



CORPORATE AND TRANSACTIONAL

Lincolnshire Networking Partnership

Background

The Lincolnshire Networking Partnership (LNP) was formed in 1998 in order to develop the availability of electronic access to public services for all sectors of the community.

Within LNP, the Lincolnshire Public Sector Working Group (PSWG) was formed in October 2001 with the following terms of reference:

- To develop initiatives for joint delivery of service recognising the need to support multiple, seamless delivery channels
- To put in place project proposals to support these, including the preparation of the appropriate business case
- To seek sources of funding and resourcing
- To seek both public and private sector partners to aid delivery

- To report proposals and suggested projects to a Joint Steering Board for agreement/information
- To manage the development and implementation of projects associated with the delivery of the e-government agenda.

The PSWG's main objective is to develop the provision of one-stop seamless public services to the customers and residents of Lincolnshire.

Improvement through efficiency



East Midlands

emce.gov.uk

Partnership Aims

The partnership aims to:

- Develop a clear strategic framework for information and internet services in Lincolnshire
- Define clear objectives which partners are prepared to fund
- Focus on resources and reducing duplication
- Inter-work through the use of standard technology
- Share experience and information to derive service and business benefit
- Leverage additional funding from various sources including Government and Europe
- Identify which areas of information or service, are not being addressed.

In June 2002 the Partnership was awarded £600,000 Round 1 Local Government Online (LGOL) funding to develop an electronic gateway for Lincolnshire. The Partnership was also awarded a further £50,000 in order to develop an appropriate business plan for the project and to develop the partnership further.

In May 2003 the Partnership was awarded additional funding of £500,000 (in LGOL) to support the following partnership projects:

- Customer Relationship Management (CRM) Integration
- Development of common e-forms
- Telephony Integration between partners.

Development of all the projects was completed by the deadline of March 2004. The entire LGOL grant was used to finance the one-off capital costs of the projects with partners financing all ongoing costs and certain additional capital expenditure.

The PSWG partnership is a member of the East Midlands e-Government Partnership, partner authorities include:

- Boston Borough Council
- East Lindsey District Council
- Lincolnshire County Council
- City of Lincoln Council
- North Kesteven District Council
- South Holland District Council
- South Kesteven District Council
- West Lindsey District Council
- Lincolnshire Police
- Lincolnshire Health Services

Formal Partnership Agreement

In June 2003, each partner signed a formal Partnership Agreement to demonstrate their commitment to the implementation of the above projects and their commitment to examine the merits of any other projects that may in the future be considered.

Issues raised through partnership working and how they have been managed

Financial/Funding

All financial/funding issues have been managed by the governance structure which was created before the commencement of any of the projects. This was backed up by a formal partnership agreement.

Governance

The change programme has been managed at officer level by the PSWG, attended directly by the officer e-Champion from each partner. The PSWG gave delegated responsibility to a Project Board for guiding the overall project on a day to day basis. A member Steering Board consisting of the member e-Champion from each partner has provided guidance for the implementation and the overall change required in partner organisations.

Each partner also recognised that a full time Partnership Co-ordinator was required to implement the project and manage the change. Each partner contributed to the funding for this position.

Partners have been responsible for implementing any changes required within their organisation, although standard procedures were written for the key business processes.

Relationships

It was important to develop a common vision for each project that was shared by all partners. It was also agreed that all projects must take account of a number of technology and business related constraints:

- To increase the probability of successfully achieving its objectives, provide a strong foundation for increased partnership working, and ensure that future projects run under a simple and flexible operational framework
- Not to constrain the e-Government agendas of individual partners
- Recognise existing technology investments and integrate into existing and planned infrastructures
- Maintain the local identity of partners
- Provide differing entry points to allow some partners to adopt additional functionality whilst allowing other, more constrained, partners to adopt this at a later date
- Facilitate the joint desire to make a significant step forward and recognise the opportunities for realising significant economies of scale.

The partnership consider the following points have been conducive to a good working relationship between partners:

- Encourage full participation by all partners
- Shared management of the programme
- Each partner specifies their success factors and ensures that these are achieved
- Detailed plan for each project highlighting where partner input is required
- Development of a clear business case
- Joint ownership of an issue and risk log
- Effective communication between partners.

Continuance of Partnership beyond 31 July 2004

The Steering Board agreed that the existing partnership infrastructure represented the preferred way forward to deliver outcomes in priority areas that demand an integrated or joined-up approach. It was agreed that the published Priority Service Outcomes (PSO) defined by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) and meeting PSO targets should provide a focus for future working by the partnership. The partnership therefore explored and agreed areas for joint development.

Staff resources to co-ordinate the planning and implementation of these projects and drive the projects forward was required. The Steering Board therefore agreed to extend the contract of the Partnership Co-ordinator and to fund the position from partner contributions as in the past. The Partnership Co-ordinator is therefore responsible for the ongoing tasks that are not of a day-to-day nature.

Revenue sources to develop the agreed projects were considered. Each partner agreed to contribute towards feasibility studies in the agreed projects.

Solutions in the future will allow partners to adopt a more flexible approach to joint working. This will allow some partners to move forward, in smaller groups, faster than others, and would allow all partners to participate at their own pace. Experience from the projects already completed show that best progress is made where a small number of partners develop a proof of concept and a model that can be used by other partners.

The following thirteen projects were agreed as priority areas for future development:

→ **Government Connect**

All partners require a system to uniquely identify a citizen electronically. A working group is in place to undertake a feasibility study into the use of Government Connect.

→ **Build on the work undertaken on the CRM integration project by developing county wide services**

The existing working group will move this project forward to share further service requests with other partners joining as they procure CRM systems.

→ **e-Procurement**

There is an opportunity for partners to share a marketplace and savings could be made by the partners on the bulk purchasing of utilities

→ **Joint Marketing of e-Government including LincUp, Broadband, Online payments**

This is being done through the County's press officers.

→ **Enhancement of LincUp**

It is planned to add additional services by establishing integration with external agencies.

→ **Monitoring of the National projects**

The partnership will continue to monitor the national projects and share knowledge.

→ **Dissemination of partner projects**

Partners continue to update each other on their progress in meeting the e-Government targets and share delivery where appropriate.

→ **Development of a common telephone directory**

A shared database containing the key service based numbers from each partner has already been created and marketed by each partner. This has allowed telephone calls to be made or transferred between partners as if dealing with internal extensions.

→ **Deep linking to join up A-Z information on all services**

Partners are working together to offer deep hyperlinks to the relevant web pages of the district or county council that provides the service.

→ **Smart Cards**

A project is underway to replace the library card with a smart card and look at interfaces for library, car parking, sports and leisure services and have engaged with the National Project.

→ **Procurement Card**

A project is underway to introduce a Lincolnshire Procurement Card with grant aid from the East Midlands Centre of Excellence (EMCE).

→ Shared ICT Support

e-Government will place an increasing reliance on ICT to deliver and support core services. District Councils in particular are vulnerable to the changing ICT human resources market and often rely on the knowledge of a single officer. This is a risk where the impact is growing. A project is underway to investigate the potential and options for integrating ICT support between partners. This is also funded with grant-aid from the East Midlands Centre of Excellence.

→ Local Directgov

The County portal (LincUp) is a pilot for the Local directgov programme.

Benefits and difficulties

The following benefits have been realised as a result of involvement in partnership working:

- The establishment of a network through which partners can understand, appreciate and support each other's stage of development and priorities for the future. A network where each can exchange knowledge, share good practice and promote mutual learning
- Sharing of resources to move projects of mutual benefit forward
- Additional funding and resources accessed through the partnership
- Widening of the services offered through partnership and joined up government
- Improved and more economic levels of service provision through CRM integration
- Development and implementation of e-government solutions that meets the specific needs of citizens within the County
- Improved information sharing between the two tiers of local government and a greater understanding of the differing operating environments within the other public sector bodies
- The implemented programme has resulted in more accessible services and information for the customers of Lincolnshire and provided seamless public services to the customers and residents of Lincolnshire.

The following difficulties have resulted:

- Decision making can be less timely on occasions
- Occasional difficulties in reconciling individual partner interests with the interests of the partnership as a whole
- On occasions the partnership has had to move at the speed of the slowest partner
- Competing with internal e-Government programmes for resources.

Lessons learned for the partnership

- Working in partnership works
- Effective management of the partnership building process
- Establishment of a climate of mutual respect
- It pays to find a Partnership Co-ordinator to manage the process and co-ordinate the partnership
- Be realistic
- Deal with change early by making partners aware of what is planned and when
- Good ongoing communication
- Top level commitment required by all partners.

What are the key achievements of the Partnership?

- All projects developed on time and within budget
- Proved that we could work together
- Strengthened working relationship between partners
- A commitment to continue to work together to achieve common objectives
- Our excellence was acknowledged by reaching the final of the SOCITM and SOLACE Local Government IT Excellence Awards for 2004
- The partnership overcame the technical obstacles
- Development of an electronic gateway to services
- CRM Integration between pilot partners
- Voice links between each partner so that telephone calls can be made or transferred as if dealing with internal extensions
- Involvement of all partners working together to develop protocols and standards for data interchange
- Delivery of additional services electronically that challenge traditional methods of service delivery across all partners.

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