Aligning Local Public Services Framework:

A Reference for Good Practice

INTRODUCTION

1. CIPFA's publication *Aligned Local Public Services* sets out the context within which local bodies need to consider innovative ways in which to work in partnership to deliver local public services economically, effectively and efficiently. It discusses the challenges that might face local bodies in working with partners to achieve aligned local public service delivery. The publication also refers to tools that are available to assist local authorities and partners to assess how well they are managing the move to aligning local public service delivery.[1] CIPFA has developed this guide to supplement those tools. It will help local bodies understand where they are on a spectrum ranging from the first steps they are taking to understand the local delivery landscape through to fully aligned local public service delivery.

ALIGNING LOCAL PUBLIC SERVICES: THE FRAMEWORK EXPLAINED

2. CIPFA's framework for Aligning Local Public Services has been developed as a reference for good practice for all who work in delivering local public services. As explained in *Aligned Local Public Services*, it builds on the concepts set out in CIPFA's FM Model.

3. Throughout this guide, the term 'entity' is used to refer to individual bodies that deliver public services within the local area. They might be locally based, or they might be located outside of the immediate local delivery area. The term 'lead entity' is used to denote the entity that would ordinarily be expected to be the entity that has lead responsibility for delivering a service or providing other interventions. The term 'organisation' refers to a collaborative partnership between entities.

4. 'Securing stewardship' represents basic practice: an entity's strategy should be evidence- and insight-based; an entity should accept accountability for the Whole Place; and there should be openness and transparency in reporting its data. CIPFA encourages local entities and organisations to develop through the other levels ('supporting performance' and 'enabling transformation'). These three levels and the associated dimensions of 'strategy', 'delivery' and 'data' are explained in the next section.

THE MATRIX ANALYSIS

5. The Aligning Local Public Services framework uses the same levels as the FM model – they are well understood and form the basis for financial management assessments across the public sector. They are:

- Securing Stewardship – entities place an emphasis on control, probity, meeting regulatory requirements and accountability;

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[1] See the Acknowledgements at the end of the publication *Aligned Local Public Service Delivery* for some further reading that may be useful in deciding on an approach to assessing progress and performance.

- Supporting Performance –entities are responsive to customers, efficient and effective, and has a commitment to improving performance; and
- Enabling Transformation – entities and organisations take a strategic approach that transforms the way services and other interventions are delivered in the local area. They are customer led, future orientated, proactive in managing change and risk and receptive to new ideas.

6. The dimensions associated with aligning local public service delivery are:
   - strategy, which looks at the extent to which a local body works at a strategic level with all relevant potential partners to develop a collaborative strategic vision, with underpinning strategies for necessary deliverables that will provide sustainable outcomes set out in a strategic plan;
   - delivery, which focuses on the extent to which outcomes are delivered collaboratively where appropriate, with entities working with all relevant potential partners at an operational level. Operational plans turn the strategic vision and plan into activities, outputs and outcomes; and
   - data. Starting from the level of securing stewardship, CIPFA postulates that Whole of Government financial data (or equivalent for non-WGA entities) should be used to report financial data on outputs and outcomes.

7. CIPFA has developed a set of statements of good practice, supported by a series of questions that allow the user to look at the practical implications of good practice and help them focus on areas for improvement. They are arranged by dimension, as shown in the table below. Each level includes all aspects covered in a lower level. However, some questions may not be relevant to every user of this model and it is likely that some entities or organisations will demonstrate performance in some dimensions at a higher level than in others.

	Dimensions		
Levels	Strategy (S)	Delivery (DEL)	Data (DAT)
Securing Stewardship	S1, S2	DEL1, DEL2	DAT1, DAT2
Supporting Performance	S3, S4	DEL3, DEL4	DAT3 – DAT5
Enabling Transformation	S5, S6	DEL5 – DEL7	DAT6 – DAT8

USING THE FRAMEWORK

8. The framework is designed to be used by entity and organisational boards and leaders and those responsible for delivery at an operational level as an improvement tool to help them assess themselves against a framework of good practice. Using the framework is not mandatory. This framework is just one of a number of guides to a delivery approach that is based on outcomes or results and that recognise the need for collaboration. However, CIPFA believes the statements of good practice represent a sound benchmark against which an entity or organisation can test its approach to service delivery.

ALIGNING LOCAL PUBLIC SERVICES: the framework in summary

STRATEGY

Securing Stewardship

S1   Local bodies meet at least annually to discuss service delivery strategies for the future.

S2   Each local body takes account of other local bodies' strategies when developing its own strategy.

Supporting Performance

S3   Local bodies set complementary outcome indicators and output targets.

S4   Local bodies meet at least quarterly to assess the impact of their complementary strategies.

Enabling Transformation

S5   Strategies for the local area are jointly developed and owned by relevant partners.

S6   Strategies are based on the needs and priorities of all stakeholders and take account of lessons learned from performance evaluation.

DELIVERY

Securing Stewardship

DEL1 Each local body manages its own delivery and reviews performance internally at least each quarter.

DEL2 Local bodies meet at least annually to appraise performance over the previous year.

Supporting Performance

DEL3 Local bodies meet at least quarterly to appraise performance against outcome indicators and output indicators.

DEL4 Local bodies co-operate to resolve any service delivery issues identified in the quarterly review.

Enabling Transformation

DEL5 Services are delivered and managed using integrated mechanisms against clearly defined milestones set out in detailed operational plans.

DEL6 Delivery is monitored throughout the year against appropriate output targets and outcome indicators.

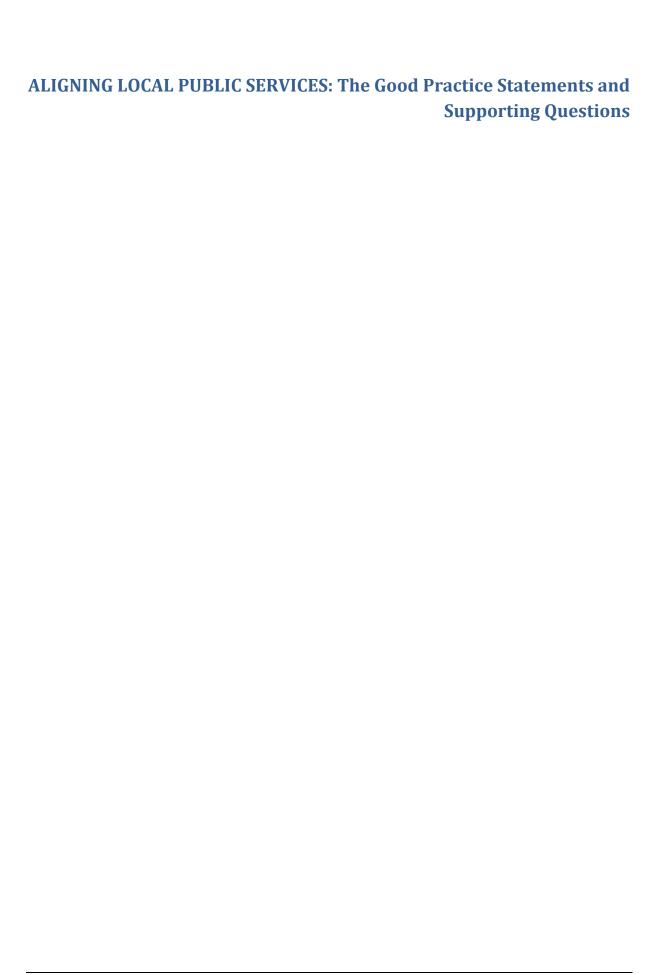DEL7 Delivery issues are resolved promptly.

DATA

Securing Stewardship

DAT1 Each local body prepares management accounts at least quarterly.

DAT2 An annual consolidated return is prepared that presents public spending in the local area by specific programmes in a way that is understandable to the general user of the information.

Supporting Performance

DAT3 Each body's reports present financial data on each strategic outcome in the context of output targets.

DAT4 Each body produces annual reports that are audited or reviewed and published within six months of the year end.

DAT5 The annual consolidated return provides financial and non-financial data on all strategic outcomes, is reviewed and published within six months of the year end.

Enabling Transformation

DAT6 Monthly reports present consolidated financial data on each strategic outcome in the context of delivery milestones and the operational plans.

DAT7 Data (both financial and non-financial) are audited or reviewed regularly and published.

DAT8 Consolidated reports covering all strategic outcomes are produced, audited or reviewed and published with the local body's own statutory accounts within three months of the year end.

ALIGNING LOCAL PUBLIC SERVICES: The Good Practice Statements and Supporting Questions

Securing Stewardship – Strategy

S1 Local bodies meet at least annually to discuss service delivery strategies for the future.

1. Has the organisation clearly identified the beneficiaries of the proposed activities?
2. Has the lead entity identified all other relevant entities that should be consulted about the entity's service delivery strategy?
3. Does the lead entity ensure that it meets at least annually with other entities to discuss service delivery strategy?
4. Are the results of the discussions documented?

Securing Stewardship – Strategy

S2   Each local body takes account of other local bodies' strategies when developing its own strategy.

1.   Does the entity have a strategic vision, clearly set out in a strategic plan?
2.   Are the strategic vision and plan written in plain English and easily understandable?
3.   Has the entity considered the strategies of other entities in developing its own strategy?
4.   Does the plan explain how the entity's strategy links with the strategies of the other entities?

Supporting Performance – Strategy

S3   Local bodies set complementary outcome indicators and output targets.

1.   Has the lead entity worked with other local entities to develop complementary outcome indicators and output targets?
2.   Do targets and performance indicators cover economic, social and environmental factors?
3.   Are targets and performance indicators clearly set out in the operational plans?

Supporting Performance – Strategy

S4 Local bodies meet at least quarterly to assess the impact of their complementary strategies.

1. Does the entity prepare reports (at least quarterly) that provide sufficient and appropriate information to allow it to assess the impact of its strategy?
2. Does the entity share this (quarterly) report with other local bodies?
3. Are the impacts assessed jointly with these other local bodies?
4. Does the joint assessment result in any changes to the strategy?
5. Does the joint assessment result in any changes to the delivery model(s)?

Enabling Transformation – Strategy

S5   Strategies for the local area are jointly developed and owned by relevant partners.

1. Has the lead entity identified a strategic route for delivering the desired outcomes?
2. Are participatory processes effective, accessible and relevant, engaging all groups?
3. Are decisions taken jointly by all partners and based on objective and rigorous analysis of the options available?
4. Do the options define realistic outcomes, based on appropriate analysis?

Enabling Transformation – Strategy

S6 Strategies are based on the needs and priorities of all stakeholders and take account of lessons learned from performance evaluation.

1. Are any lessons learned from evaluating performance against indicators in one activity incorporated into the planning for future activities where appropriate?
2. Are the views and experiences of a wide range of people and organisations of all types of background sought to inform the strategic vision and plan?
3. Are the strategic vision and plan couched in terms of the public interest, ignoring political short-termism?
4. Does the organisation demonstrate that it knows who its stakeholders are?
5. Has the organisation designed the focus of the proposed activities and will these meet beneficiaries' needs?
6. Does the organisation have a clear policy on the types of issues it will discuss with stakeholders to ensure that the services or other interventions provided are the right ones, can be delivered, and contribute to achieving the intended outcome(s)?
7. Are stakeholders, partners and staff invited to shape and share the organisation's vision, strategic aims and operational plans?
8. Do the strategic aims clearly articulate the desired outcomes to be delivered over a clearly defined period?
9. Have the views of stakeholders, partners and service users about priorities and tax implications been gathered?
10. Have conflicting interests between social, economic and environmental benefits from the outcomes or other interventions been balanced by seeking views from all groups of stakeholders and have those views been used to balance priorities?
11. Are the results of public involvement publicised and fed back to participants?
12. Does the organisation survey its stakeholders and service users to determine whether they believe that they have been consulted and listened to?

Securing Stewardship – Delivery

DEL1   Each local body manages its own delivery and reviews performance internally at least each quarter.

1.   Does the entity have detailed and robust plans for delivering the desired outcomes?
2.   Does the entity prepare reports (at least quarterly) that provide sufficient and appropriate information to allow it to assess the impact of its strategy?
3.   Does the assessment result in any changes to the entity's strategy?
4.   Does the assessment result in any changes to the entity's delivery model(s)?

Securing Stewardship - Delivery

DEL2 Local bodies meet at least annually to appraise performance over the previous year.

1. Does the lead entity ensure that it meets at least annually with other entities to appraise service delivery performance over the previous year?
2. Is the annual performance appraisal at an appropriate stage in the strategic planning cycle?
3. Does the appraisal result in any changes to the entity's strategic plan?
4. Does the appraisal result in any changes to the entity's delivery model(s)?

Supporting Performance – Delivery

DEL3   Local bodies meet at least quarterly to appraise performance against outcome indicators and output indicators.

1.   Does the entity evaluate its activities for effectiveness in delivering the planned objectives or outcomes?
2.   Does the entity prepare reports at least quarterly that provide sufficient and appropriate information to allow it to appraise performance against indicators and targets?
3.   Does the entity share this quarterly report with other local bodies?
4.   Is performance against targets and indicators appraised jointly with these other local bodies?
5.   Are entities able to challenge each other about performance against targets and indicators?
6.   Does the joint appraisal result in any changes to the entity's strategy?

Supporting Performance - Delivery

DEL4 Local bodies co-operate to resolve any service delivery issues identified in the quarterly review.

1. Has the entity identified risks to delivery and have mitigation strategies been put in place?
2. Are these risks and mitigation strategies been clearly set out in a risk register?
3. Are risks actively managed and monitored?
4. Does the joint appraisal result in any changes to the entity's risk register?
5. Are resources (people, property, money and information) shared in such a way as to promote efficient delivery?
6. Have any issues around service delivery been highlighted by the appraisal of performance against output targets of outcome indicators?
7. Have the entities taken joint action to resolve any issues?
8. Have the actions taken been successful as measured by the following quarter's performance appraisal?

Enabling Transformation – Delivery

DEL5 Services are delivered and managed using integrated mechanisms against clearly defined milestones set out in detailed operational plans.

1. Does the lead entity work with partners to achieve shared objectives or outcomes?
2. Do the lead entity's partners come from a wide range of stakeholders?
3. Are the accountabilities and responsibilities clearly allocated between partners and are those accountabilities and responsibilities communicated across partners and to stakeholders?
4. Have the lead entity and its partners created an organisation to deliver its services or other interventions?
5. Are service users involved in service design and delivery?
6. Are all new staff inducted and trained thoroughly for the roles in delivering outcomes or other interventions?
7. Has the organisation assessed the sustainability of delivered outcomes?
8. Are the funding arrangements clearly specified?
9. Does the organisation have robust planning and control cycles covering its strategic and operational plans, priorities and targets, indicators and risk management?
10. Does the organisation have robust decision making mechanisms to ensure that outcomes can be delivered in a way that achieves value for money?
11. Does the organisation link payments to third parties to outcomes (where appropriate)?

Enabling Transformation – Delivery

DEL6 Delivery is monitored throughout the year against appropriate output targets and outcome indicators.

1. Are individuals held to account for delivery?
2. Does the organisation have the right skills mix and capabilities to deliver the outcomes or other interventions?
3. Does the organisation have appropriate HR policies to ensure that the skill mix and capabilities are maintained and developed in line with delivery needs?
4. Are the operational plans based on the strategic plan?
5. Do the operational plans set out how the desired outcomes or other interventions will be delivered?
6. Does the organisation prepare monthly reports that provide sufficient and appropriate information to allow it to appraise performance against indicators and targets?
7. Does the appraisal result in any changes to the organisation's strategy?
8. Does the appraisal result in any changes to the organisation's delivery model(s)?

Enabling Transformation - Delivery

DEL7   Delivery issues are resolved promptly.

1. Has the organisation identified risks to delivery and have mitigation strategies been put in place?
2. Are these risks and mitigation strategies clearly set out in a risk register?
3. Does the organisation's risk register reflect any risks associated with the individual entities that own or are partners in the organisation?
4. Are risks actively managed and monitored?
5. Does the monthly review result in any changes to the organisation's risk register?
6. Does the monthly review result in any changes to the risk registers held by the organisation's owners?
7. Has the monthly review highlighted any issues around service delivery?
8. Has the organisation taken prompt action to resolve any service delivery issues?
9. Have the actions taken been successful as measured by the following month's review?

Securing Stewardship – Data

DAT1   Each local body prepares quarterly management accounts.

1.   Does the entity demonstrate that its financial management has an emphasis on control, probity, meeting regulatory requirements and accountability (the 'securing stewardship' financial management style in CIPFA's FM model)?

Securing Stewardship - Data

DAT2   An annual consolidated return is prepared that presents public spending in the local area by specific programmes.

1. Does the lead entity use data from Whole of Government Accounts returns to prepare an annual consolidated return for the local area that presents public spending by specific programmes?
2. Does the lead entity use easy-to-understand methods of presentation (such as bubble diagrams or pie charts) in the local area return?

Supporting Performance – Data

DAT3   Each body's quarterly reports present financial data on each strategic outcome in the context of output targets.

1.   Does the entity's quarterly report provide an analysis of the spending on each strategic outcome?
2.   Does the quarterly report on output targets?
3.   Are financial data linked to the performance against output targets?
4.   Does the entity demonstrate that its financial management is responsive to customers, efficient and effective, and has a commitment to improving performance (the 'supporting performance financial management style in CIPFA's FM model)?

Supporting Performance - Data

DAT4   Each body produces annual reports that are audited or reviewed and published within six months of the year end.

1.   Does the entity produce its annual financial reports immediately after the year end?
2.   Does the entity produce an annual report (narrative commentary on performance) immediately after the year end?
3.   Are the annual report and accounts reviewed and audited within six months of the year end?
4.   Does the entity publish its audited annual report and accounts within six months of the year end?

Supporting Performance – Data

DAT5 The annual consolidated return provides financial and non-financial data on all strategic outcomes, is reviewed and published.

1. Do the lead entity and its partners capture financial data using a common chart of accounts with consistent classifications using the United Nations Classification of the Functions of Government as set out in the Eurostat Manual on sources and methods for the compilation of COFOG Statistics or equivalent guidance?
2. Does the lead entity prepare the annual return in a way that allows readers to understand achievement against strategic outcomes?
3. Is the annual return reviewed by independent auditors?
4. IS the reviewed annual return published within six months of the year end?

Enabling Transformation – Data

DAT6   Monthly reports present consolidated financial data on each strategic outcome in the context of delivery milestones and the operational plans.

1. Has the organisation set out clear milestones and associated deliverables in the operational plans?
2. Are milestones and associated deliverables actively managed and monitored?
3. Are appropriate systems in place to manage expenditure against milestones and associated deliverables?
4. Is performance against targets evaluated at least monthly?
5. Is performance against indicators evaluated at appropriate stages of the activity and when the activity has been completed?
6. Does the organisation demonstrate that its financial management is strategic and customer led, future orientated, proactive in managing change and risk, outcome focused and receptive to new ideas (the 'enabling transformation' financial management style in CIPFA's FM model)?
7. Does the organisation collate and evaluate both financial and non-financial management information at least monthly?

Enabling Transformation – Data

DAT7   Data (both financial and non-financial) are audited or reviewed regularly and published.

1. Do the monthly reports contain all relevant financial and non-financial information to allow the reader to understand the organisation's outputs during the reporting month?
2. Do the reports enable the reader to understand what outcomes (if any) have been achieved in the month?
3. Where possible, do the reports contain information about progress towards achieving outcomes for the year to date?
4. Are the reports independently reviewed?
5. Does the organisation publish the monthly report?

Enabling Transformation – Data

DAT8 Consolidated reports covering all strategic outcomes are produced, audited or reviewed and published with the local body's own statutory accounts within three months of the year end.

1. Does the organisation publish external reports at least annually, containing financial and non-financial information?
2. Do these reports set out the outcomes that have been achieved, together with the associated resources consumed and outputs?
3. Has the information – both financial and non-financial – been independently audited or reviewed?
4. Does each local body involved with the organisation publish the organisation's annual report and accounts with its own annual report and accounts?
5. Does publication take place within three months of the year end?