'The 2006 Partnership Questionnaire':
A Briefing Note

NDC National Evaluation
Phase 2

June 2007
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Key Points

This Briefing Note provides an overview of returns from all 39 NDCs to a series of largely factual questions such as structure, operation, staffing, agency engagement, and exit/succession strategies. It is designed:

- to provide DCLG and other partners with an overview of key factual information across the 39 NDC Partnerships
- where possible to identify changes through time
- and in due course to help inform the national evaluation team in exploring relationships between largely process issues explored here (Board size, loss of a chief executive, etc) on the one hand, against outcome change and spend data, on the other.

Data Collection

Evidence is drawn from a questionnaire sent to all 39 NDCs in 2006. A similar exercise took place in the 2001-2005 Phase 1 of the evaluation. Results from the 2004 Partnership questionnaire most closely equate with this 2006 survey. However, even then caution needs to be employed in comparing results from the 2004 and 2006 Partnership surveys:

- in Phase 1 questionnaires were completed by members of the national evaluation team drawing on evidence from a number of interviews with NDC staff, Board members and agency representatives
- whereas in 2006 the questionnaire was completed by NDC staff teams and most often by chief executives.

The NDC Partnerships

Legal Status

- 22 NDCs are companies limited by guarantee, 6 are registered charities and 16 have no legal status
- 17 think that their legal status will change over the next 3 years; eight will apply for charitable status, and five more plan to become companies limited by guarantee.

Chairs and Chief Executives

- in 31 the chair, and in 29 the chief executive did not change in the previous 12 months; fewer chairs and chief executives are leaving than was the case in 2004
- the average Board size is 23, ranging from 39 to 12
- all Boards contain NDC residents, the average proportion being 59 per cent, five percentage points higher than in 2004
■ in 28 instances fifty per cent or more of Board members have served for more than 2 years
■ NDCs on average have seven agencies represented on Boards: PCTs, local councillors, and the Police are the most commonly represented 'agencies'
■ Board elections have been used by 36 NDCs
■ NDCs are generally of the view that their Boards are stable and that relationships both between Board members and staff, and also within Boards, are harmonious.

**Staffing**

■ the average number of FTE staff employed through Management and Admin budgets is ten; since 2004 13 have increased, and 24 decreased numbers of staff
■ nearly two-thirds of staff are female
■ fourteen NDCs have had difficulty in recruiting staff with appropriate skills, a lower figure than in 2004
■ staff turnover has been a problem for seven NDCs
■ 23 NDCs think that the composition of their staff team will change over the next 3 years; 11 explicitly state that there will be a decrease in numbers employed.

**The Wider Context**

**Other ABIs**

■ on average 6 other ABIs operate at least partly within NDC boundaries; DATs, YiPs and Neighbourhood Wardens schemes are the most commonly mentioned ABIs operating within NDC areas.

**Engaging Agencies**

■ NDCs on average engage 'significantly' with nine agencies: the police, local authority housing, environmental and leisure departments, and also PCTs are the agencies with which NDCs are most likely to engage 'significantly'
■ 34 are involved with their local LSP and 32 with the LAA.

**Delivery**

**Equalities and Diversities**

■ more is happening in terms of monitoring Race than other equality issues.

**Local Evaluation**

■ all 39 NDCs carry out local evaluations
■ NDCs are doing more in relation to evaluation: 30 employ staff to carry out/support local evaluation compared with 23 in 2004
■ NDCs are disseminating findings and most consider that programmes/projects have changed as a result of evaluation evidence.

**The Delivery Process**
- a revised delivery plan, community involvement and NDC Boards are generally seen to be factors assisting delivery.

Factors which have **most contributed to NDC success** in the past 12 months are:

- Partnership working (18 NDCs)
- the strengths and continuity of Boards (18)
- staff strengths and continuity (17).

The most **severe challenges** to face in the next 3 years are:

- succession strategy (21 NDCs)
- project delivery (14)
- funding (12)
- Partnership working (9)
- Board restructuring (6).

**Exit/succession strategies**

- 10 have an exit/succession strategy in place; 29 are in the process of developing one
- 38 have at least 'considered': legal status; continued service delivery; and mainstreaming projects in their exit/succession strategy.
1. **Introduction**

1.1. This Briefing Note provides an overview of responses to a 2006 NDC Partnership Survey. This questionnaire was sent out to all NDCs in August. All 39 had replied by October 2006. It was completed by NDCs staff teams, most frequently by chief executives. Occasionally, for reasons beyond the control of the national evaluation team, it is not always possible to draw on evidence from all 39 NDCs.

1.2. Comparison is sometimes possible with similar evidence obtained from NDCs during Phase 1 of the NDC evaluation (2001-05). However caution should be employed in comparing trends through time: in Phase 1 returns to these questionnaires were made by members of the national evaluation team drawing on evidence gained from a series of interviews with NDC staff, Board members and agency representatives.

**Rationale**

1.3. This Note is designed:

- to provide DCLG and other partners with an overview of key factual information across the 39 NDC Partnerships
- where possible to highlight trends through time
- and in due course to help inform the national evaluation team in exploring relationships between the largely process issues explored here (Board size, loss of a chief executive, etc) on the one hand, against outcome change and spend data, on the other.
2. The 39 Partnerships: Legal Status, Boards and Staffing

Legal Status

2.1. In the last two years there has been little change in relation to legal status (Figure 1). In 2006, 22 were companies limited by guarantee one more than in 2004. 16 NDCs had no legal status, compared with 15 in 2004. Those which are either a registered charity (6) or a Community Development Trust (4) remained stable.

2.2. 17 NDCs think that their legal status will change over the next 3 years. Eight of these will apply for charitable status and five plan to become companies limited by guarantee.

Figure 1: Legal Status: existing and planned

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Current legal status</th>
<th>2004</th>
<th>2006</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Co. Ltd by Guarantee</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charity</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Development Trust</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No legal status</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legal status will change</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>over the next 3 years (a)</td>
<td>17</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Base: All; (a) 38
Source: 2006 NDC Partnership Survey and 2004/5 Templates

Chairs and Chief Executives

2.3. 31 NDCs did not experience a change in their chair, and 29 in the chief executive, in the previous 12 months (Figure 2). Both figures are four NDCs higher than was the case in 2004. There seems to be greater stability across the Programme in relation to these key posts. This may have important and positive implications for the
Programme: during Phase 1 of the evaluation loss of a chair and/or chief executive was associated with reduced spend.

2.4. NDCs were asked how many times chairs and chief executives had changed since inception. 37 provided evidence in relation to chairs: nine have retained the same chair, whereas seven have had four changes and 10 three.

2.5. 38 provided information on changes to their chief executive:

- ten have not experienced any change
- ten only one change
- one NDC has seen six changes, one five, and three four changes.

**Figure 2: Change of Chair and Chief Executive in the last 12 months**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chair</th>
<th>2004</th>
<th>2006</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chair changed</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chair not changed</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vacancy at present</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chief Executive</th>
<th>2004</th>
<th>2006</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chief Exec changed</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chief Exec not changed</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vacancy at present</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Base: All
Source: 2006 NDC Partnership Survey

**NDC Boards**

2.6. The average size of Boards increased from 22 members in 2004 to 23 in 2006 (Figure 3). 17 have seen an increase in Board size since 2004, 15 a reduction and seven have stayed the same. The largest two Boards have 39 and 38 members respectively, while the smallest two have 12 and 14. Ten have vacancies, ranging from just one vacancy in two cases up to six vacancies in one NDC.
2.7. As was the case in 2004, on average 20 per cent of Board members are from BME communities (Figure 4). The two boards with the highest proportions of BME Board members have 64 per cent and 61 per cent respectively. Eight Boards have no BME members.

2.8. Nine saw an increase in the percentage of BME members between 2004 and 2006, 12 a decrease. BME representation on one NDC Board rose from one to six.
2.9. In all but six of the 32 instances where data is available, the proportion of BME Board members is less than the proportion of the local population made up of BME residents according to the 2006 Ipsos MORI Household Survey (Figure 5). It is not immediately obvious why this should be the case. Certainly many NDCs have made long and sustained efforts to engage with BME communities. It might have been assumed that one reason for this apparent anomaly would be that across the Programme NDC areas had seen a rapid increase of BME residents in the 2004-2006 period. Partnerships were thus trying to keep up with major demographic change. But at the **Programme wide level** there was hardly any change in ethnic composition during this two year period. But interestingly in three of the seven NDCs showing greatest disparities between BME Board membership and local demographic patterns, BME populations rose nine percentage points between 2002 and 2006. At the individual NDC level maybe some Partnerships are struggling to ensure their Board composition reflects emerging demographics.
2.10. **Figure 5: Percentage of BME Board members and BME residents in NDC area**

![Graph showing the percentage of BME Board members and BME residents in NDC area.](image)

Base: 32

Source: 2006 NDC Partnership Survey and 2006 Ipsos MORI Household Survey

Points below the 45 degree line represent a lower proportion of BME board members than would be expected given the proportion of BME residents in the area.

**Boards: gender profile**

2.11. 26 Boards have less than fifty per cent female representation. The average proportion of female members is 42 per cent, two percentage points higher than in 2004. At least two-thirds of Board members are female in three instances. In 13 instances this falls to a third or less.

**Age of Board members**

2.12. In 31 out of the 34 responding NDCs, 50 per cent or more of members are aged 25 to 59. Fifteen have at least one member under 25, one has four and two have three. All 34 have representation from the 60 and over group. In two NDCs, most members are 60 or over.

**Proportion of resident Board members**

2.13. All Boards have resident members (this includes residents and agency representatives living within NDC boundaries) (Figure 6). The average proportion rose from 54 per cent in 2004 to 59 per cent two years later. On 31 Boards residents constitute a majority. Four with the lowest proportions of resident Board members are located in the North West. Of the 11 with the highest proportion of resident members, six are in London.
2.14. Between 2004 and 2006, 27 NDCs saw an increase in the percentage of resident members, 11 by ten percentage points or more, of which 3 increased by more than twenty percentage points.

**Figure 6: Percentage of resident Board members**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Mean: 54
Mean: 59

Base: All;  
Source: 2006 NDC Partnership Survey and 2004/5 Templates  
Desired size of Board

**Length of time on Boards**

2.15. Representation on most NDC Boards is relatively stable. In 28 instances fifty per cent or more have served for over two years. In three NDCs this rises to over 90 per cent. In five instances over forty per cent of members have served less than a year.

**Voting rights**

2.16. All members have voting rights in 22 NDCs. Three NDCs have relatively low proportions of members with voting rights, two with 60 per cent and one with 70 per cent.

**Agencies on Boards**

2.17. On average Boards have representatives from seven agencies. Three NDC Boards have 11, while one has three. Agencies most frequently represented on Boards are: PCTs (37), local councillors (36), and the police (35) (Figure 7). No or low levels of membership are evident in relation to PTAs, Sure Start schemes and Connexions. The average proportion of agency representatives (*some of whom may also be residents*) has remained unchanged since 2004: 44 per cent.

2.18. Agency representatives outnumber residents (*excluding* agency representatives resident in NDC areas) on 15 of 38 responding NDCs, whereas the reverse is true.
for 19. In only one case do agencies constitute more than two thirds of a Board. In three cases more than two thirds of members are residents.

**Figure 7: Agency representation on Boards**

![Bar chart showing agency representation on Boards]

- Resident Representatives: 38
- PCT/health: 37
- LA councillors: 36
- Police/crime prevention: 35
- Voluntary/Community organisations: 27
- LA employees: 25
- Private company/trade association: 24
- JCP: 21
- LEA/FE/college/school: 20
- Youth Representatives: 17
- RSL/HA: 14
- Faith Organisations: 11
- LSC: 10
- GO: 8
- SBS/Chamber of Commerce: 7
- LSP: 5
- MP: 4
- Advisor/consultant: 3
- Connexions: 2
- Sure Start: 0
- PTA/Transport: 0
- Other: 15

Base: 38;  
Source: 2006 NDC Partnership Survey

**Board elections**

2.19. 36 NDCs have used elections to select resident members. Half of these 36 hold yearly elections, eight every two years, nine every three and one irregularly (Figure 8). 27 were able to provide turnout figures for their last election. In 13 this was less than one in five of potential voters, but in seven over a third.
Figure 8: Elections: resident Board members

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency of Elections (a)</th>
<th>Number of Partnerships</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Every year</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Every two years</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Every three years</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irregularly</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hold elections for resident board members</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Base: All; (a) 36 (all that hold elections)
Source: 2006 NDC Partnership Survey

Board operations

2.20. In 2004, and again in 2006, NDCs were asked about the extent to which they agreed with the following statements:

- Board members are clear about their roles and responsibilities
- Members have skills needed to carry out their roles effectively
- Adequate training and support are provided for members
- Board members take a strategic and long term view
- Members are happy with time commitments required of them
- Membership is stable
- Relationships within the Board are harmonious
- Relationships between the Board and NDC staff are harmonious.

2.21. Using answers to these questions, a simple composite score has been created: one point for a 'strongly agreed' or 'agreed', and a minus one for a 'disagreed' or 'strongly disagreed'. Thus across the Programme each of these eight statements is scored from minus 39 to plus 39. In 2004 responses were obtained from both Boards and programme teams. This new 2006 evidence is most directly comparable to the 2004 Board responses. Evidence of trends through time should be treated cautiously: the 2004 and 2006 surveys are not directly comparable.

2.22. For six of the eight statements there was an increase in the composite score between 2004 and 2006 (Figure 9). 'Board members are clear about their roles and responsibilities' reflects the only instance where the score decreased and this only
marginally. Increases of five points or more in composite scores occurred in relation to:

- Board members are provided with adequate training and support
- Board members have the necessary skills to carry out their roles effectively
- members take a strategic and long term view
- relations within the Board are harmonious.

2.23. This evidence suggests Board members are becoming more skilled, better at working together, and more likely to plan for the future.

Figure 9: NDC Board operation (composite scores)

Staffing

Number of staff

2.24. The average number of staff employed directly through Management and Admin budgets fell from 14 in 2004 to ten in 2006 (Figure 10). The number of staff in each NDC ranges from 19 FTE staff at the upper limit to four at the lower end. These figures do however need to be treated cautiously. Some NDCs are in effect 'staffed' in part by secondees from partner agencies.

2.25. Between 2004 and 2006, 13 increased FTE staff numbers; 24 witnessed a reduction, the largest fall being from 40 to 11.5 FTE. These reductions are likely to reflect different staffing demands as NDCs move away from activities such as project development and delivery towards other tasks including monitoring, evaluation and succession which are likely to require smaller overall staff complements.
2.26. NDCs were asked to provide evidence in relation to ‘project funded’ staff. However it is not clear that this has been answered in a consistent manner. NDCs with major housing and physical environment programmes are in any event likely to have larger numbers employed though project budgets. Returns showed that the average number of FTE staff employed through project budgets in 2006 is 41, although one NDC ‘employs’ 414, while another employs six. 24 NDCs increased FTE staff employed through project budgets; ten saw a fall.

Staff Profiles: gender and ethnicity

2.27. Nearly two-thirds of staff employed through Management and Admin budgets are female. Only four NDCs employ more males than females. In five Partnerships at least 80 per cent of staff are female; in one this rises to 92 per cent.

2.28. Of the thirty providing complete data on ethnicity five do not employ any BME staff. Of the 10 with the highest proportions of BME staff, six are located in London.

Turnover and staffing issues

2.29. NDCs were asked about four staffing issues: staff complement; turnover; recruiting appropriately skilled staff; and planned changes in the next 3 years (Figure 11):

- 29 NDCs maintained a full complement of staff over the previous 12 months; seven indicated that staff turnover had been a problem
- fourteen have difficulty in recruiting staff with appropriate skills; in 2004 26 had indicated this to be the case
in 2006 the most common recruitment difficulties related to project managers (four NDCs); theme specialists (four); and staff with evaluation and research skills (three)

twenty-three think the composition of the staff team will change in the next three years; of these 11 consider there will be a decrease in staffing levels; two are planning a short term increase, and seven a restructuring.

Figure 11: Staffing trends

2.30. On average NDCs had a 13 per cent turnover of staff funded through their Management and Admin budgets. Four had a turnover of 30 per cent or more. In one this rose to 50 per cent. Ten had no turnover. Seven partnerships considered turnover to be a problem.
3. The Wider Context: Other ABIs and Agency Engagement

Engagement with other Area Based Initiatives (ABIs)

3.1. All NDC areas contain at least two other overlapping ABIs. The average number of ABIs in NDC areas is 6, as was the case in 2004. Three NDC areas have eleven other ABIs operating within their boundaries.

3.2. Drug Action Teams (DAT), Youth Inclusion Programmes (YiPs), Neighbourhood Wardens, and European Structural Funds are most frequently located within NDC areas (Figure 12). Since 2004, the number of NDC areas containing DATs has increased by five, YiPs 4, and Neighbourhood Wardens 6.

Figure 12: ABIs located within NDC areas

3.3. Not surprisingly, ABIs with which NDCs engage a ‘great deal or a ‘fair amount’ are DATs, Neighbourhood Wardens and YiPs, (Figure 13). All NDCs within HMR Pathfinders, engage with them ‘a great deal’ or ‘a fair amount’.

3.4. The number of overlapping ABIs with which NDCs engage ranges from 11 to two; the average being five. All NDCs engage with over half of overlapping ABIs, five with all of them.
Figure 13: ABIs with which NDCs engage 'a great deal' or 'a fair amount' in partnership working

![Bar chart showing the number of partnerships with various agencies.]

- Drug Action Teams (a) 26
- Neighbourhood Wardens 26
- Youth Inclusion Programme 20
- Sure Start 20
- European Structural Funds Areas 19
- Action Team for Jobs 11
- Housing Market Renewal Pathfinders 11
- Building Safer Communities (a) 8
- Education Action Zones 8
- SRB 7
- Sports Action Zones 7
- Early Excellence Centres 6
- Urban Regeneration Companies 6
- Employment Zones 4
- Home Zones 4
- Other 3

Base: All; (a) 38
Source: 2006 NDC Partnership Survey

Engagement with agencies

3.5. On average NDCs have significant engagement with nine agencies. This ranges from one NDC having significant engagement with 16, to two having significant engagement with three. The four agencies with which most NDCs have significant engagement are the police, with whom 38 describe their engagement as 'significant', local authority housing departments, PCTs, and local authority environment and leisure departments (Figure 14).
3.6. NDCs were asked whether agency engagement had 'severely constrained,' 'constrained,' (been) 'neutral,' 'helped' or 'significantly helped' delivery. Using these responses a composite score has been created based on:

- 'significantly helped' and 'helped' scored = +1
- 'neutral' = 0
- 'severely constrained' and 'constrained' = -1

3.7. Each agency can thus potentially achieve a score ranging from -39 (all NDCs report 'severely constrained' or 'constrained') to +39 (all NDCs report 'significantly helped' or 'helped'). The police, LEA, PCT and Jobcentre Plus recorded highest scores (Figure 15). Interestingly a majority of NDCs stated that engagement with their local Learning Skills Council had constrained delivery.

3.8. In assessing relationships with agencies each NDC could potentially 'score' from +18 (all 18 identified agencies help delivery) to -18 (all agencies constrain delivery). The highest 'scored' 17, while the lowest three scored -2, -4 and -4 respectively.
### Figure 15: Agencies: engagement helping or constraining delivery (composite score)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agency</th>
<th>Composite Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Police</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Education Authority</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary Care Trust</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job Centre Plus (a)</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LA Housing</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LA Environment and Leisure</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LA Regen/Economic Devt department</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Further Education Institutions</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Registered Social Landlords</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leisure and Youth Services</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LSP</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connexions</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transport Authority (b)</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Services</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small Business Service (a)</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RDA (a)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning Skills Council (a)</td>
<td>-2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>-4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Base: All; (a) 38; (b) 37
Source: 2006 NDC Partnership Survey
Note: Composite score: ‘Significantly helped’ and ‘helped’ score +1, ‘neutral’ scored 0 and ‘severely constrained’ and ‘constrained’ score -1

3.9. Thirty-four NDCs consider they are involved with their **Local Strategic Partnership**. For 20 of these 34, this involvement is significant. NDCs are involved most frequently through chairs and/or chief executives sitting on LSP Boards, sub-committees or groups, and also closer alignment of LSP with NDC targets.

3.10. Thirty-two are involved with the **Local Area Agreement** covering their area. The exceptions were the five not involved with their LSP plus two more. NDCs are most obviously involved by being on project/steering/working groups, and by helping to formulate and share targets and outcomes.
4. Delivering Neighbourhood Renewal: equalities, evaluation, delivery and succession

Equalities and diversity

4.1. Across the Programme the emphasis tends to be placed on equality issues in relation to project appraisal (37 NDCs), staff training (37), training Board members (34), and implementing racial equality policies/strategies (34) (Figure 16). Compared with 2004, more NDCs are undertaking activities designed to promote equalities and diversities. However, as has been true since the Programme was launched, more is being done in relation to BME issues than, say, disability or gender.

Figure 16: Equalities and diversities

4.2. More NDCs are monitoring equalities and diversity issues in 2006 than was the case in 2004 (Figure 17), other than in relation to Sexual Orientation. Again there is evidence that more is happening in relation to race than for other equality issues: 36 NDCs monitor the impact of their projects on race, at least 7 more than for other equalities issue.
Figure 17: Monitoring equality and diversity impacts of NDC projects

Local Evaluation

4.3. NDCs are generally more active in relation to evaluation tasks than was the case in 2004 (Figure 18). For instance more are planning and undertaking evaluations:

- all NDCs carry out project specific evaluations
- thirty-one have drawn up an evaluation plan, in 2004 this was true for only 22 NDCs
- 23 are assessing the impact of NDC activities on BME groups, eleven more than in 2004.

4.4. Partnerships are also taking on a greater role in evaluation:

- 36 have a member of staff responsible for evaluation, one more than in 2004
- only five use consultants for all of local evaluation activities, compared with 13 in 2004
- 30 employ staff to carry out/support local evaluation compared to 23 in 2004
- 35 use residents in evaluations, four more than in 2004.

4.5. And local evaluation activities are having more of an impact. 24 have programmes for the dissemination of findings. 37 think that evaluation evidence has changed projects, and 34 that it has changed programmes.
4.6. Partnerships were asked the degree to which a range of process issues either constrained or encouraged delivery. A composite score for each issue has been created whereby 'seriously constrained' and 'constrained' responses scored -1, 'neutral/not an issue' and 'don't know' 0 and 'assisted' and 'greatly assisted' +1 (Figure 19). Revised delivery plans, community involvement, NDC Boards and evaluation activities have most assisted delivery in the previous 12 months. As has consistently been the case, Human Resource issues are viewed as being the least assisting/ most constraining factor.

4.7. Between 2004 and 2006 there was marked increase in NDCs considering three factors assisted delivery: community involvement, evaluation, and internal financial and management systems. It should be remembered of course that these 2006 results are based on NDC responses. In 2004 members of the national evaluation team completed returns drawing on evidence from interviews with NDC staff members, Board members and others. So it is not perhaps surprising to find that the 2006 responses are generally more optimistic. That may well reflect reality, but it is worth commenting on the three delivery factors apparently showing greatest improvement between 2004 and 2006:

- all of the evidence available to the national evaluation points to there being a much greater emphasis across the Programme in relation to all aspects of local evaluation
- internal management/financial systems have improved: initial work in several of the six case studies during 2006 suggests that NDC staff are firmly of the view that improved systems have dramatically helped delivery
but it is not clear why community engagement in 2006 should be seen in a more positive light than in 2004: this may reflect different perspectives emerging from the national evaluation team's 2004 assessment when compared with that from NDCs themselves in 2006.
Figure 19: Factors assisting and constraining delivery in the past 12 months (composite score)

Base: 2006 All; (a) 38; 2004 All
Source: 2006 NDC Partnership Survey / 2004-05 NDC Templates
Note: 2004 scores include three sets of responses: from the Partnership Board, the Programme Team and from Agencies. The 2004 composite score is an average of the three sets of responses.

4.8. NDCs were also given an opportunity to provide their own observations in relation to two open ended questions:

- ‘…. state the three factors which have contributed to your Partnership’s success in the past year’
- ‘and the three main challenges your organisation will face in the year to come.’

4.9. In relation to factors contributing to success the most frequently mentioned issues are:

- Partnership working (18 NDCs)
- Boards strengths and continuity (18)
- Staff strengths and continuity (17)
- Strategy (14)
- Community engagement (12)
- Internal systems (12)
- Projects (11)
- the positive impact of the Chair and/or Chief Executive (9).
4.10. And with regard to challenges the most commonly identified issues are:

- succession strategy (21)
- project delivery (14)
- funding (12 NDCs)
- Partnership working (9)
- Board restructure (6)
- staff retention and or restructuring (6)

**Exit/succession strategies**

4.11. 10 NDCs currently have an exit/succession strategy in place, with the other 29 in the process of developing one. Of those developing an exit/succession strategy, 11 think it will be in place in the next 6 months, 14 between 6 months and a year, and 3 between one and two years.

4.12. Legal status, continued service delivery and proposals for mainstreaming projects have been considered by 38 (Figure 20). 37 have at least considered asset management and also continued income streams, and 35 trading income.

*Figure 20: Issues considered in exit/succession strategies*

Base: All; (a) 38
Source: 2006 NDC Partnership Survey