



Working in partnership for partnerships

CASE STUDY: Gaining Consensus with 'Crowd Wise'

Gaining consensus can be difficult in a partnership. All partnerships, however they are structured and whatever their size, face issues of concern in relation to local sovereignty and self interest coupled with ongoing performance and financial pressures individual authorities face and the traditional challenges of two tier working places additional pressure on the ability to 'think as a collective' rather than as individual authorities. As there is no clearly defined route for partnership working, or right or wrong way to develop a Partnership, consensus needs to be reached in terms of what it is the Partnerships want to achieve (how far it want to go in terms of joint working), how the Partnership envisages getting there (in terms of resourcing, governance arrangements etc.) and how long the Partnership has to achieve its aims (is there a time limit for example, such as contract end dates). Crowd Wise (developed by the New Economics Foundation) is a participative method for taking shared decisions, producing outcomes which the participants are more likely to support or be able to live with. As a technique it helps people find common ground and avoids polarisation and is a tried and tested approach in developing policies and strategic direction and allocating budgets. The technique allows a range of options to be developed (for example options for partnership progression) and then consensus emerges through a combination of discussion and voting, with options being adapted to widen their appeal, and sometimes mergers between options occurring. Using this technique ensures that all partners are on board and a comfortable with the direction agreed, which will lead to greater trust within the partnership and greater chance of success for the partnership.

With thanks to Perry Walker (an Associate). For further information on how Crowd Wise could support your partnership please contact one of the team for an informal discussion.