the life cycle of the business plan. The scheme co-ordinator actively re-profiled activities on a quarterly basis.



**The interviewees did not discuss a particular model for outcome related planning.** This model<sup>10</sup> approach (in which the process of development *cycles round* the various stages of the model) is an accurate depiction of the process of development that under-pinned the business planning model (described earlier) and the activity development process.

It is critical to note that this process of review, development and priority setting, took place annually at the strategic level (through the October – December business planning process) and annually (at the activity level through the December – April activity agreement process).

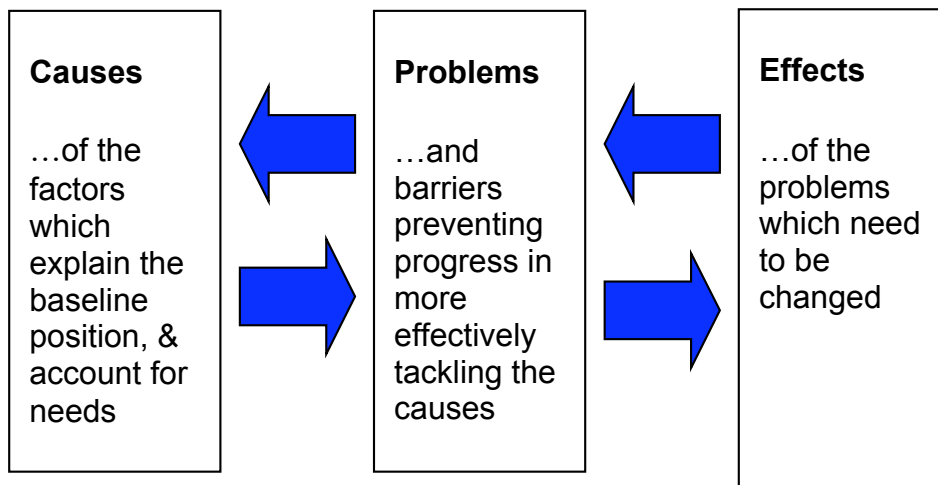
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<sup>10</sup> The model that follows is adapted from the terminology and stages of Project Cycle Management, which is currently popular within Area Based Initiatives like New Deal for Communities.

In both the strategic and activity annual review processes, principles of both design and *Re*-design were followed.

<p><b>Policy context and priorities</b> – the strategic case for making a difference</p> <p><u>Business planning process</u></p>	<p><b>Identification</b> – the causes we want to focus on, the problems we want to tackle</p> <p><u>Business planning process</u></p>	<p><b>Formulation</b> – the possible solutions to the problem – narrowing the focus</p> <p><u>Business planning / priority setting</u></p>
<p><b>Evaluation</b> – learning what works – feeding this into the future of this programme</p> <p><u>Annual reporting</u></p>	<p><b>Implementation</b> – pre set up, set up, management, monitoring and corrective action etc</p> <p><u>Activity management &amp; re-profiling</u></p>	<p><b>Commitment and financing</b> – the process of investment appraisal – double checking the “return”</p> <p><u>Activity agreements</u></p>

It appears as though the business planning and activity planning processes within the CSDP were designed to address systems’ change wherever possible in tackling causes, rather than problems, or effects.



<b>How are we going to make sure that everyone is kept on track?</b> <i>Tools &amp; techniques</i>
Board membership and agenda
Senior managers membership and agenda
Attachment protocols
Reporting exemplars
Bulletins