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Northern Ireland Assembly
Parliament Buildings
Stormont

2 May 2024
AQW 10256/22-27

Ms K Nicholl (South Belfast): To ask the First Minister and deputy First Minister, pursuant to AQW 9021/22-27, for an update on the implementation of the test and learn programme that is being jointly led by the Executive Office and the Department for Communities.

ANSWER

In September 2023 the NICS Board approved a cross-departmental Collaboration Strategic Framework (CSF) to test and learn how Departments could deliver better outcomes by improving how we work together, and how we work with community partners and local government. This included identifying opportunities to reduce the burden on community organisations in terms of multiple departmental funding processes, and consideration of the Departmental staffing costs of running multiple programmes separately. The CSF test and learn was absorbed within existing NICS teams, and we were clear with stakeholders that no new investment would be made available as part of the pilot.

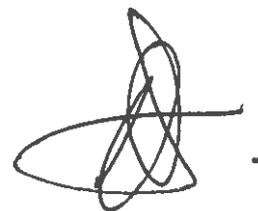
A cross-Departmental Steering Group (SG) was set up to progress the work. The SG is chaired by TEO and administered by DfC. A draft ‘Collaboration Framework’ (a copy of which has been placed in the Assembly Library) was developed to act as a flexible tool for collaboration. In parallel, the SG worked with Departmental statisticians to

identify and map the localities where multiple Government Departments were operating (including both urban and rural areas). It was agreed that community background, Departmental presence and levels of spend would be key data points to inform decisions on potential locations for pilots. Using the data, six potential pilot areas were identified (i) Duncairn and Falls Super Output Areas (SOAs) of Belfast; (ii) Gortin SOA; (iii) Aughnacloy SOA; (iv) The Strand and (v) Diamond SOAs of Derry/Londonderry; and (vi) Monkstown and Rathcoole SOAs of Whitehouse. The SG decided to focus on the Diamond and Aughnacloy SOAs to facilitate comparisons between rural and urban areas and due to the availability of experienced local staff working in the areas.

In January and February 2024 workshops were held in both pilot areas to gather views from stakeholders on collaboration. These views are being analysed and will be shared with Ministers before the Summer.



Michelle O'Neill MLA
First Minister



Emma Little-Pengelly MLA
deputy First Minister



Collaboration Test and Learn



Northern Ireland

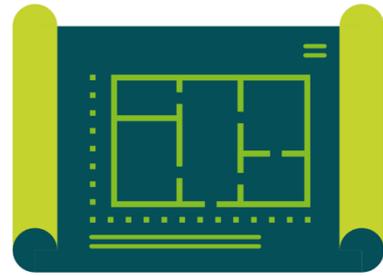
Civil Service

Collaboration Strategic Framework
**Delivering better outcomes through
collaborative working**

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01 Introduction



NICS Government Departments are delivering Test and Learn Pilots in 2023/2024, aimed at exploring the benefits of a place-based approach to improve societal outcomes through improved collaboration across Departments and external delivery partners.

To support the establishment of the Test and Learn Pilots this document sets out:

- **A Planning Assessment Framework** – what we want to do, how we want to do it and where we want to do it; and
- **An Evaluation Framework** - Establish what we want to evaluate and how.

With a growing desire within NICS to collaborate across boundaries, the Test and Learn Pilots will explore ways to embed collaborative practices in specific geographic areas within Northern Ireland to increase efficiency and effectiveness in delivering shared, long-term, strategic outcomes.

Following on from the recent themes within ‘New Decade, New Approach’, the draft ‘Programme for Government’ and ‘People, Planet, Prosperity – the Missions’, such as, ‘tackling disadvantage’, ‘transformation of public services’ and ‘green growth’, there is currently further work being undertaken in creating the NICS Renewal framework. The mission statement for NICS renewal is to enable, empower and support civil servants to effectively deliver the work of government.

This report speaks to the necessity for continuous improvement throughout the NICS so that services are people-centred, outcome focused and delivered collaboratively across sectors. We recognise that there have been successful efforts across several initiatives to improve collaboration and we wish to build on the good work and learnings from these collaborative projects. This report offers a series of ‘Collaborative Frameworks’ that can be used to fine tune current collaborative enterprises to support the successful delivery of shared outcomes. It is important to note that this report has been created from the

initial viewpoint of identifying how things can be done better within the test and learn geographies (including the utilisation of existing resources), rather than the creation of new initiatives and additional money.

Collaboration and behaviours

Collaboration can be defined as sharing knowledge and resources through frequent and effective communication to deliver shared goals and outcomes. On the surface this may seem a straightforward principle to adopt, however, within organisations, this can be difficult to achieve and maintain if structures are not conducive to fostering collaborative behaviour.

Individual Departments within NICS are accountable for their own policy areas and the current culture makes it difficult to maintain collaboration across Departments. There is growing support within the NICS for more cross-departmental working and a behavioural shift towards collective contribution toward shared outcomes. The 'Collaborative Frameworks' and 'Evaluation Framework' within this report have been designed to support the empowerment of collaborative behaviours. The Test and Learn is an opportunity to evaluate the impact of collaboration and whether it delivers better outcomes while building the case for change.

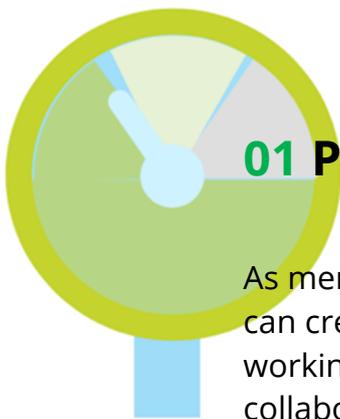
Figure 1: Draft Roadmap for Test and Learn

This roadmap highlights the ambition for the test and learn and a suggested direction of travel. Engagement with all partners will be fundamental to success. We see the 'discovery' activities within phase one as a significant opportunity to identify key partners and 'get under the skin' of each pilot area. It is proposed that phase one captures key learning which can then be applied in phase two to make incremental changes to ways of working on the ground.

| | Approvals | Phase 1 | Phase 2 |
|--------------------|---|--|---|
| Outcome | Secure buy-in from NICS leadership | Pursue opportunities to collaborate and build a case for change | Service users and partners benefiting from more collaborative and joined up delivery |
| Objectives |  Agree Geographies  Finalise Planning Framework  Finalise evaluation framework |  Complete discovery phase  Begin Test and Learn  Measure Success |  Develop and expand collaborative approaches  Develop streamlined, effective budgetary and reporting process  Review and apply evaluation learning |
| Activities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cross-departmental steering groups sessions • Data mapping presented and geographies agreed • Cross-departmental workshop exploring collaboration | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agree approach and timelines for rolling out T&L • Allocate resource to local T&L Coordinator and Evaluator roles • Engage partners and identify 'coalition of the willing' • Review and refine the framework with key partners • Apply the framework collaboratively with partners • Implement evaluation approach using the framework | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work to secure buy-in for change • Apply Phase 1 learning and make incremental changes to ways of working on the ground |
| Key Outputs | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Test and Learn Strategic Framework: Report • Evaluation Framework • Output from workshop | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Test and Learn Review – Key findings and learnings • Geographies baselined for Phase 2 activities • Phase 2 Delivery Plan | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrated plan within each pilot area • Integrated funding application process • Clear shared outcomes • Survey feedback on effectiveness of collaboration |

02 Key Themes

Before developing the frameworks, we carried out a series of 1-1 interviews, steering group sessions and a cross-departmental workshop. During this phase of work, **three key themes emerged**, which have helped to inform a realistic approach to creating the frameworks.



01 Progress over Perfection

As mentioned above, the nature of our system can create barriers to successful collaborative working. Multiple departments are involved in collaborative programmes and initiatives, but not all behaviours reflect that.

As we work to 'get our house in order' and pursue greater levels of efficiency, effectiveness and productivity, there is opportunity to make progress despite the current challenges. The Test and Learn pilots will explore ways to join up plans, align effort and resources while maintaining business as usual service delivery.



“Collaboration is achieving more with others than you would have done by yourself”.

Senior Civil Servant

02 Pursue Efficiency & Consistency

In Phase one of Test and Learn, we heard multiple accounts of process inefficiency and a lack of clarity about what steps can be taken to work collaboratively. During our one-one discussions we heard that some departmental processes had not changed despite regulatory changes having taken place. How might we address these inefficiencies within the Test and Lean pilot areas? We will explore ways to drive greater efficiency and consistency in delivery by:

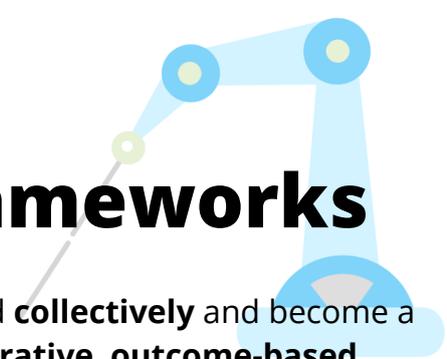
- Applying the Collaboration Frameworks and Evaluation Framework with consistency across pilot areas;
- Bringing cross-sector and cross-departmental leadership together to agree priority outcomes in each area;
- Reducing the administrative burden on community and voluntary sector partners;
- Providing clear communication from leadership on the ability to pool funds; and
- Identifying individuals within each geography who have a deep, working knowledge of the area to help drive Test and Learn activities.

03 Build Resilience



Global events in recent years have taught us that the ability to be responsive and agile in times of uncertainty is crucial. Given the nature of a 'Test and Learn' we need to embrace some of the risks that come with uncertainty, fail fast and learn quickly.

Departments are entering another period of uncertainty. Building trust and deepening cross-departmental relationships will be key for building greater resilience within our people. Through the pandemic and the more recent cost-of-living crisis, we recognised the importance of resilience and prioritising wellbeing. Test and Learn will explore how sharing of plans, data, knowledge, resources and finances can deliver more effective and resilient public services for our communities.



03 Collaborative Frameworks

Our desire for the frameworks is that they are used **collectively** and become a **flexible tool** to be used when undertaking **collaborative, outcome-based working** in our selected pilot areas. The frameworks are not something you 'complete' but rather a starting point for embedding new ways of working. We recognise that programmes and projects will be at **different stages of planning or delivery** and to realise maximum benefit, dependencies will have to be fully understood.

The frameworks should be **reviewed and applied collaboratively by all partners** in the pilot area. This will allow for a more comprehensive view of the locality to be established through **collective effort**, allowing for identification of how and where joined-up working might be achieved and support the process of **behavioural change** around collaborative working.

Each framework is supported by an instruction manual which offers some guidance around what **key actions** could be taken to foster more collaborative and joined up working in a pilot area. The suggested **governance** structure for Test and Learn is referenced in the appendix of this report and we recommend that you refer to this whilst reading the Collaborative Frameworks.

Framework 1: Collaborative Planning

The Collaborative Planning Framework has been designed to assist the process of analysing what is happening within a geography. It consists of a robust collective 'discovery phase' which will identify the key components that make up the current interventions within the geography including what already exists in terms of funding, existing projects / programmes, governance, and outcomes. We envisage during the discovery phase, that statisticians will be able to support users to produce detailed analysis of the specific area.

All partners in the area will consider the Collaborative Planning Framework together to explore opportunities to work more closely. These collective discussions will shape a shared vision, integrated plan and commitment to the area in line with the governance structure suggested.

Framework 1: Collaborative Planning

| | |
|---|--|
| <p>What is currently happening in the geography? (Evidence-based)</p> | <p>Carry out a 'discovery phase' to address the following questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What are the overarching problems the community is trying to solve?• How are initiatives being funded?• What initiatives are currently being delivered?• What are the outcomes being delivered?• What are the current governance structures in place?• What community resources are already in place? i.e., people, physical assets/ estate, technology, and processes.• Are there any partners with a presence but are not investing in an area?• Do we have a 'beating heart' within the area that can be utilised for the local co-ordinator role? |
| <p>What outcomes should be addressed in the area?</p> | <p>After completing the discovery phase take time to address the following questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• To what degree are the current initiatives addressing the outcomes / what are the key challenges?• Are there some issues not currently being addressed by existing initiatives?• Will the proposal deliver an outcome not currently being addressed?• Is there potential for interventions to collaborate around areas where outcomes are not being addressed? |
| <p>Which departments should collaborate and how?</p> | <p>Recognise that outcomes can't be delivered by a sole department. Engage with your network to address the following questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Have all collaborative partners been identified?• Is there a need to support with training and development around 'collaboration and partnership working'?• Could collaborative behaviours be incentivised by offering training?• To what degree could this collaboration help co-author a 'shared' strategy? that incorporates: |

| | |
|--|--|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Shared vision for the area; - Integrated plan; - Pooled Resources (funding and physical assets); and - Agreed outcomes and performance metrics • How regularly is impact and performance measured? • Where there is limited evidence of impact, is there an opportunity to redirect resource? Could working with others help identify new options? • Are there gateways or interim reviews coming up that can be used to realign with others? |
| <p>Have delivery partners been engaged?</p> | <p>Recognise that outcomes can't be delivered by a sole department. Once all partners have been engaged, work collaboratively to address the following questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who in the Community / area should be involved? • How should they be engaged and how frequently? • Are there effective and ongoing relationships and engagement with partners? • How will the collaborative approach make life better for those involved in frontline delivery? e.g., reducing operational bureaucracy |



Instruction Manual

Carry out quarterly planning and review sessions

Create space for all active participants involved in pilot areas to come together and share plans. This will allow key decision makers to see where plans overlap and look for opportunities to integrate plans and increase efficiency. If this is done in parallel with identifying shared outcomes, shared elements across plans or within a single plan, could evolve overtime.

Framework 2: Pooling of Funds / Resources

The Pooling of Funds / Resources Framework is designed to assist collaborative partners with the process of creating a shared budget around shared outcomes. It encourages a collective approach to considering what respective individual budgets and other resources are available and collectively consider how combining resources would best support the community in the area.

| Framework 2 - Pooling of Funds / Resources | |
|---|---|
| What funding options are available? | Identify opportunities to pool funds around shared outcomes and address the following questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What money is available per department?• Is funding coming from multiple bodies? (Lottery, EU)• Can we agree a participatory budgeting approach?• Can multi-year funding be enabled?• What other resources e.g., facilities, relationships and events, could be considered? |
| Will pooling of funds benefit the area? | Establish a clear process for tracking and realising benefits of pooling and consider the following questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Is the plan affordable?• Can pooling of funds help sustain funding in the area?• How can budgeting happen collectively and effectively for the community / area?• Can value be added for the VCS and contribute to more effective delivery of public services?• Can operational burden be reduced by pooling funds? |

Has a shared resourcing approach been applied where possible?

Establish a shared resourcing approach while considering the following questions:

- Where shared outcomes are identified, what steps can be taken to consider and apply the budget / resources as shared?
- Can the point of accountability for the shared element of the budget / resources be agreed?
- Is there a plan for effective reporting and tracking of the spend which reflects the shared elements?



Instruction Manual

Redirect resources to high performing initiatives

The test and learn will not involve any new initiatives, therefore it will be challenging to pool funds that are already being spent. Our recommendation as an interim step towards pooling of resources collaboratively, is to look for opportunities where resource might be used to greater effect.

Framework 3: Relationships and Engagement

The Relationships and Engagement Framework has been designed to assist with changing behaviours and promoting a culture of ongoing effective relationship building and collaboration. There will be a collective assessment of the roles and behaviours required to successfully run initiatives, but also the skills that are required to be successful within roles. All collaborative partners are expected to be active within the partnership in terms of engagement, participation and knowledge sharing and buy-in will be expected from a governance perspective.

| Framework 3 - Relationships and Engagement | |
|--|--|
| Have Roles and Responsibilities been defined? | Define roles and responsibilities by considering the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What roles are required within the initiative both internally and externally?• Are there internal and external skill sets available to support the initiative / programme?• Have specific individuals been identified with the right skills?• Who is currently available?• Do we have a 'beating heart' within the area that can be utilised for the local co-ordinator role? |
| Do appropriate relationships / networking capabilities exist? | Define the skills required for collaboration by considering the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Are the right people in place to build relationships?• What is the baseline skillset for collaborative working? |

| | |
|---|---|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is there a need to support with training and development around 'collaboration and partnership working'? • Could collaborative behaviours be incentivised by offering training? • What support is needed to enable this - particularly within short timeframes? • Does structured guidance exist which defines how and when to collaborate with Departments and stakeholders? • Is programme management being undertaken in a way that helps to facilitate behavioural change in collaboration? |
| <p>Has a continuous engagement strategy been agreed?</p> | <p>Decide how often delivery partners need to be engaged:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are there effective and ongoing relationships with partners? |
| <p>Do all collaborative partners and stakeholders understand and buy-in to the governance model?</p> | <p>Achieve governance buy-in from key stakeholders by considering the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has the governance model for Test and Learn as illustrated in Appendix 1, been understood by all parties? • Have partners been clearly and regularly communicated to regarding governance for Test and Learn? • Are expectations for roles clear in terms of partnership working? • Are there clear lines of accountability within delivery teams? |



Instruction Manual

Identify a 'beating heart' within each pilot area

Having the right people in the right roles is pivotal to the successful management of programmes. A 'beating heart' might be a specific person or organisation who has a deep knowledge of the geography and the communities within it. They will give the test and learn the energy it needs and will help maximise the opportunity for learning and driving change.

Framework 4: Shared Outcomes

The Shared Outcomes – Reporting Framework is designed to assist partners with the process of collective reporting, monitoring and evaluating information, in ways that best support the establishment of shared outcomes.

| Framework 4 - Shared Outcomes - Reporting | |
|--|---|
| How can capturing collective reporting data support shared outcomes? | <p>Explore how a collective approach to analysing reporting and monitoring information within geographies, can contribute to shared outcomes by considering the following questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What methods of reporting and monitoring are used or could be used by Departments?• When is data collected during the lifecycle of an initiative?• Are there opportunities to collect data collaboratively?• How can this data be used in a collective manner to analyse shared outcomes? |



Instruction Manual

Identify shared priorities

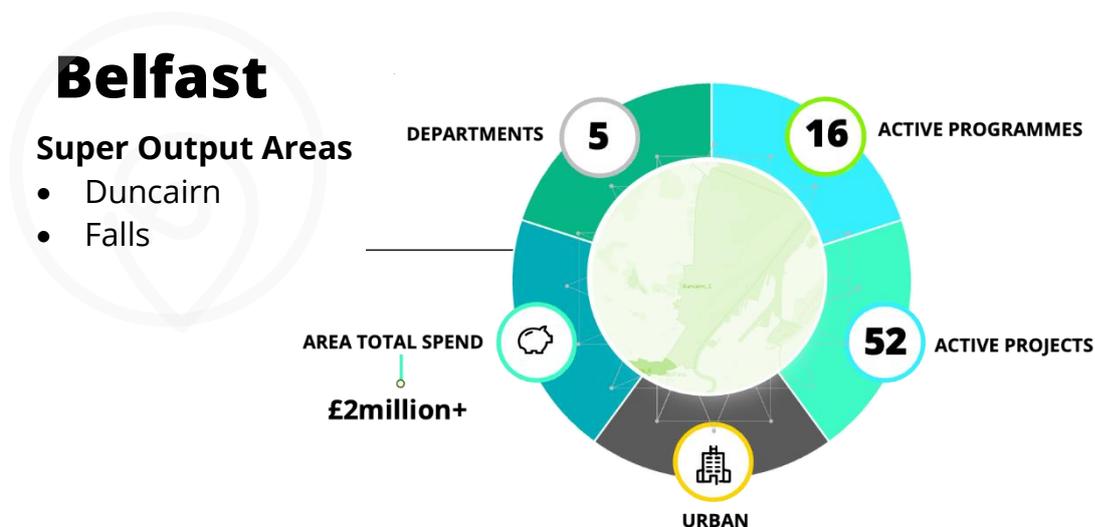
If all partners within a geography agree to prioritise a primary and secondary outcome for the area, this should allow for collective data and joined-up reporting methods to be established and a clear story to be told.

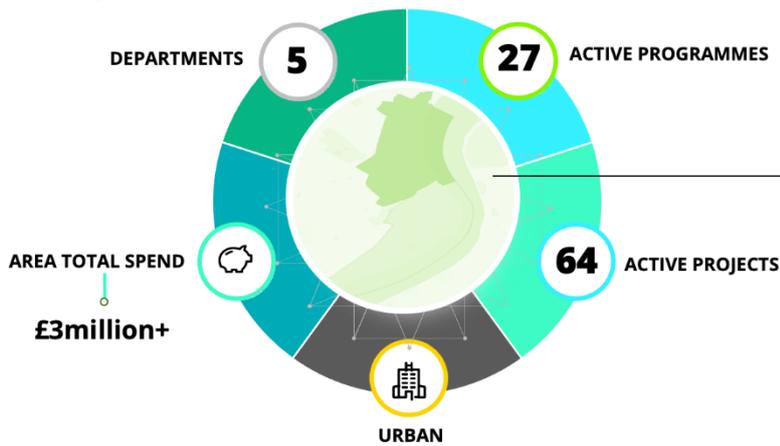
04 Applying the Collaboration Strategic Framework in Pilot Areas

After initial analysis and mapping carried out by our Professional Services Unit statisticians, eight super output areas have been identified as potential geographies for the pilot. The purpose of the analysis was to uncover localities in Northern Ireland with multiple government departments operating in an area and this analysis was carried out through an urban and rural lens.

In order for this data mapping exercise to deliver value for Test and Learn in a reasonable time scale, it was agreed that community background, Departmental presence and level of spend would be key data points considered in the decision-making process. It has been proposed that the Test and Learn pilots will begin in the Diamond area of Derry/Londonderry and Aughnacloy which will allow for early comparisons to be made between rural and urban areas.

All partners will be engaged in the discovery phase during phase one.



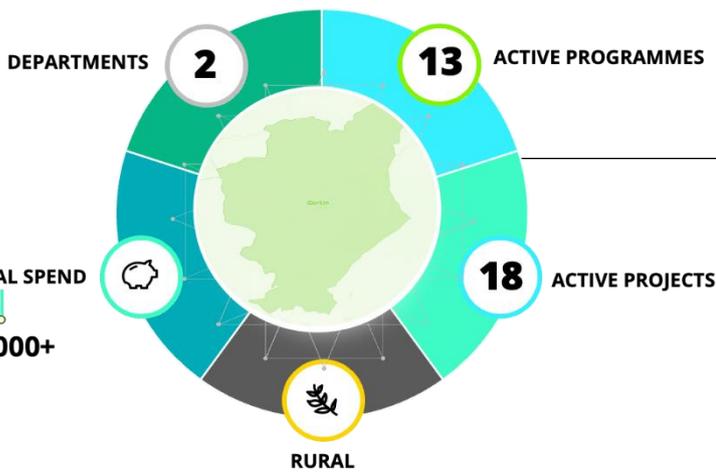
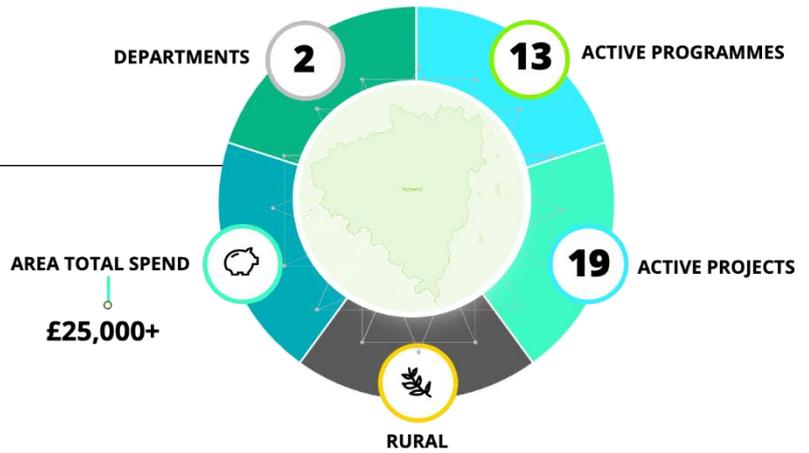


Derry / Londonderry

Super Output Areas

- Strand
- Diamond

Aughnacloy

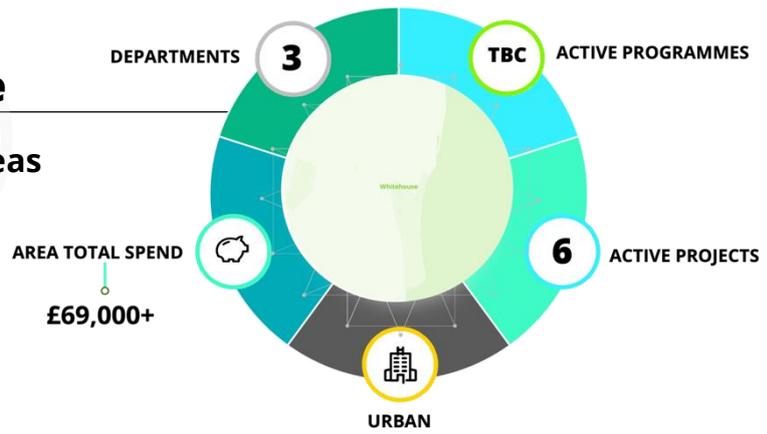


Gortin

Whitehouse

Super Output Areas

- Monkstown
- Rathcoole



05 Measuring Success

An integral part of this process has been to establish an Evaluation Framework that will allow us to assess the impact of more collaborative working in a geography. In practice we envisage the Collaborative Frameworks being used by frontline delivery teams who want to explore collaborative working. The Evaluation Framework will be a central place to capture learning at the Test and Learn Programme level and will be used to track progress.

Using the Framework

We recommend using the Evaluation Framework illustrated in *Figure 2 actively from the beginning of the process to capture live learning. Phasing and learning will be continuous to help other geographies by capturing evidence to break down barriers.

We envisage that the local co-ordinator will collect monitoring data from local delivery teams addressing the key questions in the test column. However, the person or organisation acting in the local co-ordinator role will be supported by external evaluators, which will support in data collation and a programme of interviews and surveys. This will provide a mix of qualitative and quantitative data that can be used to measure success and establish the evidence base around where collaboration is progressing and where it is being inhibited.

Focus is upon the learning and while some issues may be resolved, it is anticipated that part of the purpose of running the test and learn pilots is to identify barriers and consider how they can be mitigated.

The discovery element within phase one should help set a baseline for each geography. Our suggested approach is to start with one urban and one rural pilot area and incrementally roll out the approach throughout the remaining areas. We anticipate the initial programme(s) should be set out over 6 months, with monthly progress and interim reports after 3 months. Please refer to the 'cycle of learning' in Appendix 5 for further illustration.

*Figure 2 on the following page is a snapshot of the Evaluation Framework, for the full version please refer to Appendix 5. The Evaluation Framework has been developed in Excel and we recommend it is used in this format actively in phase two.

Figure 2: Draft Evaluation Framework

| FRAMEWORK | | Outcomes | Objective | Test | Key result | Learn |
|------------------------|--|--|---|--|--|---|
| | | Strategic Outcomes for Test and Learn | What are we going to do to achieve our desired outcome? | Questions to be answered. | How we measure success | Factors hindered achieving our key results? |
| Collaborative Planning | What is currently happening in the geography ? | A deep understanding of the needs and issues currently being addressed within pilot areas. | Establish clear processes, activities and timelines that can be implemented in a 'discovery phase.' | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What are the community needs being tackled? 2. How are initiatives being funded? 3. What are the outcomes being delivered? 4. What are the current governance structures in place? 5. What resources are already in place? I.e., people, physical assets/ estate, technology and processes. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Comprehensive list of programmes and projects. 2. Clear understanding of how much is being spent and by whom in an area to tackle issues. 3. Clear understanding of how Programmes and projects tie back to the wider objectives of CS. 4. Clear picture of who is involved and the accountability lines within the area. 5. Clear picture of the resources that are already in place, I.e., people, physical assets/ estate, technology and processes. | Reporting and live discussion across the pilot areas. |
| | What outcomes could be addressed? | Effective, joined up delivery that does more to deliver better outcomes. | Identify potential high impact programmes that are not currently working collaboratively within a pilot area. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To what degree are the current initiatives addressing the outcomes / what are the key challenges? 2. Is there potential for interventions to collaborate around areas where outcomes are not being addressed? | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. All key perspectives understood and evidenced by qualitative and quantitative data. 2. Multiple opportunities identified to deliver more impact around outcomes through collaborative working. | Reporting and live discussion across the pilot areas. |
| | Which other Departments could collaborate and how? | Departments collaborate out of conviction and not coercion. | Identify a 'coalition of the willing' who are engaged around similar issues / outcomes in an area. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Have all collaborative partners been identified? 2. Explore opportunities where sharing a plan could foster more collaborative working? 3. Can we agreed shared outcomes and performance metrics? 4. Can we identify opportunities to pool resources? (funding and physical assets) 5. How do we measure impact and performance in a collaborative way? | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A list of all key stakeholders within the area. 2. Key stakeholders agree to share a plan around shared outcomes. 3. Key stakeholders agree one primary outcome and one secondary outcome. 4. Key stakeholders agree that pooling budgets would be most effective for achieving outcomes. 5. Key stakeholders agree a consistent approach for OBA. | Reporting and live discussion across the pilot areas. |

06 Next Steps



The NICS are striving to work towards a better future for all our people as evidenced by ‘People, Planet, Prosperity – The Missions.’ The missions, “aim to be genuinely transformative. They will be taken forward collectively and on a cross-sectoral basis, to secure benefits and improve outcomes well beyond the individual programmes of work”.

So, what does this mean for Test and Learn?

Test and Learn affords us the opportunity to put the aim of the missions into practice using an approach that produces incremental change. A phased approach will therefore be necessary to ease into the process of testing and learning collaboratively. We propose starting with one urban and one rural area which will be a ‘test of the test’. The subsequent phasing of the pilots will be based on progress within phase 1. (See Figure 1 for draft roadmap)

Next steps for Test and Learn:

1. Secure buy in from NICS leadership

Present our phased approach to the NICS board and demonstrate the value that the Test and Learn will bring to achieving objectives relating to collaboration.

2. Undertake a ‘discovery phase’

As previously mentioned, the Test and Learn will begin in one urban and one rural area and incrementally roll out across all geographies. This approach will create space for discussion, learning, analysis, creation of an integrated plan and a review of the Collaborative Frameworks before commencing work in the first pilot areas.

- i. **Carry out a ‘stress test’ of the Evaluation Framework:** Users of the Evaluation Framework will have to be bought into the approach. We recommend identifying key individuals within pilot areas and discussing the utility of the suggested framework and the approach that underpins it.
- ii. **Engage active departments and discuss resources:** Identify key roles and appropriate people for roles within the area. This will

help establish where skills gaps exist, and training / development would be beneficial. As there will be no additional funding for resources, individuals will be identified within existing staff with investment being made in enhancing collaboration skills. As a key driver of the testing and learning, the role of the local co-ordinator will need to be clearly defined. There will also be a need for an external evaluator to be assigned.

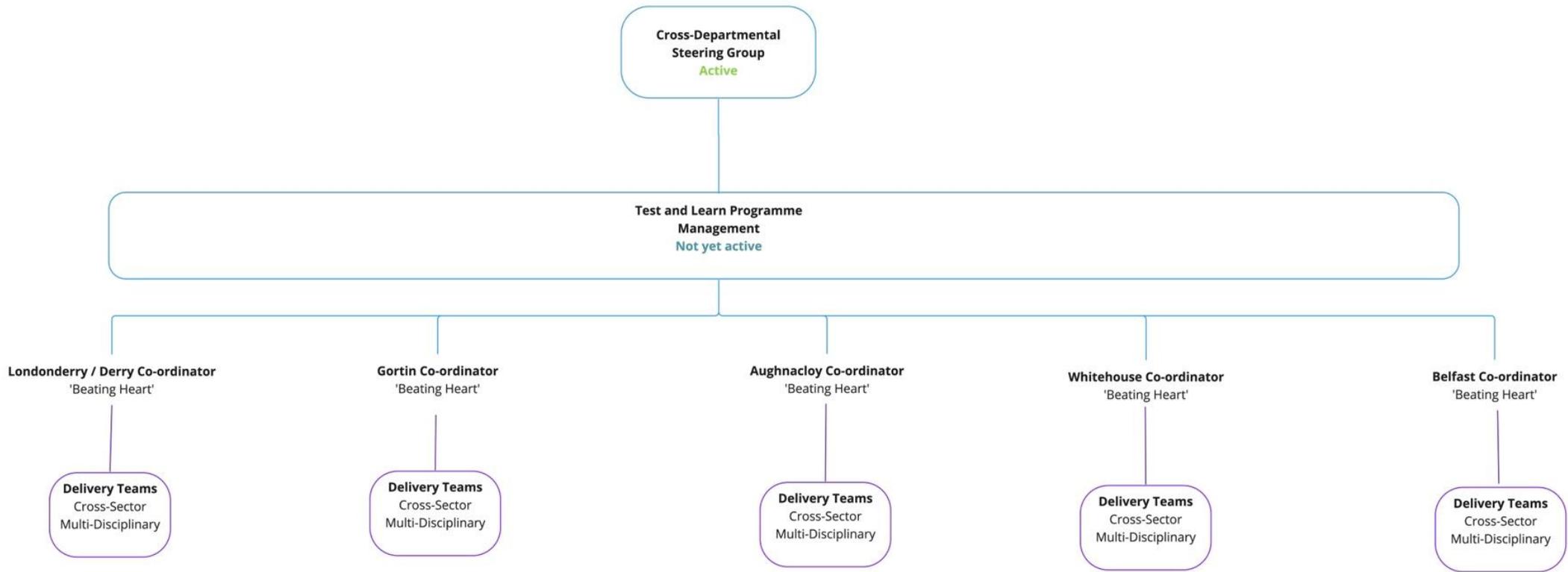
- iii. **Begin engagement with partners:** Within the Collaborative Frameworks we mentioned identifying a 'beating heart' within each geography and bringing together a 'coalition of the willing'. We recommend engaging key partners in each area from the beginning of the process once the detailed, timeline plan for Test and Learn is agreed during the 'discovery phase'.
- iv. **Agree a timeline for activity within the geography:** We recommend timeframes are established to support the roll out of the pilot, these should include collaboration days and Test and Learn launch days as part of the activities.

Appendix 1: Test and Learn Governance Structure

For the cross-departmental collaboration Test and Learn Pilots to be effective, it requires clear lines of governance and clear guidance around how lines of accountability will work. We envisage that the Test and Learn Pilots will have a 3-level Governance structure:

1. The cross-departmental Test and Learn Steering group (comprising of members of the already existing Steering group).
2. Test and Learn Programme Management (not yet active). This would be led by someone with the appropriate programme management skills supported by existing administrative staff working in a cross-departmental team.
3. Local delivery teams in each pilot geography which would be led by an on the ground convenor / local co-ordinator who will be the 'heartbeat' of the delivery and operations. We understand that local areas will have different approaches to programme governance. This flexibility will add to the learning in the pilot phase. There will also be value, however, to be gained from identifying common programme management practices across the geographies and their respective effectiveness.
4. While no additional resources are anticipated in respect of the role of co-ordinator and their work on the ground, independent evaluation of the work is crucial, and some limited resource will be required to carry this out.

Test and Learn Governance



Appendix 2: Consultation log

| Name | Department |
|---|---|
| Joan O'Hara Richard Cushnie Angharad Moore | The Executive Office |
| Philip Magee Maureen Fox | Urban Villages (Colin Area) Urban Villages (Derry Area) |
| Nichola Creagh Dawn Vance Tony Murphy Patricia Mulligan Una McConnell | Department for Communities |
| Jean McAnulty | Neighbourhood Renewal |
| Dale Heaney John McConnell | Department of Education |
| Adele Brown Michael McAvoy Christopher Farrington | Department of Justice Tackling Paramilitarism |
| Gary Maxwell Vincent Ramirez | Department of Health |
| Davina McCay Elaine Colgan Sean Kearney | Department for the Economy |
| Gerard Treacy | Department of Agriculture, Environment & Rural Affairs |
| Diane McIntyre Martin Hayes | Public Health Agency |
| Emer Morelli Suzanne Barclay | Department of Finance |

Appendix 3: Desk Research & Engagement

A list of cross - departmental consultees was agreed in March 2023 (listed in full in Appendix 1). The selection was made up of stakeholders from the Collaboration Test & Learn Steering Group and Operational experts within DfC, DE, TEO and DoJ. Consultations were carried out between March and May 2023 in both virtual and in-person meetings.

A workshop was carried out on 3 May 2023 to explore Collaboration within the context of our proposed Planning and Assessment Framework and the theme of 'Getting our house in order.'

Documents and information surrounding place-based initiatives were provided by cross - departmental members of the Steering Group in addition to open online research into best practice in Collaboration and previous Deloitte engagements. Sources of information are included in Appendix 4 of this report.

Key themes - Desk Research

The following themes were identified following desk research and information provided by Initiatives highlighted to us by the steering group that were collaborative in nature, previous Deloitte engagements that explored collaborative working and collaborative-based open desk research, using online, public sources.

Inhibiting Practices

1. Funding allocated by individual Departments.
2. Challenges of sharing data.
3. Fragmentation and duplication of services.
4. Lack of joined-up thinking in terms of reporting and knowledge.
5. Organisational Culture issues such as siloed working.

Enabling Practices

1. Co-ordinating and aligning effort across Government Departments, local Councils, and community organisations to deliver shared outcomes (as illustrated by the 'Thrive' programme).
2. Standardisation and optimisation of monitoring systems.
3. Pooling of funds around outcomes.
4. Adopting a 'Whole of Government' Approach (as illustrated by the Singapore's' shared funding model for cross-sector collaboration).
5. Continuous community engagement and a strong evidence base.

Key themes – Stakeholder Engagement

This section provides an overview of the themes identified through consultation with project stakeholders. This feedback was obtained by way of virtual interviews and workshop and identified key themes which are considered as blocking effective collaboration.

Inhibiting Practices

1. Lack of internal collaboration within the NICS and Departments, due to siloed working – recognition that there is a need to 'Get our own house in order'.
2. Accountability and ownership concerns limit the ability to pool funds around shared outcomes.
3. Data and knowledge being captured and stored in isolation.
4. Defensiveness around funding and maintaining status quo.
5. Community group spokespeople and gatekeepers not reflecting real community needs.

Enabling Practices

1. Strategic thinking with a strong business case created upfront.
2. Agree shared outcomes, measure, and report in a standardised format across departments and sectors.
3. Early collaborative planning – building internal relationships.
4. Joint vision.
5. Centralised governance via committee.
6. Active participation.
7. Multi-year funding cycles.
8. Simple system to measure outcomes.
9. Create regular feedback cycles with service users and use data to drive better decision making.
10. Decentralisation of decision-making and approvals could increase engagement and coordination at community level.

Appendix 4: Sources

| Article Name | By / Date |
|--|---|
| Draft Programme for Government | NI Executive 25/01/2021 |
| <i>Thrive</i> 23-02 Bs Foundation Visit (paper) | 02/23 |
| <i>Neighbourhood Renewal</i> Evaluation Report 2014 | DfC website articles RSM McClure Watters |
| <i>Urban Villages</i> Urban Villages Methodology Report | June 2020 |
| Community Planning | DfC website articles |
| 'Elevate' Elevate, Evaluation Revised Report | 20/12/2022 |
| New Decade, New Approach | January 2020 |
| NICS Making life better – 1 st Progress report | DoH 2014/2015 |
| <i>MARA programme</i> MARA Full Evaluation report Jan 2016 MARA Summary Evaluation report Nov 2016 PHA Evaluation of the MARA Programme | PHA January 2016 PHA October 2015 |
| Locality Based Projects: Extended Schools WRAP programme North Belfast Primary Principals support programme Full Service Programmes | DE |
| Farming Families Health Check | DARD / PHA 2012 |
| Community Safety Pilots Locality working – Update to the community safety board Locality-Based Working - Review of 3 Area Pilot Programme | 28/05/2021 CSB 03/03/2022 |
| Connect Programme | |
| AP/DSC Dementia Programme - Activity and Outcome | Social Change Initiative April 2020 |
| Locality Working - Community Safety Board update Locality-Based Working - Review of 3 Area Pilot Programme | 28 May 2021 |
| PEACEPLUS Programme 2021-2027 | Special EU Programmes Body |

| | |
|--|---|
| People, Planet, Prosperity – The Missions | NICS |
| Departmental Risk 8: Collaboration and Partnership Working Risk 8 – Presentation | CHECK EMAIL DfC 21/09/2022 |
| Children’s Services Co-operation Act (Northern Ireland) 2015 | 2015 |
| Shifting Gears Report | Deloitte / Social Change Initiative 2020 |
| Deloitte Insights – Government trends | Deloitte 2023 |
| Collaboration NI - A practical guide to collaborative working | NICVA |
| Solace and NHS - Delivering together for residents. How collaborative working in places and communities can make a difference | Solace September 2021 |
| Interim Guidance on the Children’s Services Co-operation Act (Northern Ireland) 2015 | Department of Education |
| Institute for Government / Oracle. How to improve collaboration across government | 13 October 2020 |
| Working in place- collaborative funding in practice. 5 case studies | Institute for Voluntary Action Research, 2017 |
| Collaboration NI: Alliance Contracting | September 2016 |
| Why we collaborate - Voluntary organisations talk about how they collaborate, what makes it work and why it sometimes fails | Clinks 2017 Centre for Justice Innovation |
| 14 November Test & Learn Workshop – Final Report | 05/12/22 |
| Place-based “Test and Learn” Workshop | 27-1-23 |
| DRAFT Community Development Performance Management Framework | HSC/PHA |
| Glens Healthy Places Evaluation Report Lisnaskea Healthy Places Evaluation Report Final ‘Bright Ideas, Healthy Places (North Belfast) Final Report | PHA |
| Working in Place: Collaborative Funding in Action | Institute for Voluntary Action Research September 2017 |

Appendix 5.1: Evaluation Framework

Key terms within the framework:

Outcome:

A strategic aim for Test and Learn framed within the wider context of NICS reform objectives

Objective:

A specific, achievable, measurable aim for the Test and Learn process

Test:

A hypothesis statement, question or area of interest we would like to explore in a pilot area (e.g., Hypothesis - More collaborative working will alleviate administrative burden on the CVS)

Key Result:

A specific, measurable metric that will let us know if we have found an answer / are successful in what we are testing

Learn:

Identifying complicating factors across pilot areas (Q: why aren't we achieving our key results?)

Appendix 5.1: Evaluation Framework (Pg.1)

| FRAMEWORK | | Outcomes | Objective | Test | Key result | Learn |
|------------------------|--|--|---|--|--|---|
| | | Strategic Outcomes for Test and Learn | What are we going to do to achieve our desired outcome? | Questions to be answered. | How we measure success | Factors hindered achieving our key results? |
| Collaborative Planning | What is currently happening in the geography ? | A deep understanding of the needs and issues currently being addressed within pilot areas. | Establish clear processes, activities and timelines that can be implemented in a 'discovery phase.' | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What are the community needs being tackled? 2. How are initiatives being funded? 3. What are the outcomes being delivered? 4. What are the current governance structures in place? 5. What resources are already in place? I.e., people, physical assets/ estate, technology and processes. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Comprehensive list of programmes and projects. 2. Clear understanding of how much is being spent and by whom in an area to tackle issues. 3. Clear understanding of how Programmes and projects tie back to the wider objectives of CS. 4. Clear picture of who is involved and the accountability lines within the area. 5. Clear picture of the resources that are already in place, I.e., people, physical assets/ estate, technology and processes. | Reporting and live discussion across the pilot areas. |
| | What outcomes could be addressed? | Effective, joined up delivery that does more to deliver better outcomes. | Identify potential high impact programmes that are not currently working collaboratively within a pilot area. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1.To what degree are the current initiatives addressing the outcomes / what are the key challenges? 2. Is there potential for interventions to collaborate around areas where outcomes are not being addressed? | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. All key perspectives understood and evidenced by qualitative and quantitative data. 2. Multiple opportunities identified to deliver more impact around outcomes through collaborative working. | Reporting and live discussion across the pilot areas. |
| | Which other Departments could collaborate and how? | Departments collaborate out of conviction and not coercion. | Identify a 'coalition of the willing' who are engaged around similar issues / outcomes in an area. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Have all collaborative partners been identified? 2. Explore opportunities where sharing a plan could foster more collaborative working? 3. Can we agreed shared outcomes and performance metrics? 4. Can we identify opportunities to pool resources? (funding and physical assets) 5. How do we measure impact and performance in a collaborative way? | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A list of all key stakeholders within the area. 2. Key stakeholders agree to share a plan around shared outcomes. 3. Key stakeholders agree one primary outcome and one secondary outcome. 4. Key stakeholders agree that pooling budgets would be most effective for achieving outcomes. 5. Key stakeholders agree a consistent approach for OBA. | Reporting and live discussion across the pilot areas. |

Appendix 5.1: Evaluation Framework (Pg. 2)

| FRAMEWORK | | Outcomes | Objective | Test | Key result | Learn |
|------------------|---|---|--|--|---|---|
| | | Strategic Outcomes for Test and Learn | What are we going to do to achieve our desired outcome? | Questions to be answered. | How we measure success | Factors hindered achieving our key results? |
| Pooling of Funds | What funding options are available? | More value delivered to customers and service users by pooling funds around outcomes. | Determine how much value we are currently delivering against outcomes. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Does financial transparency within a geography lead to more collaborative working? 2. If an initiative is coming to an end can multi-year funding be enabled to help joined-up delivery? | 1. Increased visibility of initiatives and spend leading to more collaborative decision making. | Reporting and live discussion across the pilot areas. |
| | Will pooling of funds benefit the area? | Priority outcomes given multi-year, strategic investment to tackle long-term issues. | Programme leadership have a clear understanding of what options are available to them. | 1. Can the CVS operational burden be reduced by pooling funds? | 1. Reduced number of application forms to complete. | Reporting and live discussion across the pilot areas. |
| | Has a shared resourcing approach been applied where possible? | Government is transparent to customers and service users on public spend and impact on communities within each geography. | Create clear tracking, reporting and data analysis processes that allow for transparency and accountability. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Where shared outcomes are identified, what steps can be taken to consider and apply the budget as shared? 2. Is there a plan for effective reporting and tracking of the spend which reflects the shared elements? | 1. Shared reporting tool which tracks shared budget and spend. | Reporting and live discussion across the pilot areas. |

Appendix 5.1: Evaluation Framework (Pg.3)

| FRAMEWORK | | Outcomes | Objective | Test | Key result | Learn |
|------------------------------|---|--|---|---|---|---|
| | | Strategic Outcomes for Test and Learn | What are we going to do to achieve our desired outcome? | Questions to be answered. | How we measure success | Factors hindered achieving our key results? |
| Relationships and Engagement | Have Roles and Responsibilities been defined? | Staff are confident in their skills. | Develop a clear understanding of the skillsets operating in a geography. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What roles are required within the initiative both internally and externally? 2. Are there internal and external skill sets available to support the initiative / programme? 3. Have specific individuals been identified with the right skills? 4. Who is currently available? | 1. Identification of skills required and roles assigned to skilled individuals. | Reporting and live discussion across the pilot areas. |
| | Do appropriate relationships / networking capabilities, exist? | Staff are supported with collaborative working and are clear on what is expected of them. | Build a training and support plan to ensure we have the skills required to be successful in a pilot area. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Do we have the right people in place to build the right relationships? 2. What support is needed to enable this - particularly within short timeframes? 3. Does structured guidance exist which defines how and when to collaborate with Departments and stakeholders? 4. What is the baseline skillset for collaborative working? 5. Is programme management being undertaken in a way that helps to facilitate collaboration? 6. How can we address skills gaps where they exist? | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Collaboration skills are at the correct level to successfully run test and learn. 2. Training delivered to bridge a skills gap. | Reporting and live discussion across the pilot areas. |
| | Is there a continuous engagement strategy? | Staff are supported with external collaborative working and are clear on what is expected of them. | Build a training and support plan to ensure we have the skills required to be successful in a pilot area. | Are there effective and ongoing relationships internally and with partners? | 1. Strong relationships and networks have been established. | Reporting and live discussion across the pilot areas. |
| | Do all collaborative partners and stakeholders understand and buy-in to the governance model? | Governance that increases collaboration and effective delivery of services. | Successfully establish a central PMO to lead Test and Learn. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Has the governance model been accepted and understood by all parties? 2. Have partners been clearly and regularly communicated to regarding governance? 3. Are expectations for roles clear in terms of Partnership working? 4. Are there clear lines of accountability within delivery teams? | 1. Governance well understood and all partners clearly understanding roles and responsibilities. | Reporting and live discussion across the pilot areas. |

Appendix 5.1: Evaluation Framework (Pg.4)

| <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;"> FRAMEWORK </div> | | Outcomes Strategic Outcomes for Test and Learn | Objective What are we going to do to achieve our desired outcome? | Test Questions to be answered. | Key result How we measure success | Learn Factors hindered achieving our key results? |
|---|--|---|--|---|---|---|
| Shared Outcomes | How can capturing collective reporting data support shared outcomes? | A clear story of success within geography and rich data for enhanced decision making. | Integrated data sharing mechanisms agreed and used effectively in pilot areas. | 1.What methods of reporting and monitoring are used or could be used by Departments? 2.When is data collected during the lifecycle of an initiative? 3.How can this data be used in a collective manner to analyse shared outcomes? | 1. Integrated data capture and sharing mechanisms in place. | Reporting and live discussion across the pilot areas. |

Appendix 5.2: Feedback Loop

Continuous Evaluation

After the geographies are well understood, we recommend capturing key lessons from the beginning. Using Objectives and Key Results, we can be flexible to change as we explore the framework. The collaborative frameworks and the evaluation framework should be applied consistently across pilot areas so that learning can be transferred where possible.

