

LOCAL PARTNERSHIPS

The public sector delivery specialists

OUR WORK

Assurance – staying on track
and saving you money



Local Partnerships provides short, inexpensive but effective reviews on high impact, high risk projects or programmes to help ensure you're 'on track' and maximise your chance of success

Background

Assurance reviews are carried out at key points in the life of a project or programme. They are peer reviews undertaken by trained and experienced consultants as well as experienced professionals working in local public sector organisations.

Reviews consist of a series of interviews with stakeholders preceded by key document review and followed by a short focused report with findings and recommendations delivered before the review team leave site. Reviews offer informed constructive challenge and recognise good practice as well as setting out areas for improvement and recommendations for success.



“ Thank you very much to you and your team for a thorough and forward thinking review that will undoubtedly help us to do the project better.”

Jill Campbell, Project Manager, Bradford Council

The setup and three days onsite work were challenging. We have now decided to continue the Gateway Reviews throughout the whole life cycle of this programme.”

David O'Connor, Assistant Chief Executive, Lincolnshire County Council

The observations and recommendations will leave a legacy of learning and improvement far beyond the project.”

Ian Watson, Assistant Chief Officer, Humberside Police

Our assurance offer

Assurance is an essential element of strong governance. It is a process that provides a project board and senior management with an independent assessment of the state of health of their project or programme, answering questions like:

- ▶ how likely is our project to succeed?
- ▶ how confident can we be that our investment will deliver the agreed benefits to the required quality, on time and within budget?
- ▶ what should we do to improve our chances of successful delivery?

Local Partnerships helps to answer these questions through a tailored range of assurance reviews.

Our approach

We have a ten year track record of organising and delivering high quality cost effective assurance reviews. With access to high quality accredited reviewers across a wide range of disciplines with a diverse skill set, our approach can be tailored to your organisation's needs.

Outcomes

During 2013/14, Local Partnerships conducted 27 assurance reviews, including 18 Gateway Reviews and 9 Health Checks. This supported the delivery of 25 local initiatives and employed the expertise of around 50 specialist assessors.



We offer 4 types of assurance product:

Gateway Reviews – we are the only Government accredited provider of Gateway Reviews, a process that will examine your project or programme at its critical points and provide an independent objective view of how well placed it is to move forward to the next stage. A Gateway Review is:

- ▶ designed for complex projects of high value and high risk where there are multiple stakeholders for example, a multi-million pound procurement exercise for a new road, building or service or a major change or transformation initiative
- ▶ undertaken at key stages of a project
- ▶ typically comprised of one day to review documents, a half day planning meeting, and three days on site by a four person team
- ▶ provided by peers and experts – at least two members of the review team will be peers from other local authorities with expertise in similar projects.

Health Checks – these are shorter more focused reviews. A Health Check is:

- ▶ suitable for a number of small complex issues on major complex projects or wide ranging reviews of medium size projects
- ▶ flexible and tailored to the needs of the project or programme
- ▶ typically comprised of a day's planning and document review and two days on site for a two person team of peers and experts
- ▶ undertaken through a mix of interviews and facilitated stakeholder discussions.

Internal Assurance Toolkit – Local Partnerships has developed a flexible toolkit that can be adapted for use by any local authority. The overall aim of the toolkit is to develop an assurance programme that can be used on projects either internally or in partnership with other local public bodies.

The toolkit provides a strategic approach to strengthen corporate governance and robust decision making. It is designed to improve the rigour and discipline in procurement, commissioning, change management and contract management, particularly for projects and programmes of work that don't necessarily require an external review.

The toolkit is designed to be:

- ▶ easy to use yet robust enough to demonstrate it being an added value process
- ▶ flexible and free from unnecessary complexity and jargon
- ▶ within the basic requirements of the Cabinet Office accredited assurance process
- ▶ easily rolled out to other public sector bodies, creating a common approach to internal reviews.

We will provide on-going support to develop assurance capabilities in-house, review team leaders and to ensure the toolkit is maintained to include lessons learned from other authorities.



Swiftsure – quick (usually one day on site) and cost effective, providing focused support:

- ▶ suitable for smaller projects of up to around £100 thousand in capital expenditure
- ▶ focused on a single topic or issue – for example governance or stakeholder engagement
- ▶ comprises a one day document review followed by one day on site for a single accredited reviewer.

Gateway Reviews, Health Checks and Swiftsure all include a confidential report before the review team leaves your site, highlighting key themes and principles, as well as constructive advice for where improvements or changes could be made.

Contact

Please get in touch to find out more about how an assurance review could help you and to discuss the options available, or to speak to Local Partnerships about how we could support you in other areas of your work delivering local services.



Local Partnerships is jointly owned by



HM Treasury

Local Partnerships, the public sector delivery specialists

Local Partnerships, Local Government House, Smith Square, London SW1P 3HZ
020 7187 7379 | LPenquiries@local.gov.uk | [@LP_localgov](https://twitter.com/LP_localgov) | localpartnerships.org.uk