PARTNERSHIPS FOR LOCAL DEVELOPMENT

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Why is partnership a fundamental feature of contemporary governance and local development policy and practice?

- **Benefits**
  - creation of a shared vision and strategy for local development resulting from….
  - joined up and inclusive local governance

- But also **potential costs**
  - ‘talking shops’
  - lack of transparency/democratic deficit

Need to ensure partnerships produce **added value**

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Added value from partnerships requires:

- The right partners
- Robust structures and working processes
- Resources
- Performance management

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Building partnership – bringing partners together.

- **Local partners** – local government councillors and officials, local development agencies, public service providers, businesses and business organisations, trade unions, local NGOs etc.

- Who are the appropriate partners? Balancing inclusiveness and efficiency
- What skills, expertise and experience will they bring?
- What contributions should they make?
- What benefits will they be looking for?

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Organising local partnerships – the ‘hard’ infrastructure

What partnership structures may be needed?

- Time-limited or permanent?
- Decision-making or advisory?

- Boards and executives
- Wider forums and assemblies
- Theme/project/task groups

- Protocols and ‘rules of engagement’

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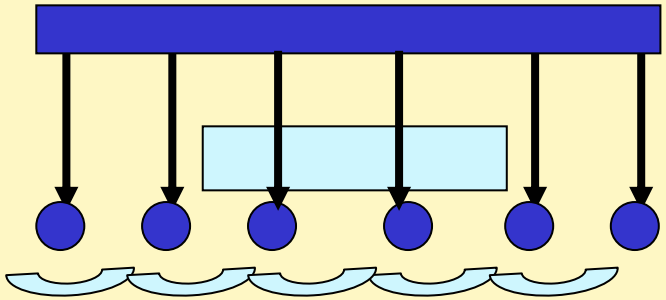
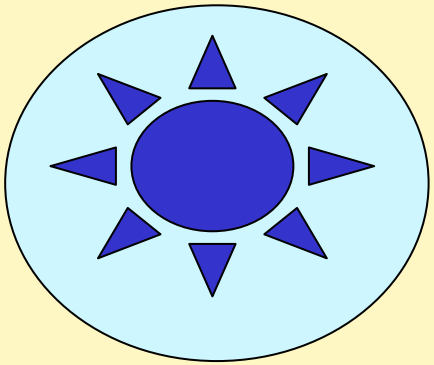
STRONG
INCLUSIVE
CONVENTION

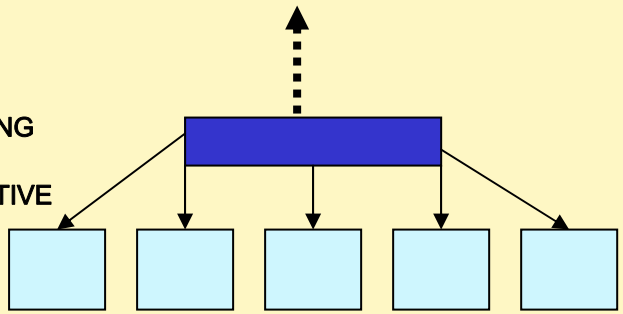


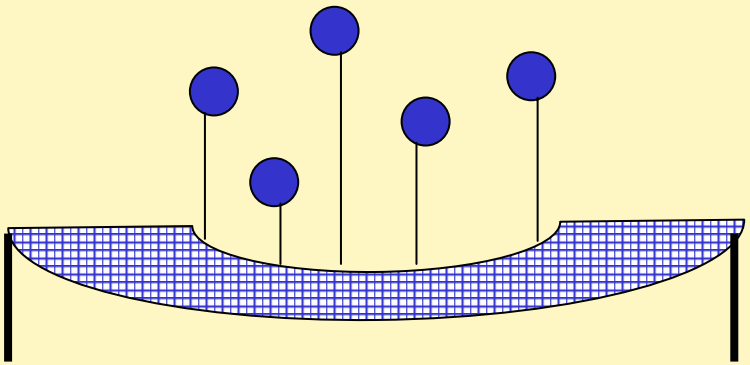


HUB AND
SPOKE

STRONG

EXECUTIVE





SAFETY NET

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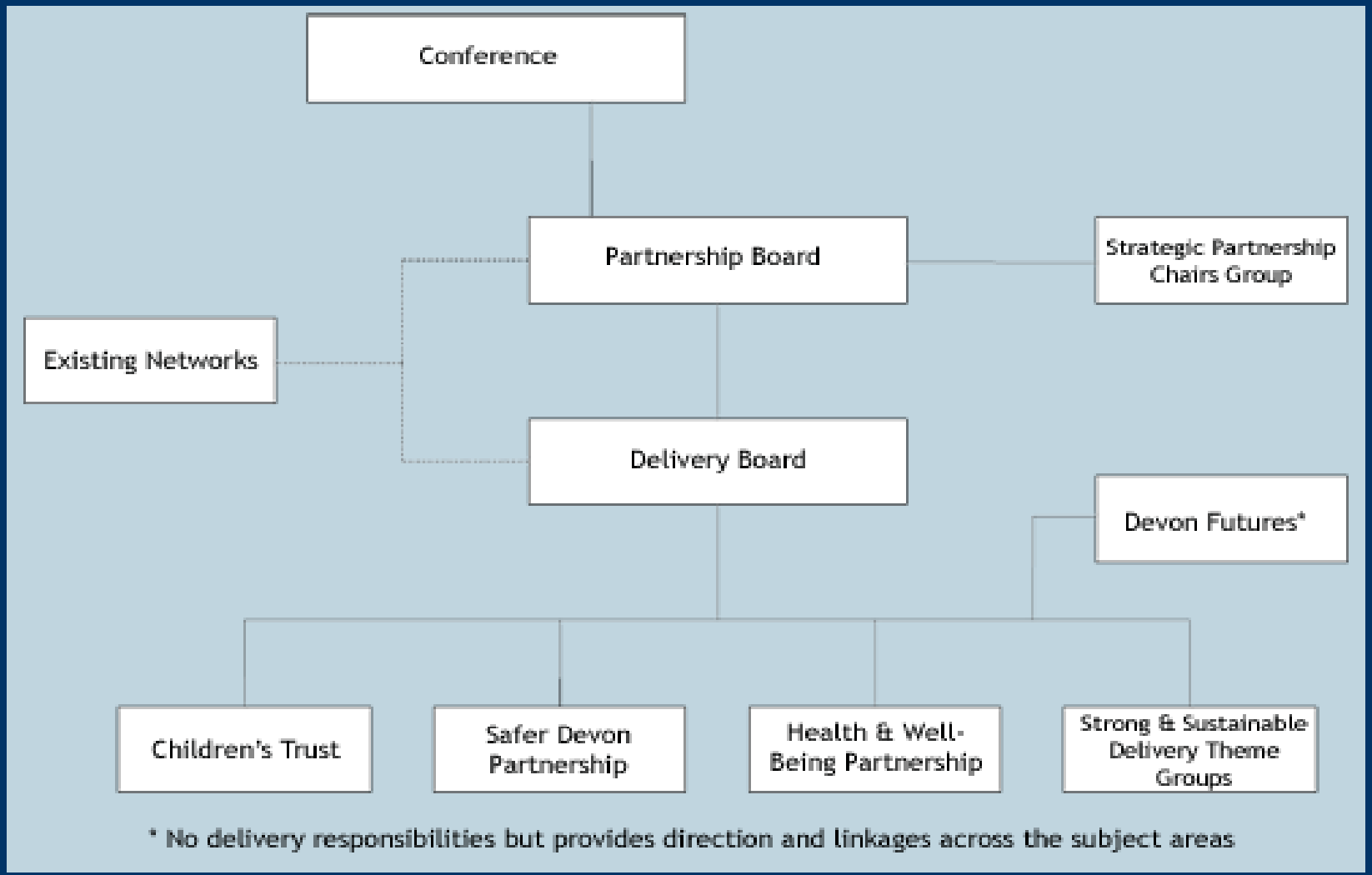

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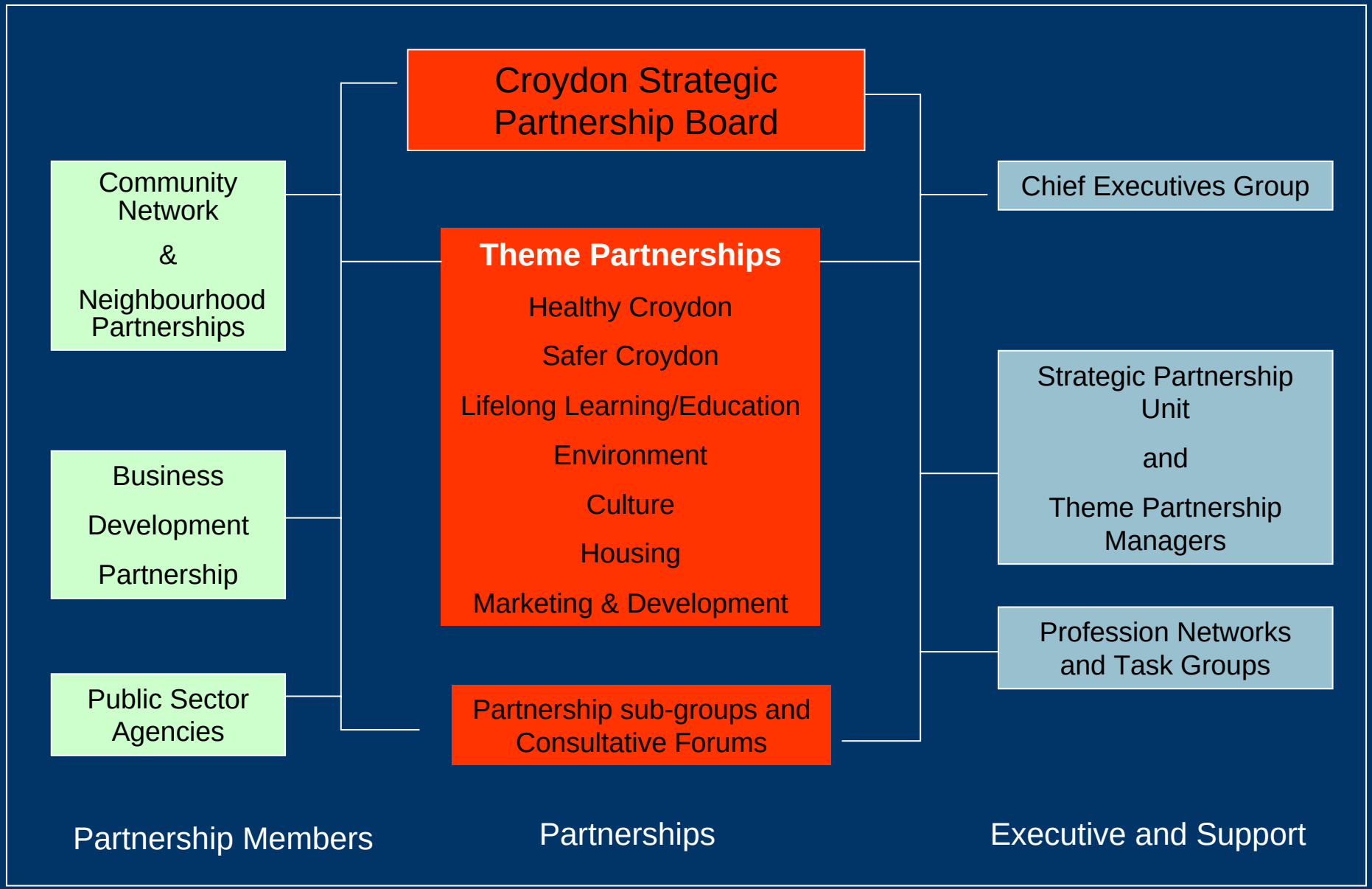

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Making the partnership work – the ‘soft’ infrastructure

- Equal partners or recognising diversity?
- Building trust and a shared perspective

- Partnership leadership
- Transparency and accountability
- Learning, development and training

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Resources for Partnership

Partnerships need resources of **staff and money**

Staff

- A partnership team
- Both managerial and technical skills – negotiation and strategy, financial and project management, evaluation

Money

- Where will resources come from?
- National and European funds
- Support from local partners – money and in kind

Is the partnership **fit for purpose**?

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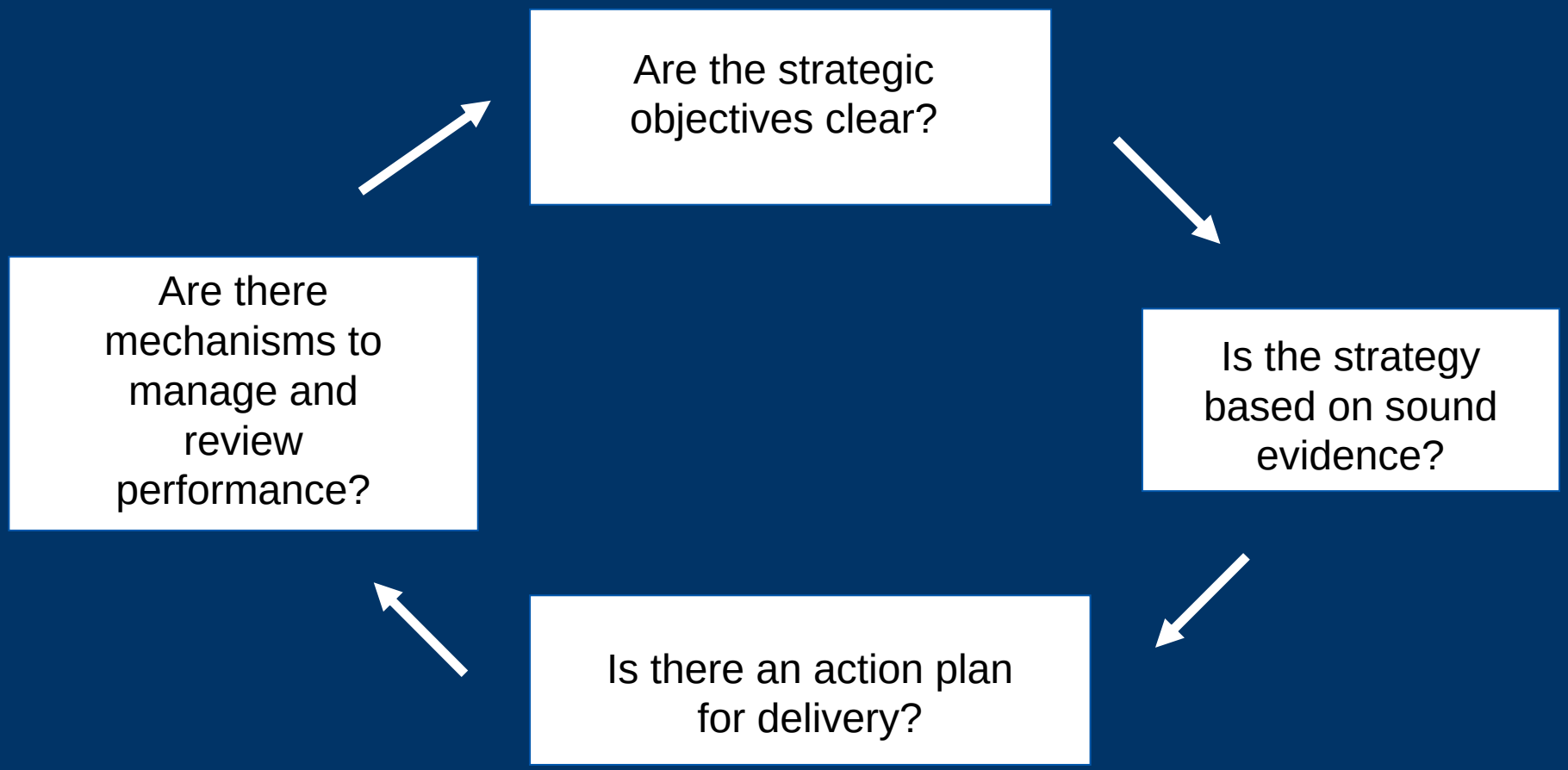
Managing performance and adding value to the local development strategy



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Strategic priorities

- Are the strategic objectives of your local development plan clear? Are local partners signed up to them?
- Is the strategy aligned with national and European strategic priorities (and funding sources)?
- How are potentially conflicting local goals reconciled?
  Economic competitiveness vs social inclusion?
  Growth vs environmental sustainability?

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Is your strategy evidence-based?

- The evidence-based approach – what works, how and why?
- Requires an evidence base linking problems, trends, baselines, targets, actions, indicators and outcomes – the 4 Ms

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Meso data on performance of businesses, public bodies

Macro data on economic and social trends

Micro data on needs and views of citizens

Managerial data on programme and project performance

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Is your action plan SMART?

Some common problems

- Unambitious or overambitious objectives and targets
- Limited relationship between problems, interventions and desired outcomes
- Poorly specified targets and indicators – and often too many

Targets and indicators contributing to the strategy should be

- **S**pecific
- **M**easurable
- **A**chievable
- **R**esourced and **R**ealistic
- Within a specific **T**ime

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Reviewing performance

Reviewing delivery

↓

Reviewing partnership working

↓

Improvement planning

↓

Evaluation

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Reviewing delivery

- To show action and progress against targets and outcomes at project and strategy level
- To provide an assessment of performance and identification of areas for improvement/adjustment

To answer questions such as:

- What resources are we putting in? What are we delivering with these resources?
- Are projects and initiatives contributing to strategic objectives?
- Are we hitting our targets? Are we doing so cost-effectively?
- Is the strategy influencing partners' and stakeholders' policies and programmes?

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Reviewing partnership working

Is the partnership fit for purpose?:

- Strategic?
- Inclusive?
- Efficient?
- Action focussed?

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Improvement planning

An improvement plan should:

- Identify key actions to deliver on targets
- Identify possible modifications to strategy or action plans
- Identify actions to improve partnership working
- Identify necessary resources

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External evaluation

- To ensure objective assessment
- Prior assessment of strategic options
- Formative evaluation of processes and progress
- Summative evaluation of outcomes and impacts

- An evaluation culture

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Conclusion – action checklist

Is your local development partnership fit for purpose?	**If not**
Are the objectives and remit of the partnership clear?	Review and clarify remit
Are the key players involved?	Review membership
Are partnership structures and working processes robust?	Adjust structures, processes, partnership culture
Does your partnership have the human and financial resources it needs?	Action plan to strengthen partnership team and resource base

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Conclusion – action checklist Cont…..

Is your local development strategy manageable and deliverable?	**If not…..**
Are the strategic priorities clear and are partners signed up to them?	Review strategy to focus better on priority issues
Is the strategy evidence-based?	Develop a better information system
Does it demonstrate how delivery will be achieved?	Develop a stronger action/delivery plan
Are there mechanisms to drive, manage and review progress and delivery?	Improve performance management arrangements
Is there provision for objective external evaluation?	Develop an evaluation strategy

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