

**MAKING A DIFFERENCE:
EFFECTIVE IMPLEMENTATION OF CROSS-CUTTING POLICY**

**A Scottish Executive Policy Unit Review
Kenneth Hogg
June 2000**

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SUMMARY OF MAIN MESSAGES

Effective implementation of cross-cutting policy: why it matters

1. The Scottish Executive will be judged by the extent to which it delivers on its objectives. The Executive does not deliver at its own hand the programmes to meet most of these targets: eg those in Programme for Government or the Social Justice Strategy. It is important to address how we interact with and support the agencies which do deliver them.

2. Many of the Executive's key objectives tackle complex social and economic issues which require a multi-agency cross-cutting response. Since 1997 the volume and profile of cross-cutting policy has increased markedly, as have the numbers of associated initiatives and multi-agency partnerships. This has been the territory for the review.

Symptoms: experiences of cross-cutting

- within the Executive: a lot of effort, but not yet seeing sufficient results on the ground.
- within delivery agencies: agreement that cross-cutting approach is right; but too many initiatives, plans and partnerships. Not clear how they all fit together. Mixed messages from the Executive about the relative importance of cross-cutting issues.

Diagnosis: updating how we work

3. We identify 3 main areas:

- policy development process: taking account of implementation issues
 - sponsorship role: how we interact with the agencies which deliver
 - supporting partnerships: making life easier for the delivery mechanisms
- } discussed in sections 3, 4 and 5

Prescription: what do we do about it?

4. Specific recommendations for each of the areas above are set out in sections 3, 4 and 5, and are summarised in section 7. More generally, the recommendations are targeted to help meet a number of common concerns:

- concerns about achieving real changes in outcomes in return for the significant inputs being invested in cross-cutting approaches;
- concerns about the need for clearer prioritisation and targeting of effort and resources on the things which matter most;
- agencies' concerns about initiative overload, the proliferation of partnerships, and mixed messages from the Executive about their role in delivering cross-cutting policy;
- ultimately, the need for more efficient and effective service delivery which meets people's needs and wishes. This review is about making a difference.

INTRODUCTION

Purpose

What? “To examine the interface between policy development and policy implementation to ensure the right conditions for translating cross-cutting policy into joined up service delivery.”

Why? The Scottish Executive wants to demonstrate that its policies deliver real change. Since 1997 much Government policy has promoted a cross-cutting approach. It is therefore timely to consider if how we operate is appropriate for this kind of working. This project focuses on putting cross-cutting policy into practice: identifying what helps effective implementation and what hinders.

Cross-cutting policy

What? Cross-cutting policy addresses issues irrespective of institutional or organisational boundaries. In this report it usually means policy developed jointly by Departments and which depends on a range of agencies for its delivery. Examples include social inclusion, improving health, rural development, tackling drugs, the New Deal and sustainable development.

Extent of increase? Non-cross cutting, or ‘single agency’ issues remain, and continue to account for much Government expenditure eg most NHS health care. Cross-cutting solutions are not appropriate for every issue¹. But they are increasingly being used to tackle key social and economic issues. Consequently, both the proportion and profile of cross-cutting policy has increased, through cross-cutting initiatives such as New Community Schools and across entire policy areas such as improving health.

Reason for increase? The major social problems confronting individuals and Government alike do not come neatly sub-divided. The Modernising Government agenda aims to remove barriers to effective and convenient services that stem from the way they are organised or delivered. People want well coordinated and responsive services. Cross-cutting policy responds to that wish.

In addition, since 1997 the Government has founded its programme of reform on tackling not only the consequences of social and economic problems, but the root causes of the problems themselves. Priorities include better health (not just better health care), giving children a better start in life (not just better education), tackling the causes of crime (not just criminals), and attacking poverty. This has required new approaches: cross-cutting policies to deliver joined-up services.

¹ Section 4 of the Performance and Innovation Unit’s report *Wiring It Up: Whitehall’s Management of Cross-cutting Policies and Services* (January 2000) provides a decision making framework which helps to identify: when a cross-cutting approach could be worthwhile; and the right kind of intervention. (See www.cabinet-office.gov.uk/innovation/1999/wiring/coiwire.pdf)

Conclusions

Short term

The project's recommendations are primarily for the Scottish Executive: both Ministers and officials. Across the UK, Government is still at a relatively early stage in handling major cross-cutting policies. This report identifies impediments to success and suggests practical changes. A full list of recommendations is provided at Section 7. Two general themes which emerge are:

- our policy development processes and policy management structures are not all fit for purpose to deliver cross-cutting policy objectives;
- we need to pay more attention to the implementation half of the policy equation. It is in the Executive's interest that the organisations which deliver our policy objectives are clear about what is wanted, have the tools to deliver, and operate in an environment conducive to effective implementation.

Longer term

The report also sets out at Section 6 a vision for the future: how the Executive's policy implementation structures and process might look in time if current trends in favour of the cross-cutting approach continue.

Methodology

We took views from a wide range of staff in the Scottish Executive and delivery agencies on a wide range of policies. To ensure some consistency across geographical areas we specifically discussed 4 in each area:

- 1999 drugs strategy 'Tackling Drugs in Scotland' (1999)
- New Community Schools;
- 'Modernising Community Care' (1998);
- New Deal (18-24).

For full details of methodology and process see Annex A.

Definitions

See Annex A. One term in particular is important. "Delivery agencies" is used to describe collectively the organisations which put into practice Scottish Executive policy. These include public bodies (eg local authorities, NDPBs and Health Boards); voluntary organisations (key service deliverers in areas such as community care, social inclusion, regeneration and childcare); and private sector bodies (eg in delivering the New Deal). We fully recognise however that these agencies' role can extend well beyond being delivery agents of the Executive. This is true in particular of local authorities, which have a separate mandate to set policy priorities in response to local needs. Understanding the differences between the agencies is a critical part of the analysis.

STOCK-TAKE OF CROSS-CUTTING EXPERIENCE IN SCOTLAND

5. Cross-cutting policy approaches are not new in Scotland. Government and delivery agencies have long recognised the usefulness of joint working, and we therefore have experience to draw on. But the scale of cross-cutting activity now underway, driven by the Executive, is unprecedented. There are signs that the policy implementation ‘machine’ is struggling to cope and that overall implementation is being compromised.

6. Subsequent sections of this report consider whether the Scottish Executive needs some fine tuning to manage better this activity and ensure that it produces real change. This section summarises the situation which both the Executive and delivery agencies currently face: good and bad.

Cross-cutting in Scotland: strengths to build on

Tradition of collaborative innovative working at local level: eg

- meeting the needs of children through the Hearings system
- health visitors as link professionals to other services
- close collaboration between public sector and voluntary organisations

Pioneering the concept of partnership working: eg

- within the European Community - in European structural funding programmes. Scotland has led the development of funding partnerships since 1980s and is still regarded as an example of best practice by the European Commission;
- within the UK - in urban regeneration programmes. £485 million was invested in New Life for Urban Scotland partnerships between 1988 and 1998, an unprecedented level of investment in partnerships.

More recent experience to draw on of partnership working in almost all cross-cutting policy areas. (See list of partnerships at Annex B).

Geographic coverage: joined-up approaches are in place right across Scotland, including in the most rural and remote areas: eg geographic coverage of Councils for Voluntary Service (since 1960s); and more recently the rural partnerships (mid-1990s).

Significant degree of consensus at national and local level around policy priorities: social justice, children, health, education.

No additional tier of regional Government offices; no action zones.

Manageable scale and size: possible to get representatives of all local authorities/Health Boards/local enterprise companies at the same meeting.

Opportunities to build on developing community planning infrastructure.

Cross-cutting policy in Scotland: the view from delivery agencies

- many examples of agencies taking the initiative locally to work in partnership, unprompted by Government: eg Highland Wellbeing Alliance; Glasgow Alliance
- new cross-cutting organisational structures being implemented: eg children's services

- Local authorities: 88 Government initiatives & 63 consultation papers in 6 months¹
- In 9 months, 265 Scottish Office circulars to one local authority Chief Executive + 244 to Director of Education; + 297 more circulars from COSLA²

Widespread local support for cross-cutting approach and partnership working. But ...

- Highland Council area: 140 partnerships³
- Fife Council area: 150
- South Lanarkshire Council: 50
- Glasgow Dev Agency: 80; (invited to attend all 17 sub-groups of one of its 8 SIPs).
- Easterhouse: covered by 7⁴

Swamped by Government initiatives. Question coherence.

Cross-cutting delivery systems seizing up.

Too many partnerships to support properly; overlap; duplication.

Too much effort spent on unnecessary plans. Limited real value. Overlap.

Mixed messages about cross-cutting from the Executive.

Agencies geographic boundaries not co-terminous.

- City of Edinburgh Council: 24 area-wide plans, most required by Executive.

- rarely given credit for partnership working in performance management systems
- not included in corporate contracts
- unclear about priority between initiatives

- Greater Glasgow Health Board covers 6 local authority areas (hence 6 community care plans)
- Lothian Health Board covers 4

¹ *Audit of Government Initiatives and Consultation Documents (SOLACE)*, 1999) Study period: October 1998 - March 1999. The Scottish Executive has not verified the figures, but a research study being carried out by CRU on behalf of the Development Department will provide baseline data about the demands placed on local authorities by summer 2000. In addition, COSLA and the Accounts Commission also made demands of local authorities in the same period.

² Time period: July 1998 – March 1999.

³ NB: the methodologies used to calculate numbers of partnerships vary by agency. They do, however, give an impression of the scale of activity involved.

⁴ Specifically: Priority Partnership Area; Social Inclusion Partnership; Glasgow Alliance; Employment Zone; Communities the Care; Working for Communities; New Community School

RENEWING THE POLICY DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

The Scottish Executive rarely delivers cross-cutting policy at its own hand: it relies instead on a range of agencies to implement policy initiatives. They, not the Executive, will deliver the outcome based targets in the Programme for Government and Social Justice strategy. Involving these agencies in the policy development process can help to identify early and address the issues which may make a difference to implementation on the ground.

Building implementation issues into policy development

7. **Importance?** Listening to the views of delivery agencies on policy proposals can help to anticipate implementation problems and ensure agencies are clear what is being asked of them. It also helps to identify early on the areas where central and local priorities overlap: effective implementation is more likely if agencies and frontline staff are enthusiastic about it. Formal consultation on final proposals usually comes too late for this, by which stage it is also presentationally difficult to announce major changes in direction. Meaningful early discussion is more useful and more likely to foster local ownership of initiatives. And given that some cross-cutting outcomes can take many years to achieve – eg improvements in health – it is important to establish at the outset robust and sustainable delivery arrangements.

8. **Current situation?** The involvement of agencies varies considerably across the Executive, as it did in our 4 ‘sample’ initiatives:

- 1999 drugs strategy - produced with intensive involvement and contributions from delivery and partner agencies³;
- New Community Schools - used seminars (one national and 3 local before pilots invited; more later) and written consultation. Also a good example of an initiative where central and local thinking coincided. Despite the short deadline for the submission of bids (6 weeks over Christmas) and other complaints about funding, local authorities and other agencies agreed with the substance of the initiative and pursued it enthusiastically;
- Modernising Community Care - national seminar run jointly with COSLA;
- New Deal (18-24) - UK initiative and key 1997 manifesto pledge. Agencies we spoke to reported little local agency involvement prior to launch; some felt it duplicated existing programmes; little attempt initially to align national and local policy thinking⁴.

9. **Changes?** Any policy development process has to reflect the timescale and dedicated resources available. Equally, for valid reasons Ministers may wish to develop the Executive’s thinking on policy issues before formally involving other organisations. But the earlier delivery agencies are brought into the policy development process, the better the opportunity to incorporate implementation realities into policy proposals, foster local ownership, and capitalise on local enthusiasm for change in areas where central and local thinking coincides.

³ Another example where external stakeholders felt involved is the Best Value Task Force. It was established in 1997 to pursue the development of Best Value on a voluntary, non-legislative basis. It comprised a small group (9 in total); chaired by the Scottish Executive; with 5 COSLA and one Accounts Commission representatives. The Task Force published four reports, with the final report (December 1999) listing recommendations on the future of Best Value.

⁴ An alternative view is that the New Deal does include flexibility in its design, but that it remains largely untapped by local agencies.

We recommend that delivery agencies are routinely involved in the process of policy development, and that any decision not to do so is a conscious one weighing up the potential benefits of early involvement. A similar commitment is contained within the Scottish Compact with the voluntary sector, and full implementation of its commitments was a central recommendation of a recent Policy Unit review⁵.

10. In addition, delivery agencies seem not always to be clear about **when** they are being consulted or the basis of the consultation (eg on policy, implementation or both). They may attend seminars on policy proposals without realising that is to be their sole opportunity to express views. Equally, if the importance of such events is not flagged up clearly by the Executive some agencies may not realise their significance and choose not to attend, unwittingly forfeiting their only chance to offer comments. **We recommend that, whatever the form of consultation, signposting should clearly convey the message: ‘if you have any views, speak up now’ and what specifically views are being sought on.**

Consultation timescales

11. **Importance?** Formal consultation is one way of seeking views on policy proposals from delivery agencies. The Executive is also keen to take into account communities’ views: the greater the community ownership of initiatives the greater the chances of effective implementation. Meaningful consultation with agencies, communities and voluntary organisations takes time, but time is often at a premium in the policy development process.

12. **Current situation?** There are widespread complaints from delivery agencies about the length of time the Executive provides for consultation: at times only 6-8 weeks⁶. Agencies point out that pulling together a co-ordinated and considered view, and clearing it through the requisite committees can take up to 12 weeks, particularly where community views are sought: local authorities often need to circulate Executive consultation papers further to seek views from community or voluntary sector groups. Traditional consultation mechanisms can also be inappropriate for communities: eg too formal seminars or guidance circulars with too detailed information are not helpful. Overall, the Executive risks giving the impression that it pays only lip service to benefits of community involvement.

13. **Changes?** A recent review of Cabinet Office guidance on written consultation supports the view that many of those consulted find the current 8 week recommended period insufficient. **The Policy Unit’s Civic Participation study⁷ recommends that for written consultation exercises, policy divisions should normally allow 12 weeks. We also recommend that where community views are specifically sought, policy divisions consider providing longer timescales and using different forms of consultation eg local meetings and participative events.**

⁵ The voluntary sector delivers some of the Executive’s key objectives in cross-cutting areas. For example, **community care** (it provides 86% of residential care places for people with mental health problems and 66% of places for people with learning difficulties); **social justice** (it has a mandatory role within Social Inclusion Partnerships) ; and **childcare** (provides around 50% of childcare places). Source: Policy Unit review of the Scottish Executive’s relationship with the voluntary sector (1999).

⁶ On a related point, delivery agencies are also unhappy about the timescales set for submitting bids.

⁷ See **Civic Participation** (Scottish Executive Policy Unit study, February 2000) paras 29-31

Developing political relationships and clarifying roles/responsibilities

14. **Importance?** Elected members have a strong bearing on local authorities' implementation of Scottish Executive policy, as do chairmen and board members of NDPBs. They agree priorities for action locally and set budgets (local government budgets comprise 32% of the total Scottish Executive budget⁸), balancing national initiatives with local programmes to meet local need. The stance they take on any particular issue is informed by their view of their organisation's responsibilities in relation to the Scottish Executive, and the extent to which they accept a role as delivery agents for the Scottish Executive.

15. **Current situation?** Engaging local political leaders tends not to be addressed in developing Executive policy. And although Executive officials have good links with their counterparts in local government officials (we received positive feedback on this), there is a tendency to read the latter's agreement as having the Council signed up. This neglects the role of elected members and risks jeopardising policy implementation by misreading the degree of local support.

16. Agencies question whether the Executive realises the extent to which implementing national initiatives absorbs resource and diverts staff from other work. And there are strong views within Councils that their democratic mandate gives them the right to set priorities locally (and allocate resources accordingly) to meet their residents' needs, rather than necessarily giving priority to implementing national policy priorities. Elected members are not inclined to accept a role as Scottish Executive delivery agents. Some local authority officials feel their lines of accountability are uncomfortably ambiguous: ie between their elected members and the Scottish Executive whose policies they are also delivering. Many feel that central government does not trust local government.

17. Our analysis reflects the current balance between central government and local government/agencies' responsibilities. That point of balance has changed over time and may do so again in the future. But we do not have the capacity to centralise everything, so the tension between central and local responsibilities will remain. While there may be some comfort for the Executive in centrally directing initiatives, experience suggests that greater delegation to, and flexibility at, local level can produce better results by fostering local ownership, harnessing local energies and encouraging local innovation.

18. **Changes?** Local government's delivery of Executive policy is a critical factor in effective implementation. We need a sustainable relationship which recognises local government's mandate to set local priorities but also secures delivery of Executive policy. Strengthened links with elected members could help develop shared political agendas and remove blockages to delivery: perhaps best achieved by Ministerial-Councillor contact. The McIntosh Report recommended a "formal working agreement" to ensure regular dialogue⁹. COSLA is working on 'covenants' between local government, the Executive and Parliament. **Whatever the outcome of McIntosh recommendations, it would be worth the Executive investing more effort in aligning central and local priorities, identifying territory where national and local policy priorities overlap.**

⁸ 1999/2000 figures, comprising AEF (Revenue Support Grant and Non-Domestic Rates) minus Specific Grants (over which authorities have no discretion to alter spending priorities), and excluding capital expenditure.

⁹ *Moving Forward: Report of the Commission on Local Government and The Scottish Parliament* (June 1999) Paragraphs 44-45

RENEWING THE SPONSORSHIP ROLE

The ways in which the Scottish Executive interacts with delivery agencies, and the messages which it conveys to them about policy priorities, affect policy implementation. The sponsorship role between the Executive and delivery agencies (formal in the case of NDPBs and Health Boards, loosely defined in the case of local authorities) is critical in reinforcing those messages. Our analysis suggests that by renewing sponsorship arrangements we can better support cross-cutting policy implementation.

Reinforcing the cross-cutting messages

19. **Importance?** Scottish Executive sponsor divisions manage the performance, financial and accountability relationship with the Health Boards and Non-Department Public Bodies (NDPBs) which report to Scottish Executive Ministers¹⁰. They therefore help frame the ‘Scottish Executive message’ to delivery agencies in relation to policy priorities, cross-cutting or otherwise, and influence organisational behaviour.

20. They also provide one of the main communication channels between delivery agencies and the Executive¹¹: agencies are particularly sensitive to messages from their sponsor divisions. If faced with apparently conflicting Executive messages, agencies will seek sponsor divisions’ guidance on which to prioritise, and tend to give greater weight to messages from sponsor divisions than from other Scottish Executive Departments. Even although they may not lead on any policy initiatives themselves, sponsor divisions’ actions strongly influence how effectively policies are implemented.

21. **Current situation?** In line with their differing constitutional status, sponsorship arrangements differ for the different organisations¹². We highlight three main concerns with current sponsorship and performance management arrangements.

22. Firstly, **NDPBs and Health Boards are not always held to account by sponsor divisions for their involvement in partnerships**, or given credit for their contribution. Despite the fact that much partnership activity is carried out at the request of the Executive, it

¹⁰ Examples are listed in the table below.

Delivery agencies	Sponsor Division	Department
Health Boards	Performance Management Division	Management Executive, HD
Scottish Enterprise & HIE	Enterprise & Tourism Division	ELLD
Scottish Homes	Housing 2 Division	DD
Scottish Natural Heritage	Countryside & Natural Heritage Unit	RAD

¹¹ Although it is not technically a sponsor division, the Voluntary Issues Unit provides a communication channel with the voluntary sector and a single initial point of contact within the Executive for voluntary bodies.

¹² For example, there are strong accountability and performance management arrangements between Health Boards (not technically NDPBs) and the NHS Management Executive, including annual face to face accountability reviews and ongoing in-year monitoring. NDPBs receive Ministerial direction on how to use the resources allocated to them (via annual guidance letters) but tend to be performance managed with a relatively light touch by their sponsor divisions. Local authorities have a much looser accountability to the Scottish Executive for their performance (direct accountability for specific grant expenditure; indirect accountability to the Accounts Commission) and may set expenditure priorities locally.

rarely features fully in agencies' corporate objectives, agreed with sponsor divisions. Thus, the objectives set for Scottish Enterprise and HIE largely relate to economic growth, business birth rate and training, rather than tackling social exclusion or contribution to rural partnerships. Scottish Homes' objectives relate mainly to housing, yet it is one of the key agencies involved in cross-cutting regeneration work. Health Boards' work in drug action teams, social inclusions partnerships, regeneration partnerships, community safety partnerships, and new community schools has tended not to feature in their accountability reviews or in their corporate contracts¹³. One NDPB (at the 'responsive' end of the spectrum) told us:

“cross-cutting issues and partnership will be a priority for us when our contract with the Scottish Executive says it's a priority”

23. Secondly, in the absence of a formal sponsoring function within the Executive for local authorities (reflecting their different constitutional position) we should make the most of other levers to reinforce the cross-cutting messages. **Best Value currently provides one of the strongest levers available to encourage joint working.** Some progress has already been made with the cross-cutting application of Best Value to several agencies delivering particular services: eg strategic reviews done by East Dunbartonshire, Fife and South Ayrshire on economic development and children's services. Work such as this can and should be encouraged by the Executive. As a lever, Best Value has the advantages in Scotland of having been developed with a relatively inclusive approach (compared to England) but Ministers retain the ability to control its future development.

24. Thirdly, the Executive could usefully provide **more advance warning for agencies of forthcoming initiatives or areas of policy change which will affect them.** Not knowing about these can undermine agencies' strategic and resource planning. Effective early warning systems are particularly important for agencies affected by initiatives emanating from several Departments of the Executive. Delivery agencies say they **are** usually aware in advance of most policy initiatives coming down the tracks. But that seems to happen often via their links to professional and advisory bodies, other public agencies, and personal contacts, **not** formal communication from the Scottish Executive.

“As a Health Board we often hear about relevant initiatives from the Council, not the Health Department” (Health Board General Manager)

25. **Changes?** We recommend that the Executive renews sponsorship arrangements. Taken together, the recommendations should not significantly increase the amount of work currently undertaken by sponsor divisions. But they will change their role in some respects, to support more effectively cross-cutting policy implementation. **We recommend that:**

- sponsor divisions are re-cast as the interface between the agency and the **Executive**, not one particular Department. Sponsor divisions should be familiar with the full range of cross-cutting issues which affect their agencies now or might do so in the future. As a consequence:

¹³ This is however changing: the NHS performance management process is currently being reviewed to take account of social justice and other wider objectives.

- **corporate contracts and guidance letters should reflect the full range of cross-cutting activity, as should agencies' strategic objectives;**
- **sponsor divisions should provide for their agencies more systematic advance notice of forthcoming initiatives/policy changes which will affect them,** regardless of the Scottish Executive Department from which the initiatives will originate.
- **we should make the most of Best Value as a lever to encourage cross-cutting working within local government, and between local authorities and other agencies;**
- **sponsor divisions should routinely identify and share within the Executive innovative best practice in agencies.** New thinking on cross-cutting policy and joined-up working is not the exclusive preserve of the Executive. Tomorrow's national policy may begin life as local innovation. The Executive should identify local innovation early and champion what works. Policy divisions also have responsibility for this, but sponsor divisions could more proactively encourage agencies to showcase their innovative working and circulate the information across the Executive.

Managing the volume of initiatives

26. **Importance?** Delivery agencies' overall capacity is a finite resource. Clarity about the relative priority between policy initiatives helps them target resources on the most important. It is therefore important that the Executive:

- makes explicit how initiatives fit together and relate to overarching policy objectives. It is particularly important that the relative priority assigned to cross-cutting initiatives is made clear: their effective implementation depends upon a wider range of agencies committing themselves to deliver the objectives and being clear about any wider implications for existing policies;
- has up to date information about how close to the limit agencies are in order to avoid important initiatives failing because of lack of implementation capacity.

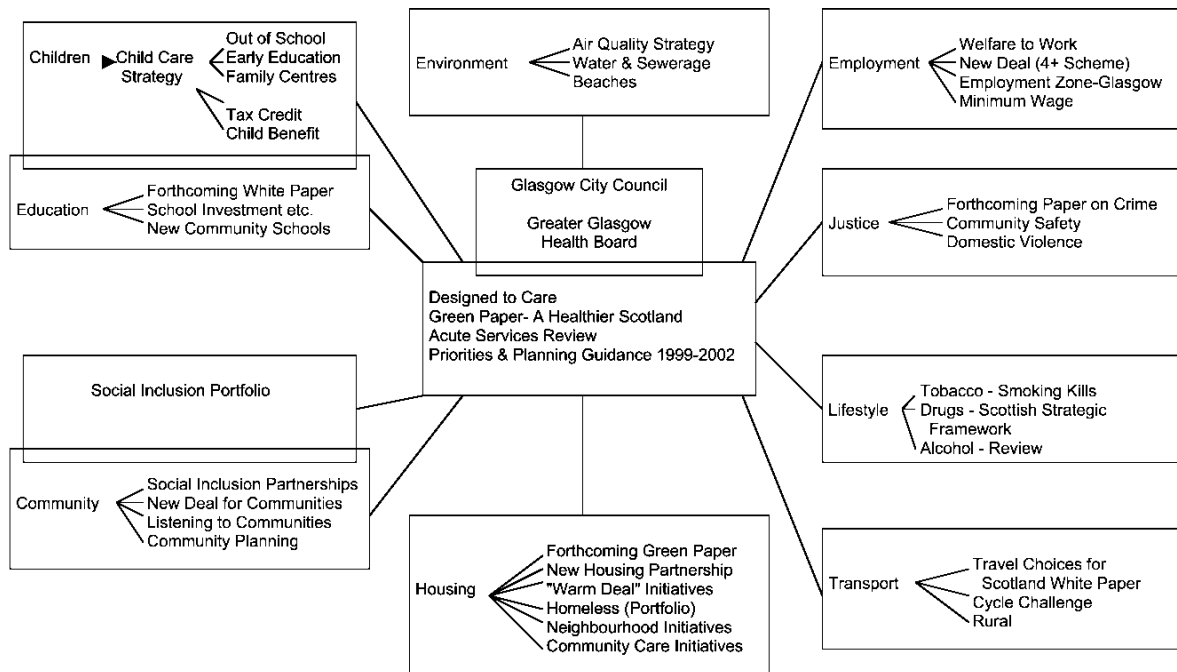
27. **Current situation?** '**Initiative overload**' is a frequent complaint from delivery agencies. In particular, agencies point to the cumulative impact of initiatives emanating from different Departments of the Executive. This is not exclusively a cross-cutting issue - some initiatives are for a single agencies – but cross-cutting initiatives can be more resource intensive as they often require partnership working.

28. There are also concerns that some initiatives are not followed through to completion after launch and there is widespread agreement within the Executive that most policy areas could benefit from a **cull of out of date or 'overtaken' initiatives**. Staff in delivery agencies may well be working on initiatives or programmes which have long passed their intended life, and which may duplicate more recent initiatives.

29. The problems are compounded for delivery agencies by a **perceived lack of clarity about the Executive's priorities**. More specifically, although the Executive acknowledges related initiatives in policy statements such as White Papers, we don't always explain how

initiatives fit together (eg complex areas such as the relationship between Local Learning Partnerships, Adult Guidance networks, Education Business Partnerships, Community Learning Plans). In addition, **we have not always made clear the degree of priority Ministers attach collectively to cross-cutting issues** and clearly defined the overall priorities. Agencies' energies and resources are not infinite, and even if they wish to align their priorities with ours we are not always giving them a clear enough steer: eg to what extent should Health Boards devote their resources to support Drug Action Teams or should LECs use their resources to promote social inclusion? Instead, the message picked up by agencies is that *"everything seems to be a priority"*. Some referred us to the Programme for Government which does not prioritise areas: everything has to be implemented (mostly by delivery agencies) on time.

30. The diagram below illustrates the complex policy picture confronting delivery agencies. It was produced by Greater Glasgow Health Board in liaison with Glasgow City Council in December 1998 in an attempt to identify the linkages between the various initiatives which they were expected to help deliver.



31. **Changes?** The Executive is not the sole cause of the high volume of initiatives: many demands affecting local authorities also emanate from COSLA and the Accounts Commission. But we should do what we can put our own house in order.

32. Firstly, we lack comprehensive information about the volume of initiatives launched by the Executive, and in particular how many initiatives from across the Executive impact on any single agency. It is therefore difficult to know how best to respond to anecdotal claims of overload. **Jointly with Development Department, the Policy Unit has commissioned a research project to quantify the volume in respect of local authorities, and to provide baseline information.** Initial results should be available by summer 2000.

33. Secondly, the Executive lacks mechanisms to monitor volume on an ongoing basis. No one part of the Executive has a complete overview of the full range of initiatives which each agency is asked to deliver. Sponsor divisions do not have easy access to this information for their agencies. This means that we don't have good management information about the available capacity of delivery agencies at any point in time. The problem is even more acute for local authorities which have no Executive sponsor division. **We therefore recommend that:**

- **LG Group has better access to information about forthcoming policy initiatives to enable them to advise on local authorities' implementation capacity, as should sponsor divisions for their agencies. To support this:**
- **better management information about current and forthcoming initiatives should be readily available to sponsor divisions, LG Group and to policy divisions. We suggest that the revised DEPLAN system be capable of providing information online across the Executive on planned and existing initiatives. Additionally, consideration should be given to providing similar information about initiatives already announced on the Executive's internet site.**

34. Thirdly, **we recommend that in future every initiative should spell out explicitly to delivery agencies how it links to other initiatives also being implemented by the agencies, and to any overarching objectives eg social justice targets.**

35. Fourthly, we must address the perception that the Executive's policy priorities are not clear to delivery agencies, and the perceived lack of collective agreement about the relative importance of cross-cutting issues. Requesting that agencies should now drop some initiatives in favour of others would be over-reacting. There will always be a broad range of work to be tackled. But the greater the clarity about priority, the more agencies will shift the balance of resource and effort accordingly and the greater the chance of effective implementation. **We recommend that future publications setting out the Executive's programme for government more clearly state the overall (few) priorities to which Ministers wish delivery agencies to attach particular importance and resource, make clear the relative importance of cross-cutting issues, and that the Executive's priorities are more clearly reflected in guidance letters to delivery agencies.**

Customised interactions with individual agencies

36. **Importance?** Individual agencies differ markedly in their size, structure, culture and history of partnership working. Agencies' capacity and enthusiasm for implementing an initiative is unlikely to be the same across Scotland. The ways in which the Executive interacts with agencies should take account of those differences.

37. **Current situation?** Scottish Executive officials are well aware that differences exist. Yet national policies tend to be applied uniformly across Scotland. Some initiatives allow for local variation in how policy is implemented, but little explicit recognition seems to be given to the widely varying resources available within each organisation. (Borders Health Board has 32 staff; Lothian Health Board has 213. Clackmannanshire Council has 1,899 staff; Glasgow City Council has 30,688. Some large voluntary organisations have multi-million pound turnovers and employ large numbers of salaried staff; but 65% of them have incomes of less than £25,000 per year and many are supported only by small numbers of volunteers.)

The way in which we interact with agencies tends not to accommodate their differing organisational structures, many of which have altered recently eg new cross-cutting children's services departments in local authorities¹⁴. Cross-cutting initiatives are likely to be more effectively implemented if they are routed to the most appropriate part of the agency's structure in the first instance eg a local authority corporate centre rather than a service director.

38. **Changes?** National policy initiatives should be **flexible** enough to accommodate varying local implementation capacities and organisational structures. Because of the differences between agencies, 'treating everyone the same' is unlikely to deliver similar outcomes. **We recommend that when developing new initiatives policy divisions seek advice from sponsor divisions and the Voluntary Issues Unit on flexible approaches for interacting with their agencies.**

¹⁴ For example, Stirling Council has merged education and children's services; East Ayrshire are planning to merge all of social work and education, as are Perth & Kinross.

SUPPORTING PARTNERSHIPS

All cross-cutting policies require joint working at local level for their implementation. Most require partnership working. But managing the business through partnership models brings new challenges: introducing new incentives; identifying and removing disincentives.

Volume of partnership activity

39. **Importance?** Partnership working brings significant additional demands on agencies' resources: attending partnership meetings, usually at relatively senior levels; undertaking work for partnerships; supporting their development and building sustainable relationships with partners. Additional resources are rarely provided. It is in the Executive's interest that agencies are not stretched to the point where overall implementation is compromised.

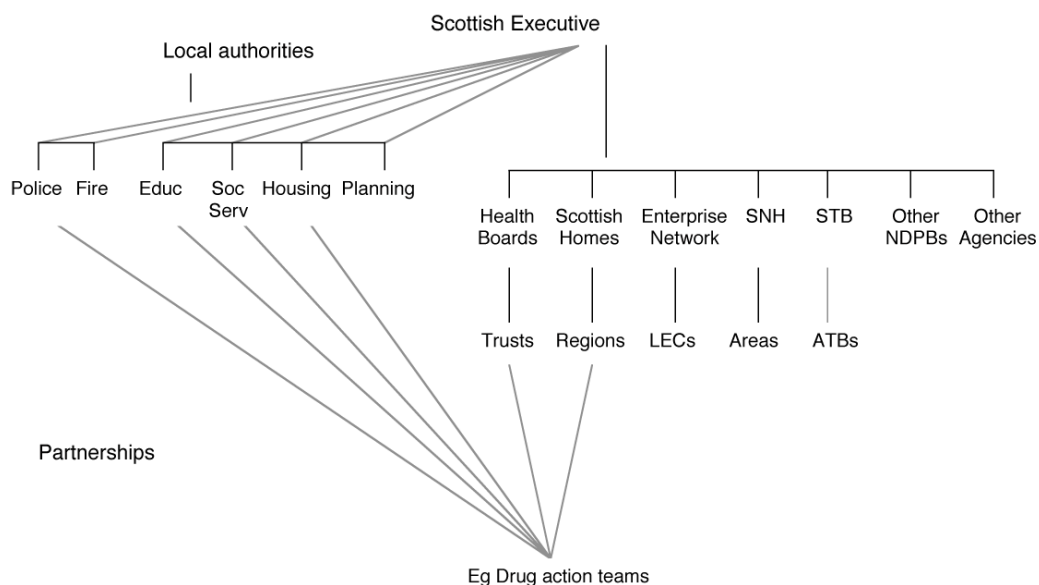
40. **Current situation?** Delivery agencies are struggling to cope with the proliferation of partnerships at local level. A partnership approach has (for good reasons) become second nature across the Executive, and in recent years the overall number of partnerships has grown enormously. But associated problems include:

- agencies are stretched and cannot properly support all existing partnerships;
- duplication of effort: ie the same cast list discussing similar issues at meetings of different partnerships;
- when launching new cross-cutting initiatives the Executive's usual practice has been to set up new partnerships rather than re-use or build on what already exists¹⁵. And while a lot of effort from the Executive typically goes into setting up new Partnerships, delivery agencies report a lack of continuing support;
- divisions in the Executive which are considering establishing new partnerships are not always aware of the full range of existing partnerships set up by other Departments. Equally, there is no easy way currently for them to find out;
- the rationale for creating new partnerships may not be applied consistently by the Executive. Some partnership structures may have been established when the real objective has simply been to foster joint working. Conversely, there are also examples of cross-cutting policy areas in which formal partnerships have not been established: eg co-ordinating service development and provision for mentally disordered offenders. Some have suggested that at times the creation of partnerships has been seen as the desired outcome, instead of simply being a means to an end;
- the problems are exacerbated by the lack of coterminous geographical boundaries between agencies: 32 local authorities; 15 Health Boards; 28 NHS Trusts; 5 Scottish Homes Regional Offices; 13 local enterprise companies reporting to Scottish Enterprise,

¹⁵ One exception is the White Paper 'Towards a Healthier Scotland' (February 1999) which advocated the re-use of existing inter-agency structures when it invited bids for 3 health demonstration projects.

10 in the Highlands & Islands; 8 Police Forces. This has the effect of duplicating planning activity (eg for community care) and complicates partnership arrangements.

41. The diagram below could be replicated for each type of partnership established by the Executive, with many of the same agencies appearing in different configurations.



42. The role of **Community Planning** is particularly important, and emerges from our study as potentially the most effective mechanism to co-ordinate locally inter-agency working. Community Planning is at different stages across Scotland. The 5 Pathfinder Councils and their partner agencies are amongst the most advanced, but it has taken root in many other areas. Its supporters include a wide range of delivery agencies, not just local authorities, which are attracted by the potential to rationalise the plethora of partnerships, streamline inter-agency planning activity, and increase efficiency by focussing effort on achieving the outcomes.

43. There may well be room for improvement in Community Planning - the recently published Evaluation of the 5 Pathfinders highlights useful lessons¹⁶ - and some would prefer a different title. But if we didn't have Community Planning, this report would be recommending the creation of something similar. To capitalise on the opportunities provided, a couple of issues need to be dealt with:

- Community Planning is at make or break stage and the visible support it receives from the Scottish Executive will be critical in determining its future. Uncertainty will undermine some agencies' commitment to the process: they won't want to back the wrong horse;
- within the Executive, the potential role of Community Planning has tended not to figure greatly within the thinking of most Divisions. Some staff are unaware of the potential relevance to their own interests.

¹⁶ Rogers et al, *Community Planning in Scotland: an evaluation of the Pathfinder Projects* commissioned by COSLA (University of Birmingham School of Public Policy, September 1999)

44. We are aware of more negative reports of Community Planning in some areas. But in our analysis the process is critically dependent on the commitment and support of local political leadership; they might take it more seriously if the Executive was seen to do so.

45. **Changes? We recommend that:**

- **the Executive should invite partners in each local authority area to consider collectively the scope for rationalising current local partnership structures, and submit to the Executive their proposals for approval. In the meantime, the Executive should declare a moratorium on new partnership structures;**
- where local partners wish it, **the Executive should devolve to them responsibility for maintaining local partnership structures on a continuing basis** to deliver the Executive's cross-cutting policy objectives. Approval by the Executive of subsequent changes should not be required. Community planning partnerships provide ready-made entities comprising the key players, and might therefore take on this task. (That is not to suggest that other partnerships be re-cast as subsets of community planning partnerships, or to imply an extension of local authorities' powers or role through their leadership of community planning.) Any new partnership structures should continue to provide proper participation of voluntary sector and community groups: they must not be squeezed out of partnerships by statutory agencies. Where existing partnership structures are a result of UK Government initiatives such as the New Deal, and where there is a clear consensus for change, the Executive should discuss with the relevant Whitehall Department the scope for local flexibility;
- **Community Planning should in any case be given a higher profile within the Executive. Ministers should endorse publicly the valuable future role of Community Planning, and the Executive should consider ways in which to support its development locally:** the more robust a process it becomes the more use it will be to local partners and to the Executive;
- **whenever delivery agencies' geographical boundaries are being reviewed, the potential benefits to partnership working of coterminous boundaries should be taken into account by Ministers.** Examples include the next review of local authority boundaries by the Local Government Boundary Commission (to which Ministers have powers to give directions); the commitment made in 'Designed to Care' to consider altering some Health Boards' boundaries in the West of Scotland in the interests of coterminosity; and the current reviews of the Enterprise Network and of Scottish Homes.

Finance and financial accountability

46. **Importance?** The ways in which public funding is allocated, accounted for and used can affect delivery of desired outcomes.

47. **Current situation?** It is frequently claimed that current funding systems used by the Executive and other public bodies are not well-suited for cross-cutting initiatives. The funding processes for cross-cutting initiatives vary: some come with hypothecated or ring-fenced funding (eg New Deal); others require expenditure from within agencies' baseline allocations (eg Drug Action Teams). But common perceived problems include the following:

- the Government’s penchant for **prescribing centrally how specific sums should be used** is too rigid (national priorities may not suit every area of Scotland), too bureaucratic and time consuming (eg separate application and monitoring forms to be sent to the Executive for each bid), displays lack of trust in local partners’ judgement, and undermines the wider trend towards partnership working on cross-cutting issues. For example, the Scottish Executive allocates at least 14 separately identified and accounted for funding streams for services for young children, most of which are accessed by local authorities and re-united at the point of delivery¹⁸;
- some recommend greater use of **pooled budgets** – at national and local level – to fund cross-cutting activity. At national level, this would mean new non-Departmental budget(s) to which Departments would bid for cross-cutting initiatives. This would, it is argued, encourage joined-up approaches¹⁹. At local level, it would involve creating new organisations by pooling resources from, for example, Health Boards, Social Work and Education to provide children’s services. Others argue against this approach on the grounds that establishing pooled budgets (either by top-slicing existing budgets or with new money) removes any incentive to bend further remaining mainstream budgets;
- it is commonly stated by agencies that Scottish Executive/HM Treasury guidance and regulation **prevents the pooling of budgets**. This, we believe, is not the case²⁰: the key issue is partners’ willingness and determination to work in new ways. Nevertheless, the rules are not transparent and should be clarified;
- there are also mixed views about the usefulness of **challenge funding and bidding processes**. Some argue that bids for small pots of money can influence wider behaviour and initiate larger scale spending changes (the rough sleepers initiative is quoted as one such example). Agencies agree that they are more likely to respond to initiatives if some ‘new’ money is attached. Yet others report that bids involve an disproportionate amount of work to prepare and subsequently evaluate in return for only minimal additional resource²¹. Some agencies told us that the experience of unsuccessfully bidding for funds can also demotivate and undermine the partnership dynamic which has taken so long to establish eg bids for the Mental Health Development Fund. Others, though, said that the bidding process can galvanise partnerships;
- different **allocation methodologies** are used for the various agencies: eg the formulae used by the Executive to allocate AEF to local authorities; the SHARE formula used for

¹⁸ These include: Pre-school Education (3 & 4 year olds; rural supplement; development funding); Childcare Strategy (support for 0-3s; Children’s Services Development Fund; General Childcare Strategy); Social Work & Children’s Services (grant support for early years); Excellence Fund for Schools (early intervention; supporting parents; classroom assistants; class size reductions; National Grid for Learning); support for Gaelic medium pre-school education; New Community Schools. In addition, funding is available from the New Opportunities Fund for after-school study; ICT training; childcare projects; and Healthy Living Centres. The Excellence Fund alone comprises 9 separately funded and accounted for core programmes (10 from 2001); 1 of the 9 core programmes comprises 5 individually identified and funded elements. Some virement has been permitted between the 9 programmes. The New Opportunities Fund allocates a further 4 funding streams.

¹⁹ Some of this is hinted at in the recent Social Justice strategy (pages 18-19)

²⁰ A view endorsed by the Performance and Innovation Unit’s report *Wiring It Up: Whitehall’s Management of Cross-cutting Policies and Services* (section 9). We do accept though, that the traditional approach to corporate contracts and objectives (see paragraph 19) may also be sending the wrong signals.

²¹ The same criticism is made of pilot schemes: too much effort for too little return. A balance is required between trying new ways of working and avoiding overload.

Health Boards (updated by Arbuthnott recommendations); the formulae used by Scottish Homes for its regional offices, and by SE and HIE for their LECs. This money is increasingly being spent in partnership with other agencies to tackle common priorities, so inconsistencies between the methodologies may compromise the overall effectiveness of local policy implementation. It would be helpful to establish whether this is the case, and to compare the outcomes on a geographic basis;

- the increase in partnership working and partnership expenditure challenges the appropriateness of existing **accountability arrangements** and suggests a need for new models of collective accountability. (Discussed more fully in the following section);
- finally, agencies are frustrated by the **lack of synchronisation** between their budget cycles. As a result, one agency may hold up a partnership spending decision because it cannot commit funds until later in the financial year. This seems to be primarily a problem for agencies to resolve themselves, with encouragement from the Executive: they or their parent bodies (eg Scottish Enterprise) decide on their own budgeting and spending processes. However many also complain that the Executive compounds the scheduling problems: even if partners were able to synchronise their budgeting processes, the Executive periodically requires new developments/activities to be funded after local budgets have been set.

48. **Changes? The above issues need to be more fully addressed than the resources of this review allow. We have agreed with Scottish Executive Finance a separate study specifically to address them.** The review should:

- produce clarified guidance for delivery agencies on the flexibility allowed under current rules for pooling budgets and accounting for money in joined-up ways; and consider whether any changes in existing guidance/regulations should be made to encourage joined-up delivery of policy²². If possible, this should be taken forward in liaison with the Parliament's Finance and Audit Committees, which will have an important role in encouraging new behaviours in relation to allocating and accounting for budgets on a cross-cutting basis;
- evaluate local experience to date on flexible use of funding to establish what has worked best. Lessons learned should inform future use of funding in areas such as tackling drugs; children's services (or a sub-set such as Sure Start); learning disabilities; or older people. This work should be taken forward with the relevant lead policy interests.

Partnership accountability

49. **Importance?** Accountability mechanisms designed for non-cross cutting environments may not be appropriate for partnerships or joint working situations. This matters because we need to know whether partnerships are delivering on their (and the Executive's) commitments. Inappropriate accountability mechanisms may also discourage partnership working.

²² This should incorporate the 'Making it Happen' Action Team recommendation, endorsed by Ministers, to review financial and regulatory barriers to joined-up working. See *Making it Happen: Report of the Social Inclusion Strategy Action Team* (Recommendation 9; page 10)

50. **Current situation?** There are two broad issues to address. The first is **how we hold partnerships to account**. Agencies working in partnership are dependent upon each other to achieve the partnership's objectives. But agencies remain accountable individually, not collectively, to Ministers and local electorates. Thus, if a Health Board 'bends its spend' towards a Drug Action Team's objectives it remains individually accountable to the Health Minister for its expenditure. But whether or not the objectives of that expenditure are achieved may well depend on the collective success of the partnership, not the individual Health Board. Some therefore ask whether we need new, collective, models of accountability and new ways of measuring the 'partnership effect'²³

51. The Cabinet Office's Measurement and Performance Project (MAPP) aims to understand and improve the use of performance measures and targets in multi-agency working. The project will produce, by Autumn 2000, guidance and supporting case studies for multi-agency partnerships on using performance measures to support their work; and a resource centre on the Internet²⁴.

52. Secondly, there is a perception amongst delivery agencies that **scrutiny and inspection regimes can discourage inter-agency or inter-professional collaboration**. Agencies are subject to different scrutiny regimes - eg Parliament; the Executive's sponsorship role; Inspectorates (eg HMI, SWSD); Best Value and the Accounts Commission - and the scope of central inspection regimes is set to increase²⁵. Scrutiny arrangements send strong signals about the relative importance accorded to joined-up working. A PIU report (on England) recently concluded that "current systems of audit and external scrutiny contain few positive incentives for cross-cutting working, and there is a perception that they can act as a barrier to cross-cutting working"²⁶. The example most often quoted to us was the importance of schools inspections balancing their focus on educational attainment and teaching standards with broader outcomes, for example of inclusivity.

53. Work is already underway within the Executive to develop a common approach between Inspectorates and better ways of inspecting outcomes which cut across traditional professional boundaries. A common charter setting out a generic framework for all inspectorates has been prepared and will be rolled out later this year. New Community Schools will be inspected by cross-disciplinary teams including health, social work and community education interests, in addition to the HMI inspection team, and the written reports will comment on how well schools promote inclusion.

54. Best Value is an important tool locally to help local authorities demonstrate public accountability, but it is also important in reinforcing joint working. The new public performance reporting framework, should bring greater transparency to local government

²³For further discussion see *Fitting Together? A Study of Partnership Processes in Scotland* Report to Scottish Homes (Department of Urban Studies, University of Glasgow, August 1999)

²⁴ See MAPP Interim Report (Nov 1999) The project is expected to be completed by Autumn 2000 <http://www.cabinet-office.gov.uk/eeg/1999/mapp.htm>

²⁵ Under the Standards in Scotland's Schools etc. Bill, the powers of HMI will be extended to inspect the education functions of local authorities. Once re-established as an Executive Agency, Scottish Homes is to assume responsibility for the regulation and monitoring of all registered social landlords and the landlord functions of local authorities. And a new Scottish Commission for the Regulation of Care is to assume the registration, inspection, enforcement and complaints investigation functions of local authorities and health boards in relation to day care, residential care and nursing care facilities, and will regulate other forms of care not currently regulated.

²⁶ PIU, *Wiring It Up*, Section 10 <http://www.cabinet-office.gov.uk/innovation/1999/wiring/coiwire.pdf>

accountability and thus reinforce partnership working with other agencies. Efforts have also been made to ensure complementarity between nationally-run inspection regimes and local application of Best Value. In fulfilling their new role to inspect the education functions of local authorities, HMI will be carrying out joint inspections with the Accounts Commission of all 32 local authorities by 2005. These inspections will incorporate the principles of Best Value and will build on Best Value audits previously carried out to establish the value added by the local authority to school education.

55. **Changes?** There is encouraging work under way on both fronts to be taken forward. We endorse the work of the Inspectorates, the Accounts Commission, and Best Value team to ensure that scrutiny regimes reinforce joint working and are complimentary in approach and scope. **We recommend that the Policy Unit lead further work on the scope for new accountability models for partnerships.** This work should:

- examine the benefits and potential disadvantages (eg extra bureaucracy) of new models;
- examine who, within the Executive, should hold to account partnerships for their performance²⁷;
- consider particular issues common in partnership working: eg outcomes can take many years to achieve and can require more risk taking; indirect links between inputs and some outcomes (eg ‘NHS money’ being spent on food co-ops, community groups, heating and housing); allowing more local discretion to capitalise on local opportunities;
- take into account the role of voluntary sector, private sector and community groups in partnerships: ie organisations which are not otherwise accountable to the Executive;
- consider the scope for benchmarking of outcomes.

Planning requirements

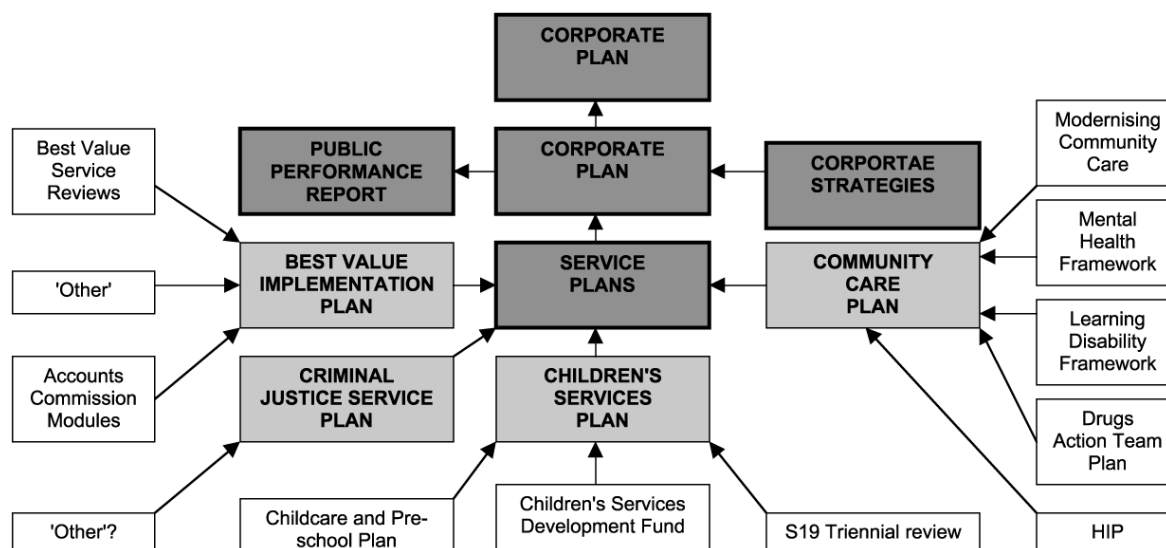
56. **Importance?** It is important that the plans and strategic documents which the Executive requires of delivery agencies: remain suitable vehicles for handling cross-cutting policy and partnership working; do not duplicate each other; remain genuinely useful to the Executive and/or agencies.

57. **Current situation?** There is a good case for a fresh look at the range of plans required by the Executive, with a view to rationalising the total number. Agencies report overlap and duplication; that outmoded plans continue to be requested; and that too much effort is diverted from delivering services to producing documents for which there is little real benefit. For example, many feel that Community Care Plans have outlived their usefulness now that Health Improvement Plans (linked to financial plans) are required. Officials also commented to us that a stock-take would be worthwhile, for example to re-consider the need for some issue-specific plans in the light of the emergence of new Community Plans.

58. The diagram below gives an indication of the planning requirements of Social Work Departments²⁸.

²⁷ *Wiring it Up* describes (Section 10) the joint accountability lines for ONE (single work-focused gateway to benefit)

²⁸ Source: Scottish Office, Social Work Services Group, March 1999



59. **Changes?** A review of the range of plans required of agencies would be useful. The Policy Unit will build this aspect into the research relating to local authorities discussed at paragraph 32. For other agencies, **we recommend that sponsor Divisions compile with their agencies a full list of all the plans required of them by the Executive, and consider with policy divisions the scope for reducing the requirement, bearing in mind the potential offered by Community Planning to do so.**

60. Finally, **we recommend that an exercise be undertaken jointly by sponsor divisions (and informed by the outcome of the local authority research mentioned above) to assess the scope for better synchronisation between agencies' planning cycles.**

Organisational behaviour and culture

61. **Importance?** The unanimous view of the people we spoke to was that organisational behaviour and culture makes or breaks joined up working: both within local partnerships and within the Executive. Overcoming cultural barriers was one of the 3 key areas identified by the 'Making It Happen' report²⁹. Another recent study concluded that "the need for partners to recognise that effective partnership processes, as well as integration between partnerships, requires substantial change in the working practices and cultures of individuals and their organisations."³⁰ It is therefore in the Executive's interest to encourage and support organisational development work to address these issues.

62. **Current situation?** The Executive has a good deal of experience of supporting partnerships and encouraging the behaviours most likely to achieve joined-up results: eg DD has for some years supported area regeneration partnerships. But we could do more to actively encourage and support the Enterprise companies, Health Boards and local authorities to develop their partnership skills. Many of these bodies have made the running themselves: recognising that specific skills are required and recruiting appropriately. There is scope though for the Executive to reward positive behaviours and cultural change. Within the Executive, a lot has been done to move towards new ways of working. A Policy Unit review

²⁹ *Making It Happen* Social Inclusion Strategy Action Team Report (November 1999)
³⁰ *Fitting Together? A Study of Partnership Processes in Scotland* Report to Scottish Homes (Department of Urban Studies, University of Glasgow, August 1999)

(January 1999) drew lessons about what worked best, and the cross-cutting effort has been intensified since Devolution. But the consensus seems to be that we have not fully ‘cracked’ cross-cutting working yet, and snags remain to be overcome.

63. Changes? We recommend that in pursuing the Modernising Government agenda the Executive takes forward the following elements to support the implementation of cross-cutting policy:

- within the Executive, Departments’ forward work programmes (agreed with Ministers) and individuals’ job descriptions should give greater priority to implementation aspects of policy - not just developing new initiatives – reflecting the recommendations of Section 3 above. Eg not sacrificing involvement of delivery agencies for speed of announcement;
- the value of secondments to and from delivery agencies and partnerships. Secondments can help officials understand better the sharp end of service delivery, and help policy be informed by practical experience of translating initiatives into action. Perceived orthodoxies that secondments remove staff from the ‘the eye of the office’ and that we can’t afford to lose our own resources should be countered with the view that secondments are an investment in better policy making;
- getting the right mix of skills within the Executive and delivery agencies to implement the cross-cutting agenda effectively and to work across professional boundaries. This has implications for pre and post-qualification training and professional development, performance assessment, and rewarding staff;
- the cross-cutting agenda should be pursued across the public sector through the Scottish Leadership Foundation. The Executive should seek opportunities to invest in local leadership capacity and to reward positive organisational behaviours;
- Ministers should highlight more regularly local partnership successes, including on visits. Highlighting the success of other organisations, including local government, which work together to deliver the Executive’s objectives should be a part of the Executive’s overall approach to presentation.

SECTION 6: LOOKING AHEAD – CROSS-CUTTING IMPLEMENTATION IN THE FUTURE

64. This report is primarily concerned with improving effective implementation of current cross-cutting policy. Preceding sections make appropriate recommendations. But if current trends in favour of cross-cutting continue – and there is no indication that they will not – then it is helpful to look ahead briefly at how effective implementation could best be achieved in the future. Starting from the report’s recommendations, it is possible to ‘project ahead’. The vision of the future which emerges has the following features:

- policy initiatives (cross-cutting and otherwise) are **clearer about the desired outcomes** eg expressed in terms of how people’s lives will change. That puts a greater premium than at present on clarity of purpose when developing policy. In addition, the Executive’s over-riding **policy priorities are communicated more clearly** to delivery agencies;
- the Executive’s policy initiatives reflect, where possible, a **closer alignment of national and local policy priorities**. That alignment is achieved through a stronger partnership between the Executive and the agencies which deliver policy, including local government, and the **Executive demonstrates more visibly that it trusts agencies to deliver**. Respective roles are clearer than at present, but agencies also participate more fully than at present in the policy development process;
- the Executive concerns itself far less than at present with how these outcomes should be achieved, and consequently is **less prescriptive about the processes** to be used locally. Local diversity in approach is not a problem for the Executive; innovative working and risk-taking becomes more common;
- delivery agencies, insofar as they are accountable to the Executive, **have broader corporate objectives** reflecting the full range of, and relative priority attached to, Ministers’ policy objectives. Their accountability and performance management arrangements reflect that broader appreciation of policy objectives. This is not to say that organisations’ purpose or focus is less well-defined; it simply recognises the roles they need to play in order to achieve their main objectives;
- community planning evolves to form stable and valued **umbrella partnerships** in each area. Some of the smaller local authority areas may decide to join forces to create partnerships with a greater critical mass and more coterminous boundaries. There is **no rigid blueprint**: arrangements differ slightly in different areas of Scotland, building on local arrangements. These partnerships become a primary interface between delivery agencies and the Executive for cross-cutting policy implementation. They have the authority to **rationalise the existing partnerships** within their areas, to suit local circumstances and ways of working. Community plans themselves become more meaningful documents, to which other more specific plans clearly relate but do not duplicate. (A number of existing planning requirements are lifted, following review);
- the Executive carries out **new and effective performance management of cross-cutting outcomes**, holds to account local partners in new ways including using benchmarking eg for community care; tackling drugs; tackling exclusion; children’s’ services.

SECTION 7: RECOMMENDATIONS

Renewing the policy development process		
Para 9	Delivery agencies should be routinely involved in the process of policy development.	Policy divisions
Paras 10 and 13	For written consultations, we should normally allow 12 weeks. Where community views are specifically sought, we should consider providing longer timescales and different forms of consultation. Agencies should be clear whether consultations will be their only chance to comment, and what their view are being sought on.	Policy divisions
Para 18	Where possible we should align central and local priorities, identifying territory where national and local policy priorities overlap	Ministers Policy divisions

Renewing the sponsorship role		
Para 25	<p>The Executive should renew sponsorship arrangements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • corporate contracts and guidance letters should reflect cross-cutting issues, as should agencies' strategic objectives. Agencies should receive advance notice of forthcoming initiatives or policy changes which will affect them; • make the most of Best Value to encourage cross-cutting working; • identify and share within the Executive innovative best practice in agencies. 	<p>Sponsor divisions</p> <p>LG Sponsor divisions</p>
Paras 33-35	<p>The revised DEPLAN system should provide management information online across the Executive about planned and current initiatives.</p> <p>In future every initiative should spell out explicitly to delivery agencies how it links to other initiatives and to overarching objectives or targets.</p> <p>Future publications setting out the Executive's programme for government should more clearly state the overall priorities to which Ministers wish delivery agencies to attach particular importance; these priorities should be more clearly reflected in agencies' guidance letters.</p>	<p>DCD</p> <p>Policy divisions</p> <p>Policy Unit Sponsor divisions</p>
Para 38	Initiatives should be flexible enough to accommodate varying local implementation capacities and organisational structures.	Policy divisions

Supporting partnerships		
Para 45	<p>Delivery agencies should consider the scope for rationalising current local partnership structures, and submit proposals to the Executive. In the meantime, we recommend a moratorium on new partnership structures.</p> <p>Where partners wish it, the Executive should devolve to them responsibility for maintaining local partnership structures on a continuing basis, to deliver the Executive's cross-cutting policy</p>	<p>Ministers MG</p> <p>MG Policy divisions</p>

	<p>objectives. Clearance by the Executive of subsequent changes should not be required. Community planning partnerships provide ready-made entities which might take on this task.</p> <p>Community Planning should be given a higher profile within the Executive and Ministers should endorse publicly the its future role.</p> <p>Whenever delivery agencies' geographical boundaries are being reviewed, the potential benefits to partnership working of coterminous boundaries should be taken into account by Ministers.</p>	<p>Ministers LG</p> <p>Ministers</p>
Para 48	<p>A separate review specifically to address financial issues should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • produce clarified guidance for delivery agencies on the flexibility allowed under current rules for pooling budgets and accounting for money in joined-up ways; • consider whether any changes in guidance/regulations should be made to encourage joined-up delivery of policy; • evaluate local experience to date on flexible uses of funding and establish what has worked best. 	<p>Scottish Exec Finance & Policy Unit</p>
Para 55	<p>Further work should be undertaken on the scope for new accountability models for partnerships</p>	<p>Policy Unit</p>
Para 59	<p>We should reduce where possible the number of plans required of agencies by the Executive.</p>	<p>Policy & sponsor divisions</p>
Para 60	<p>We should assess the scope for better synchronisation between agencies' planning cycles.</p>	
Para 63	<p>The Modernising Government agenda should incorporate recommended elements to support implementation of cross-cutting policy.</p>	<p>DCD</p>

EFFECTIVE IMPLEMENTATION STUDY

Background

65. In early-1999, the Policy Unit examined the development and handling of cross-cutting policy **within** the Scottish Office. This project takes the next step, and focuses on the Scottish Executive's interface with the agencies which deliver policy.

Definitions

66. **Policy implementation.** The study focused on the implementation of policy. We have not, on the whole, included Ministerial announcements or media launches per se in this definition (ie few implementation consequences). We have included policy initiatives (medium implementation impact); and major policy change (large implementation impact).

67. **Cross-cutting.** We have taken cross-cutting policy to be that which requires input from more than one Scottish Executive Department and which requires coordinated multi-agency action for its implementation. Examples include policy on social inclusion, sustainable development, community safety, and improving health.

68. **Delivery agencies.** The Scottish Executive delivers very little policy at its own hand. Instead it relies on local authorities, Health Boards, local enterprise companies, other NDPBs such as Scottish Homes, and voluntary and private sector organisations. This report uses the term "delivery agency" to describe these organisations, but recognises that their roles can extend well beyond implementation of Scottish Executive policy. This applies in particular to local authorities, which have a separate mandate to develop policy in response to local needs.

Methodology

69. Project Team:

- Kenneth Hogg (Scottish Executive Policy Unit)
- Janet Kells (Director of Commissioning, Lothian Health Board)
- Benny McLaughlin (Head of Policy Development, East Dunbartonshire Council)

70. Steering Group:

- David Belfall (Head of Housing and Area Regeneration Group, Development Department)
- David Middleton, (Head of Local Government Group, Development Department)
- Douglas Sinclair (Chief Executive, Fife Council)
- Gill Stewart (Head of Children and Young People's Group, Education Department)
- Kevin Woods (Director of Strategy and Performance Management, Health Department)

71. The Project Team looked at the issue both from inside the Executive looking out, and from outside the Executive looking in. The work comprised the following main elements.

72. **Mapping exercise:** to develop a broad picture of the main policy areas where delivery is required through partnership arrangement and of the main interactions between the Scottish Executive and those who implement cross-cutting policies.

73. **Literature review:** using evaluation reports of relevant policies and their implementation and other literature to assess best practice approaches.

74. **Discussion with Scottish Executive policy divisions** responsible for illustrative cross-cutting policy initiatives to understand better the experience of policy development and their interface with delivery agencies:

- Community Care Division, HD
- Schools Standards and Improvement, ED
- Public Health Policy Unit 2, HD
- New Deal & Adult Training, ELLD

75. **Discussions with Scottish Executive sponsor divisions/functions** to understand better their experience of the accountability and performance management mechanisms relevant to delivery agencies;

- Strategy & Performance Management, HD
- Enterprise & Tourism, ELLD
- Scottish Executive Finance Group
- Housing 2, DD
- Senior Local Government Group

76. **Discussions with delivery agencies**³¹ in 3 areas of Scotland (Glasgow, Stirling, Highland) to understand better their experience cross cutting policy implementation.

Glasgow	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greater Glasgow Health Board • Glasgow Development Agency 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Glasgow City Council

Stirling	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stirling Council • Forth Valley Health Board • Forth Valley Enterprise 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Central Scotland Police • Triage (private sector consortium) • Forth Valley Primary Care Trust

Highland	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highland Council • Highland Health Board • Northern Constabulary • INE • Moray, Badenoch & Strathspey Enterprise • Highland Community Care Forum • Voluntary Sector Providers Alliance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highlands & Islands Enterprise • Voluntary Action Highland • Employment Service • DASH • Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations • Highland Health Council

³¹ Most discussions were at Chief Executive or Director level.

Others

COSLA

Health Education Board for Scotland

South Lanarkshire Community Planning group:

- South Lanarkshire Council
- Central Scotland Police

Fife Council

- Lanarkshire Health Board
- Lanarkshire Development Agency

77. Discussions within the Scottish Executive and with delivery agencies covered a wide range of policy areas and initiatives. To focus discussion, and to provide some consistency of information, the Project Team specifically examined the development and implementation experience of 4 policy initiatives:

- community care (specifically 'Modernising Community Care', 1998);
- New Community Schools;
- tackling drugs (specifically 'Tackling Drugs in Scotland', 1999) and
- New Deal (18-24).

GOVERNMENT-SPONSORED PARTNERSHIPS IN SCOTLAND**Partnerships****Scottish Executive lead interest**

Rural partnerships	RAD: Rural Development Division (E)
Social Inclusion Partnerships	DD: Area Regeneration Division
Rough Sleepers/Homelessness	DD: Social Inclusion Division
Community Planning Partnerships	DD: Local Government Division 2
City Partnerships	DD: Area Regeneration Division
Working for Communities	DD: Area Regeneration Division
Transport Forums	DD: Transport Division 1
European Structural Funds Partnerships	DD: European Structural Funds Division
New Deal Partnerships	ELLD: New Deal & Adult Training Division
Employment Zones	ELLD: New Deal & Adult Training Division
Adult Guidance Networks	ELLD: Transitions to Work Division
Education Business Partnerships	ELLD: Transitions to Work Division
Initiative at the Edge	ELD: Enterprise & Tourism Division
Childcare partnerships	ED: Early Education and Childcare Division
New Community Schools	ED: Schools Provision & Org Division
Drug Action Teams	HD: PHPU Division 2
Healthy Living Centres	HD: PHPU Division 1
Health Demonstration projects	HD: PHPU Division 1
Communities that Care	JD: Crime Prevention Unit
Community Safety Partnerships	JD: Crime Prevention Unit
Inter-agency forum on women offending	JD: Adult Offenders Division
Child Protection Committees	