

DISTILLATE Product D1 (Guide to Partnership Working)

Research Report – Version 2.1 – 20th April 2008

1. Background

DISTILLATE (Design and Implementation Support Tools for Integrated Local land Use, Transport and the Environment) was one of 14 research programmes funded under the UK Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council's research programme on the development of sustainable urban environments. The principal objective of DISTILLATE was to develop, through focused, interdisciplinary research, ways of overcoming the barriers to effective development and delivery of sustainable urban transport. It was an interdisciplinary project combining traditional academic research institutes, 'practitioner' institutions such as TRL and SEI, and local authority partners. Our vision within DISTILLATE is of a step change in the way in which sustainable urban transport strategies and schemes are developed and delivered. There were seven sub-objectives leading to seven sub projects. These were:

1. to document and review the barriers to the delivery of sustainable strategies (Project A);
2. to develop new methods for generating appropriate strategy and scheme options and for designing integrated strategies (Project B);
3. to establish an effective set of core indicators and targets as an input to strategy formulation, forecasting and appraisal (Project C);
4. to support the more effective collaboration between the agencies responsible for transport strategy development, both within and between local authorities (Project D);
5. to develop approaches for overcoming the financial and other barriers to effective implementation (Project E);
6. to enhance existing predictive models to reflect the impact of the wider range of policy instruments, and to facilitate interactive strategy development (Project F);
7. to improve the methods used for appraisal to reflect more effectively the requirements of sustainability (Project G).

DISTILLATE built upon the DISTILLATE scoping study which reported in 2004 (see Forrester *et al* 2004; Hull *et al* 2004a and Hull *et al* 2004b). We developed our programme structure, during the scoping study, through a series of discussions with our local authority partners, the Department for Transport and other stakeholders. In doing so, we focused on the following key stages in the development and implementation of a transport and land use strategy: problem identification; strategy development; scheme design; and implementation. For each of these key stages we identified the barriers to effective strategy development and implementation, developed research proposals to tackle those barriers, and assigned priorities to them. From this longer list of potential research tasks, we identified nine which were priority needs for our local authority partners, and offer a significant research challenge. We have worked with 16 local authorities representing a range of different local government structures. They in turn have provided some 35 case studies, which have helped to illustrate problems, identify solutions and test our products. In documenting and reviewing barriers we have conducted three surveys which have demonstrated the changing nature of the problems which local authorities face. These in turn have provided a context for the 19 products from our research. Our 19 products include both tools to help local authorities pursue specific tasks more effectively and guidance documents to clarify specific elements of the policy development process. Each of these products has reported separately. There are ten more technical 'tools', and nine guidance documents including guidance on the selection and use of indicators, guidance on the integration of indicators and monitoring across sectors, a funding toolkit for decision-makers,

guidance to funding agencies, a review of ways of overcoming the inconsistencies between targets and appraisal, and this guidebook on ways of overcoming barriers to partnership working which is one the two products produced by DISTILLATE Project D, 'Improved Effectiveness in Organisational Delivery', which identified and addressed three problems:

- 1) barriers between local authority and PTE officers and external stakeholders
- 2) internal structural and internal cultural barriers within local authorities, and
- 3) barriers to evidence-based approaches to decision making in transport.

2. The role of the D1 Guide

These three problems, discussed more fully in the Project Logical Framework Analysis (LFA) (Forrester 2006), eventually gave rise to two Project product outputs, this Guide, and another, 'D2', to deal with communication of DISTILLATE outputs. This Guide, D1, focussed on the first two problems of project D, that is that:

- Problem 1: There are barriers between LA and PTE officers and external stakeholders, and
- Problem 2: There are internal structural and internal cultural barriers within LAs and PTEs

These were then subdivided into subproblems each of which generated a sub-objective as follows:

Sub problem 1.1 states that "There are barriers with stakeholders who provide or can provide direct transport solutions but who are external to local authorities/PTEs". DISTILLATE questionnaire responses highlight the difficulties of the fragmented system of government: lack of control over the rail network, and privatised or deregulated transport systems are considered to be the most significant challenges in the delivery of local sustainable transport solutions. These points were also explored in the Scoping Study which found that private ownership causes difficulties in achieving social objectives for rail and bus transport provision. For example, bus operators increase bus fares (due to increased costs for drivers, fuel etc.) which conflicts with the need to retain and increase the number of passengers. Equally, commercial objectives make it difficult to sustain Park & Ride facilities during the weekday inter-peak period and deregulation makes it more difficult to achieve modal integration. The scoping study also finds that it is difficult to involve bus operators in projects or to gain their commitment in them. This, in turn, delays projects or even prevents them from being implemented. This gave rise to Objective 1.1: "Barriers between local authority officers and external transport providers should be better understood and ways of overcoming them suggested and tested".

Sub problem 1.2 says that "There are barriers with stakeholders who can provide indirect transport solutions". This refers particularly to the solutions provided by land use planning which can minimise the need for travel. Similar to a point raised below (Problem 2.2), the scoping study finds that there is a lack of joined up thinking and integration, especially within and between different levels of local government. Due to the fragmented nature of the system, transport agendas are often in conflict with regeneration, or development agendas. These conflicts are also apparent at a higher level – e.g. between the DfT, DEFRA and ODPM. Thus, Objective 1.2 is "Barriers to the provision of indirect transport solutions should be better understood and ways of overcoming them suggested and tested".

Subproblem 1.3 states that "There are barriers between local authorities and different government departments". Problems and conflicts exist between local and central government in relation to the planning process. The first DISTILLATE questionnaire results demonstrate that the DfT and government offices are considered to be the most important stakeholders in terms of the decision making process. This, allied with the findings from the Scoping Study that the range of different governmental departments (such as the DfT and DCLG) can lead to inconsistent signals and

confusion as to the chain of command, indicates the significance of this barrier. Over and above this, the questionnaire finds that national policy contradictions and political short-termism (apparently at national level, although the wording in the questionnaire is a bit ambiguous) are seen as significant barriers. This gave rise to Objective 1.3: “Barriers between local authorities and government departments should be better understood and ways to overcome them suggested.”

Sub problem Problem 1.4 says “There are barriers between council officers and the public”. Local authorities are required to engage with different stakeholders and by doing so often enhance the decision making process, but the methods are not always clear. The questionnaire revealed the relative importance respondents give to the involvement of members of the public in the decision making process. However, the Scoping Study identifies the difficulties with public involvement: members of the public often have ‘conservative’ views and are unwilling to embrace change, which is a considerable barrier to sustainable transport. Strongly linked to this, cultural dependency on the car and the perception of poor quality public transport are both seen as significant barriers according to the DISTILLATE Inception Report and the use of high-quality, evidence-supported data to overcome these states of affairs is critical. There is also an indirect barrier that exists – the need for politicians to please members of the public. This gave rise to Objective 1.4: Barriers between council officers and the public should be better understood and ways to overcome them suggested. N.B. This was not resourced within DISTILLATE Task D, however, we have always tried where possible to include this as a substantive issue.

SubProblem 2.1 is that “There are structural barriers in local authorities resulting in a lack of effective communication between those responsible for planning and delivery at different levels”. There is a lack of communication which is institutionalised within Local Authorities. The Scoping Study finds that there is a clear lack of joined up thinking and integration between departments at the local government level, identifying various barriers which also relate to the different levels of government (such as county and district councils). Where the two tier system is in place, power struggles and ‘turf wars’ between county and district councillors are evident, and are exacerbated by political differences between county level and district level councillors. The two tier system also traditionally splits transport and planning (the former is at a county level, the latter at a district level). The questionnaire endorses these points, finding that divided responsibilities for delivery, physical locations of different departments, and different stakeholder procedures all are reported to act as barriers. The questionnaire also finds that different organisational structures and staff are also reported to be a problem (although to a lesser extent). This gave us Objective 2.1: “Internal cultural barriers & the role of different disciplinary approaches in transport planning should be better understood, ways of overcoming them suggested and tested.”

Sub problem 2.2 is “There are cultural barriers in local authorities reinforced by a sectoral, departmental and disciplinary approach to transport planning”. The differences between different disciplines and officer with different sectoral backgrounds affect the communication between key members of the team developing the transport and land use plans. The Scoping Study found that perceptions of ‘compartmentalised people’ and ‘blinker outlooks’ hindered the ability of local authorities to think and act creatively and flexibly. This is partially attributable to the fragmentation described under barrier 2.1. The study also finds that roles and responsibilities are somewhat ‘clouded’ by a lack of understanding of who is responsible for particular aspects of work. This gave us Objective 2.2 which is “Internal structural barriers between local authority departments should be better understood and ways of overcoming them suggested and tested.”

Finally, subproblem 2.3 is “There are barriers between the LA officers and LA elected members in developing policy for more sustainable transport solutions”. The first DISTILLATE questionnaire

highlights the importance attributed to elected members at the problem identification stage (although respondents considered that there was little scope for improvement in this regard). Over and above this, change (or uncertainty) in local authority political leadership is identified in the Scoping Study as being a significant barrier. The study also finds that elected members sometimes inhibit policy changes (such as congestion charging) as there is often a greater emphasis on perceptions of public acceptability than on evidence of effectiveness. This issue was also raised in the partner workshop in London in January: some officers commented that there is a lack of understanding and effective communication between officers and elected members. This gave us our last objective, 2.3, which was that “Barriers of effective communication between local authority officers and elected members should be better understood and ways of overcoming them suggested and tested.”

This Guide should also be seen in the context of the framework provided by the two other Project D deliverables, the ‘Structures Report’, *Understanding the Structure of Institutions Responsible for the Delivery for Sustainable Urban Transport* (Forrester & Snell, 2006) and the ‘Processes Report’, *Understanding the Processes of Policy Delivery for Sustainable Urban Transport Reports* (Tricker *et al* 2007). Within DISTILLATE Project D, from the outset, it was recognized that local authority actors differ in their values, assumptions, the range of resources available to them as well as the formal and informal rules and constraints under which they have to work. These differences depend on their organization and the scale of governance at which they operate (e.g. Passenger Transport Executive, County Council, Unitary Council or District Council). We largely dealt with these non-material things as processes (see Table 1). Under structures, we considered things like buildings and formal institutions (see Table 1 taken from Forrester *et al* 2006).

Processes	Structures
internal mechanisms and practices	the values of key actors
	the assumptions key actors hold
	key actors’ organisational responsibilities
the range of resources available to key actors: finance use of time political process staff knowledge and skills	the range of resources available to key actors: finance structural allocation of time political context (including political cycles) access to the ‘action arena’ (i.e. Knowledge and Power)
actors’ interpretations of formal and informal ‘rules’ (at the micro-level, a.k.a. rules for <i>individual</i> behaviour)	actors’ interpretations of formal and informal ‘rules’ (at the macro-level, a.k.a. rules for <i>institutional and organizational</i> behaviour)

Table 1: The relationship between process & structure and the issues influencing organisational delivery (after Forrester *et al*, 2006)

While our Guide flags up the need for structural changes it realises that these require a sea change that can often only be aspired to. However, with respect to partnership working, there is a real need for improvements in the transport sector. Fortunately there is currently a real prospect for such improvements, given the opportunities offered by forums such as Local Area Agreements, Multi-Agency Agreements and City Region planning.

Approaches to working practices were summarised in Processes Report (Hull *et al* 2007) as follows:

Formal working practices	Informal working practices
EXPLICITLY CONSTITUTED	NATURAL/SPONTANEOUS/CASUAL
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Controlled by senior managers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Between individuals
Perform a specific task	Function supports friendship, mutual help, and confirmation of specific beliefs and ideologies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> formal rights and obligations behaviour formatted and constrained formal group leaders codified structures, rules and procedures behaviour based on division of labour, through filling of well-established/historical roles roles have titles, job descriptions, contracts more or less permanent and relatively stable organigram networks well-defined and follow formal lines interpersonal relations are prescribed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> develop through a variety of forces contain people from various sections/levels who have something in common (beliefs, fears, aspirations, energy) may be formal members of other workgroups “cliques” – horizontal/vertical(different ranks)/sundry employees may be ephemeral or unstable sociogram networks poorly defined and cut across regular channels interpersonal relations are spontaneous

Table 2: Comparison of formal and informal working practices (after Hull *et al* 2007)

These working practices usually play out in four different social arenas which can be characterised as follows (after Furnham 2005)

Sub-types of group orientation: -			
COMMAND	TASK	INTEREST	FRIENDSHIP
e.g. standing committees/boards	e.g. ad hoc/expert groups/commissions	e.g. voluntary and common issue	e.g. for social/interpersonal needs

Table 3: Types of working practices (taken form Hull *et al* 2007)

The Processes Report told us that *prescribed processes* can appear to be attractive solutions, but even where processes – and even policies – are prescribed, there is still a need for effective communication and partnership working for delivery.

A particular issue we had to deal with is that the stylized policy cycle which sufficed for our earlier explorations (see Project D LFA) is not always sufficient to understand complex realities. An important message is that overcoming organisational and institutional barriers is a complex issue and requires equally complex solutions. For example, transport practitioners need to understand the interlocking (and sometimes competing) policy arena and dynamic policy cycles that operate within their own policy arena but also which change with respect to partnership working as the issues translates from national to local levels or from city/region regional upwards or downward (see Figure 1 below).

This Report reports on the production of the Guide designed to address in particular sub-problems 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 2.1 and 2.2. By doing so it will also indirectly impact upon practitioners' ability to address sub-problems 1.4 and 2.3. The next sections look at the specific niche of the Guide, the approach we took to its production, how we tested it with different practitioner communities at different levels of the policy cycle, and what changes we made as a result.

3. The conceptual approach to the Guide

There are key principles that have some bearing on effective delivery of policies: a great deal of the work involved in the planning and delivery of transport policy involves partnering with other individuals in the same organisation and/or with other organisations, often in quite complex arrangements as noted above. The success of such intra- or cross-organisational working depends on the management not just of the technical side of the project partnership but also of the partnership itself. How the partnership is constituted, the quality of the relationship among the partners, who takes the lead on different aspects and how the partners engage with each other can all affect how well the aim is delivered. The Guide aims to assist transport practitioners in understanding partnership working and in using it better for their purposes – the delivery of sustainable urban transport systems. The Guide provides a non-technical handbook to steer practitioners through the processes of inter- and intra-partnership working where a partnership is defined as “any *agreed, structured* cooperation between two or more parties, usually formed to allow partners to do something together that they could not do separately” (Bryson *et al* 2006).

We started from the Scoping Study Reports (Forrester *et al*, 2004 and Hull *et al* 2004a and 2004b). Leading on from the Scoping Study, we carried out a series of open interviews with local authority partners. DISTILLATE also performed a questionnaire survey of our partners (in 2004 with our 16 LA partners and two others, see Hull & Tricker 2006) and the information from these sources was all collated into our own Logical Framework Analysis. We then did some more in-depth interviews with LA partners who we felt had had some successes in working in partnership. These included a range of governance structures including PTEs, Unitary Authorities, and Metropolitan and rural Councils. We also carried out a targeted literature review looking for solutions to partnership problems and also generic and meta-analysis-type papers. References and sources were also suggested by partners, some of these – ones which we found particularly useful – are discussed in some detail below.

There are guides which address the issue of partnership working and engagement already (*e.g.* *PROSPECTS* (May *et al*, 2005) & *Guidemaps* (Kelly *et al* 2004)) so we realised that there was no need to reinvent, but to develop these guides and make them more accessible and understandable by the audience they were designed for, particularly to address this need for partnership working. Further, and unsurprisingly, most of the guides that are written by and from transport practitioners are written from the perspective of getting actors from outside of the transport arena or outside local authorities involved in transport processes. This DISTILLATE Guide was rather designed to help transport practitioners to stop thinking about getting others involved in transport as an end point in itself but instead to think about how transport problems could be solved jointly with those ‘others’ and how transport could contribute to solving their problems. Thus it shows how a step change can result, and, thereby, to make a significant input from social science.

Following on from initial discussions with practitioners we suggested a flowchart or ‘decision tree’ start/entry section. This also followed another DISTILLATE subproject (G2) where we had already used this approach successfully. It is a logical structure and easy to follow.

Initial ideas for the Project D Guide were adapted from one single booklet to address all three aims of the Project (see LFA, (Forrester 2006)) to two separate tools – this Guide and an online tool using the decision tree approach in a much more rigorous manner. D1 was to be a generic guide to partnership working and D2 is a DISTILLATE-focussed guide to using the outputs of the whole DISTILLATE project in a holistic manner.

The review of the literature on the design and implementation of cross-sector collaborations and partnerships, supplemented by a review of that on integrating environmental policy into mainstream

policy making (a necessary prerequisite for a step change towards more sustainable transport solutions), suggests that the factors identified in Table 4 are all important in aiding effective delivery. A study of the sources used to produce Table 4 shows that they are in no way mutually exclusive. Thus, some factors that help in the delivery of sustainable policy integration also help make partnerships work. This is hardly surprising, and structural factors such as the need for a strong ‘champion’ are valid across the board and thus appear in each of the three lists.

What makes a partnership work – top 10 (adapted from Bryson, Crosby & Stone, 2006)	Ten top tips for making a step-change towards sustainability (Nilsson, M., 2007)	Key facilitators for overcoming structural barriers – a top 15 (Forrester & Snell, 2006)
<p>Structural factors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partnership is most likely to work where there is a strong structure within which the partnership can work. • Partnerships work best when there are champions at all levels to provide leadership. • Partnerships work best when trust is fostered between members. • Partnerships work best when resources and tactics are used to equalise power relationships within the partnership. • Partnerships work best when they are planned in advance but when that planning is responsive to changes. • Partnerships work best when the build on the strengths of partners. <p>Aims:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partnerships are most likely to succeed when there is agreement on the problem. <p>External factors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partnerships are more likely to form in times of difficulty. • Practitioners are most likely to turn to partnership working when not doing so is likely to result in failure. • Partnerships work best when the success of the partnership is recognised. 	<p>Structural factors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decisions must be taken centrally. • Decision making must be transparent. • Partners must be open to reallocating powers and tasks to others. • Champions are needed within each sector. • Trust must be engendered and difficult issues should not be swept under the carpet. <p>Use of evidence & data</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partners need high levels of information on the consequences of their choices. • Decisions should not be appraised but also evaluated. • Public auditing should be possible. • More cross-sectoral assessment tools are needed. <p>Other:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Successful experience can be used as a platform to create institutional learning. 	<p>Structural factors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proximate working locations of partners. • Clear links between policies* (as well as between sectors). • Clearly defined roles and requirements of each actor. • Champions at all levels. • Constancy of staff. • Good internal communications. • Businesslike approach rather than a bureaucratic approach. <p>Aims:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear links between policies* (as well as between sectors). • Similar goals. • Two way needs. • Added value through partnership working. • Ability to see ‘bigger picture’. <p>External factors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Political support. • De-politicisation of evidence. • Mandatory requirement for partnership working. <p>Other:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • History of collaborative working.

Table 4: Factors than facilitate partnership working: paraphrased from the literature & grouped

One truism is that no one factor alone will make a partnership successful. It may not be necessary to achieve *all* of the above factors, but in order to maximise the potential for delivery it was suggested in the Guide that practitioners should be aiming to achieve a significant number of the factors from each list. These factors were condensed to give a full list of 19 factors in the Guide. These factors are both structure factors (factors 1 to 11) and process factors (12 to 19) but for the sake of clarity they are all presented in the Guide as a single list:

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| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Partnerships should be well planned – don’t just leave them to chance; 2. Partnerships work best when there are champions at all levels and in each sector; 3. Partnerships work best when the role of each partner is clear; 4. Partnerships work best when there are good internal communications; |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

5. Partnerships should build upon the strengths of partners and powers and tasks should be reallocated within the partnership to make the best use of partners' strengths
6. Partnerships work best when power relationships are equalized within the relationship;
7. Partnerships work best when decisions are taken at the centre of the partnership and in a transparent manner;
8. Partnerships work best when partners work in an open and sharing manner and trust is engendered;
9. Partnerships work best when the staff are located near to each other and where there is continuity of staff;
10. Partnerships work best when there is a clear link between the agendas of the participating actors and agencies, this can foster a business approach rather than an enforced 'bureaucracy' approach; and, finally,
11. Partnerships can be helped by mandatory requirement.
12. Partnerships are most likely to succeed when there is agreement as to the nature of the problem, and actors and agencies have similar goals and a similar 'world view';
13. Partnerships are most likely to succeed when actors and agencies both have a need for partnership working and when both can gain benefit through partnership working (acknowledging that this may be in time of difficulty for actors and agencies operating individually and also where the risk of failure is greater without the partnership);
14. Partnerships are most likely to succeed when partners have access to full information on the consequences of their choices and the decisions taken by partnerships should be evaluated as well as appraised;
15. Partnerships work best when there is a history of collaborative working upon which to build:
16. Partnerships work best when successes are recognised and built upon to create institutional learning;
17. Partnerships work best when there is political support;
18. Partnerships work best when evidence is separated from politics;
19. More cross-sectoral assessment tools are needed for use by cross-sectoral partnership actors.

Table 5: the list of factors as it appears in the Guide

For the purposes of the Guide, it was also necessary to introduce some background concepts to help understand the social and political structures within which partnerships can work. Also it is necessary to distinguish between what is participation of others in transport sector process and what is true partnership.

Even *within* local authorities, problems for partnership working can often be different agendas and different sectoral interests. Issues such as 'ownership' of policy arenas and 'belonging' to different policy cycles with all the concomitant differences in social organisation, practice and terminology used that this brings are all important. The Guide seeks to locate the transport planner at the centre of a wider milieu: it is important to recognise that strategies and goals are derived from this wider milieu; further, this wider milieu provides the standards ('norms') for deciding what *can* be done and what *should* be done. In other words, what *can* be done in terms of transport planning may not be possible in terms of what can be done politically or what should be done to bring benefit in terms of delivery of more sustainable outcomes to other sectors. The impetus to cross-sectoral partnership working can and should come out of a common understanding across the sectors. However, in the real world the *need* for partnership working may well precede cross-sectoral understanding – thus, in practice, there is often a need to start working in partnership first and build the necessary trust, communication and understanding as you go along. This is not ideal but reality is often not ideal.

For local governance, the 4-stage policy cycle is often used as a heuristic device to understand the stages or arenas of action: at the 'lowest' (i.e. most local) level is the local level policy cycle with local policies and strategies being formulated, translated into policy measures, implemented, and evaluated. Practitioners are reminded that the local transport policy cycle is only one of a number of

policy cycles at the local level; local authorities have sectoral responsibilities in many different areas such as education, health, environment and economic development. Further, as with the transport policy cycle, each of these is replicated at national and again at European levels. It is an accepted truism that every level of governance should have an important part to play in the formulation and implementation of transport policy, and a corollary of this is that both ‘top-down’ and ‘bottom-up’ policy making is required necessitating better partnership working with all sectors but also better engagement between the levels of governance.

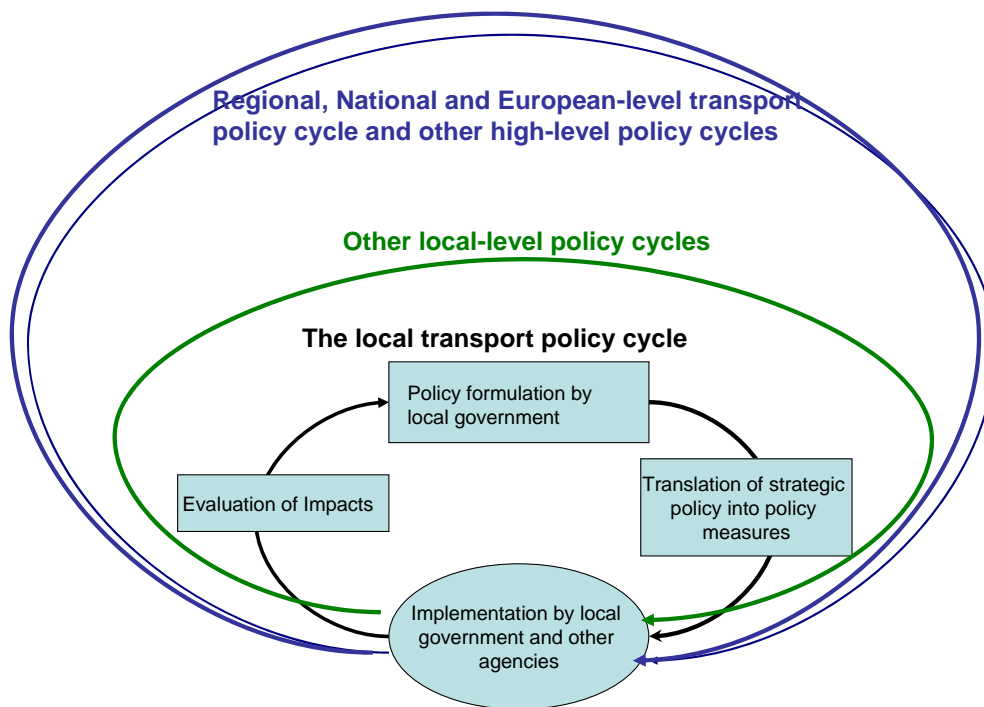


Fig 1: The different level at which Policy and transport implementation interact

As well as there being multiple policy cycles, it was important to communicate to practitioners that each cycle has its own stages: the transport policy cycle may be at one stage but it is important to recognise the stage at which the other actor’s policy cycle is so as either to be able to get them involved in the transport policy cycle or to get transport objectives included, or even delivered, in someone else’s policy cycle. For example, if transport practitioners are involved in scheme implementation or evaluation it is unlikely that they will find a readily receptive audience in someone whose policy cycle is currently engaged in strategic policy discussions. Similarly, when transport practitioners are developing their LTP, they are less receptive to advances for scheme-level partnership working from another sector. Putting in the effort to try to fit these policy cycles that are working on different timescales together was emphasised as an important element of partnership working. It was also noted that the local ‘other’ policy cycles – health, education, employment and so on – all have their commensurate national and higher-level cycles thus working with the local representatives of those sectors may allow transport practitioners not only to influence the other sectors’ local-level policy cycles but also to feed into their higher-level policy cycle(s).

There is a need to be clear as to why transport wants to engage in a partnership and what it is transport hopes to get out of it. Forrester & Snell (2006) note that local government, and transport within local government, have lost out in terms of real power (power to effect a change) in recent decades. However, even if partnership working is enforced upon the transport sector, they may find that there

are benefits in terms of ease of delivery, or of widening the scope of delivery, in embracing a more efficient form of partnership working.

4. The structure of the Guide

The Guide is designed to help local authority officers and other transport practitioners in considering their best course of action when deciding to explore working in partnership with officers and stakeholders from other sectors such as health, education, economic development and so on, as well as from the private sector when they are crossing sectoral, organisational or levels-of-governance barriers. The Guide is aimed at professional transport planners and practitioners at all levels of responsibility, but is targeted particularly at those who are either new to partnership working, or who find themselves trying to troubleshoot a partnership in which they find themselves working.

The Guide is structured around four chapters: Chapter 1 is an introduction looking at the context within which local authority partnerships work. Chapter 2 looks at five options for partnership working and works through each option or approach in turn. Chapter 3 concentrates upon nineteen factors which can help achieve success in intra and inter-organisational cross-sector working. Chapter 4 explores some case examples of partnership working and explores key issues coming from them.

The Guide is to be used as a resource in itself but also as a guide to other resources on partnership working (e.g. May et al, 2005 *The Decision Makers' Guidebook* cited above). This Guide will allow the transport practitioner to have a proactive influence on the quality of the relationship among the partners, on who takes the lead on different aspects and on how the partners engage with each other. This will affect how well the goal of the partnership is delivered and also how well the partnership is directed to deliver transport aims. Guide users are taken through a series of decision trees or 'flowcharts'. The first decision tree is to allow users to determine whether they need this Guide now or later. The first Decision Tree is reproduced in Figure 2.

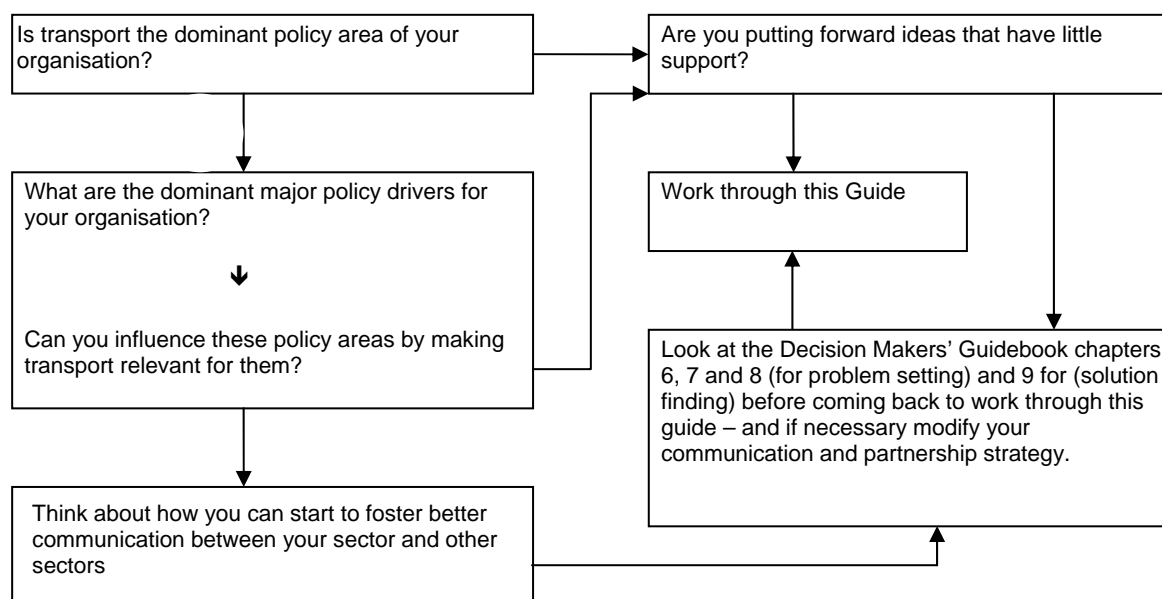


Figure 2: Decision Tree Number One from the Guide: Where to start

The second decision tree (Figure 3) is designed to allow users to find out what Option for partnership working might suit their purpose – the user is give five Options. The decision tree helps practitioners decide on their strategy in any given circumstance. Essentially, it offers five options and six questions for working through which of these five options may suggest the best strategy for the approach to

partnership. Working through this decision tree may also suggest some new reasons why partnership working might be a useful option.

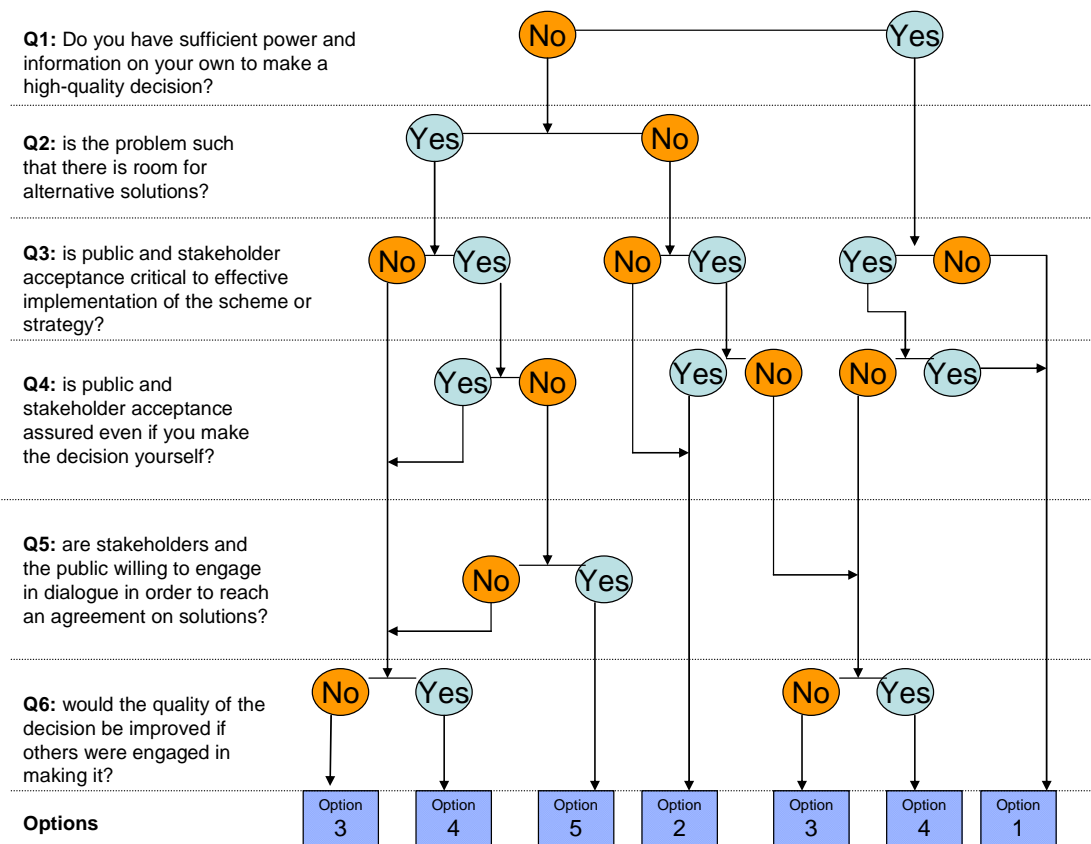


Figure 3: Decision tree number two: Choosing a 'partnership' strategy (after Robinson, 2003)

The Options, which form a continuum and which shall be explored more fully below are, in brief: Option 1: that expert knowledge alone solves the problem. Option 2: that other stakeholders need to be involved but the decision remains yours to make. Option 3: that other stakeholders may help you make the decision. Option 4: that other stakeholders make the decision (but still you implement it), and Option 5: that you relinquish power for a shared agenda to the partnership.

This Guide is designed to help particularly in following Options 3, 4, and 5 into fuller partnership working. Each Option is explored in more depth in the next section. It is important to remember that these Options are theoretical bases for action. They exist in a continuum of practice which ranges from making the decision oneself to fully-devolved responsibility. These options are theoretical and in practice the distinctions between them can appear blurred. Also, the tasks involved in these options are not mutually exclusive – they form a continuum of good practice. Good communication and good stakeholder engagement run through all of these Options (and through the cases cited Chapter 4 of the Guide).

Option 1 is where expert knowledge alone is probably sufficient to solve the problem. It is suggested that one should still tread carefully before making decisions that impact upon large numbers of people. Working with peers and stakeholders is likely to be required but no significant effort is needed other than good communication. There are several guides which will be useful in following this Option. They are introduced in the Guide. Communication is, however, by no means, a clear and straightforward task. In order to communicate to stakeholders the fact that a practitioner actually does have sufficient information to make an informed decision, she or he may still need to ascertain that

there are no viable alternative solutions via some form of stakeholder survey, and they will almost certainly need to check whether or not public and stakeholder acceptance are assured. This involves iterative, engaged and participative communication methods. The Decision Makers' Guidebook (May, 2005) is an invaluable tool to help throughout this process. Practitioners are directed to sections 3 on the decision making context – noting particularly the section on stakeholder involvement; section 4 on approaches to decision making; and section 5, participation, on information provision. Information provision is defined as “a one-way process to keep those with an interest in the strategy [or scheme] informed” (*ibid.*)

At this stage of collaborative working it is suggested that there is no formal partnership as there is no need for one. However, a difficult and time-consuming process is actually identifying the relevant stakeholders to whom you need to communicate. Considering who is likely to be impacted by the scheme is usually a minimum requirement. The practitioner is directed to look for tools to help with communication and engagement at the *Guidemaps report volume 1* (Kelly *et al*, 2004) section 3 on engagement; and also the *Practical Approaches to Participation* booklet (Richards *et al*, 2007) section 4 on approaches to participation. Guidemaps usefully reminds us that these processes take time, skills and cost so it is advantageous to factor in a communications budget even if you do not consider partnership working necessary. The practitioner is encouraged to consider bringing in trained communicators rather than relying on their own skills alone.

Further, practitioners are given advice on when they might want to move beyond Option 1 and into Option 2. A fundamental question in Option 1 is ‘why am I communicating this to these stakeholders?’ and practitioners are asked if they need to communicate do they really need a more participatory approach – i.e. do they need to move to option 2. Option 2 is really only a logical progression and an extension of option 1. It is where information from some other stakeholder groups is included but the decision remains the practitioner's to make. The primary flow of information is reversed from Option 1, above, and the need is to listen rather than talk. This is often defined as *Consultation*, defined as “where the views of stakeholders and the general public are sought at particular stages of the study and the results are input back into the strategy formulation” or scheme design (May, 2005, *op.cit.*). Although the participation of others is needed there is still no formal partnership needed. As with Option 1, the *Decision Makers Guidebook* and *Guidemaps* guides are cited as useful, in particular the *Decision Makers Guidebook* section 5, participation, on consultation and the *Practical Approaches...* (Richards *et al* 2007) section 5 on ‘engaging, targeting and responding’.

Option 3 is where practitioners may wish to consider releasing a certain level of decision-making power to partnership. They will need share information with their impending partners and, building on the good communication and good stakeholder engagement of Options 1 and 2, they now need to share problems to help find solutions. However, the final decision still remains the practitioner's to make. In Option 3, power and authority remain vested in the authority. Even so, as Richards (*op.cit.*) says, these sorts of processes “should only be considered when there is a commitment to listening to, and acting on, the issues raised”. DISTILLATE has designed several option generation and appraisal tools which can help at every stage of putting this type of partnership working into practice. Formal partnerships can be a great help but so can informal partnerships. There are few guides – hence this guide.

Option 4 is where the practitioner needs to share power: to listen but also to start to release decision-making power to others or to a formal or informal partnership not only in setting what needs to be done but also in deciding what to do, and how to do it. Thus, there is a need to go one step beyond Option 3 and allow the partnership to assess the problem and not just suggest possible instruments. The decision about what to do needs to be handed over to the partnership to make. However – maybe due to legislative and governance structures for example – responsibility remains vested in the authority practitioner. Otherwise, Option 4 is to all intents and purposes similar to Option 3.

Option 5 is where you need full, formal partnership working to reach agreement on – and implement – a solution. Further, and this is where the distinction from Option 4 lies, responsibility is now

devolved to the partnership. Under these circumstances practitioners are recommended to set up a formal partnership. With the greater drive towards partnership working and partnership delivery – for example with City Region planning and with formalized Multi-Agency Agreements, Option 5 is now becoming a realistic alternative. The urban regeneration example from Sheffield cited in the Guide probably represents the most that can be achieved under the current UK structures of local governance. There, while Sheffield City Council Transport had handed decision-making powers over to Sheffield One in some cases of transport planning and for some scheme delivery with respect to air quality, SCC transport retained the responsibility. However, this level of partnership working shows how a partnership can deliver things that no one department could hope to achieve working on its own. In such situations, the identification of key stakeholders is important as is the need to decide how to engage with them. It is further important to keep in mind how engagement with key stakeholders (such as consultants, transport operating companies, and so on) impinges upon engagement with other stakeholders who may appear not so key to delivery (such as other sector colleagues or the public). The short-term delivery of goals should not outweigh the challenge to develop a durable partnership to provide a long-term delivery framework.

The third and final flowchart (Figure 4) is to aid users in planning for successful partnership working.

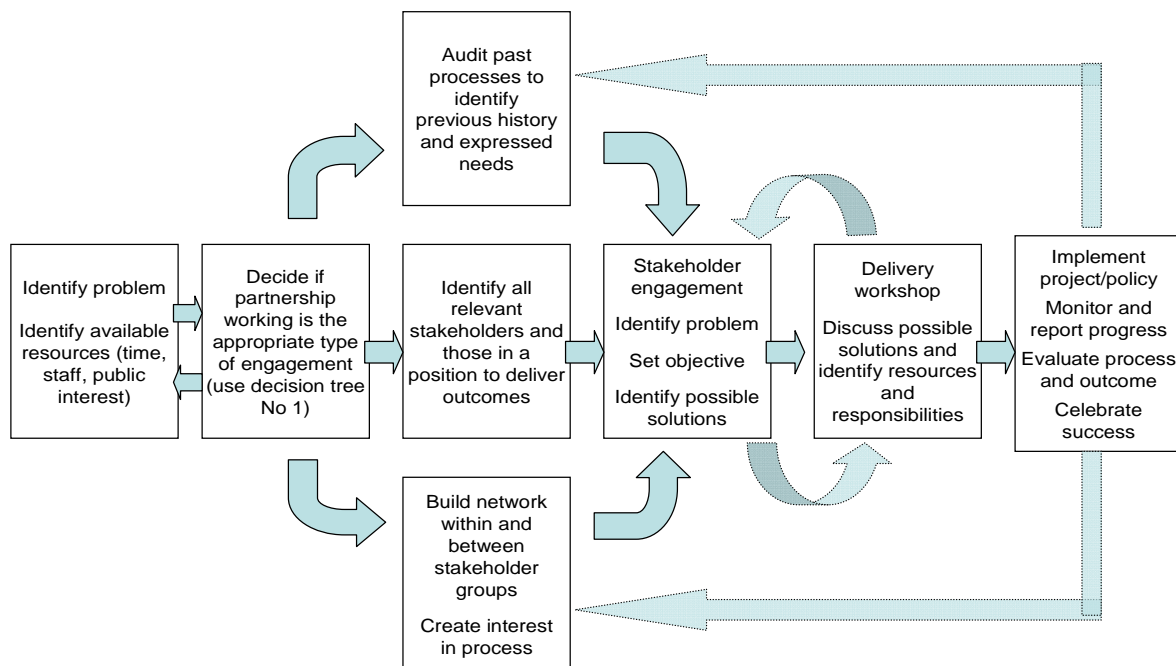


Figure 4: Decision tree number three is a planning loop for planning partnership working – adapted from Richards *et al* (2007).

Decision tree three it is one of a series of 19 factors which contribute towards successful partnership Table working that are expanded upon in the Guide. The full list of factors is reproduced above in Table 5.

As the completion of this product will coincide with the end of DISTILLATE, it will be accessed as required by practitioners via the D2 online tool or directly via the DISTILLATE website. The Guide is free to access from the DISTILLATE website at <<http://www.distillate.ac.uk>>. As the tool is designed to meet a very specific requirement of a specific subset group (LA officers with little current experience of partnership working, little theoretical knowledge about partnership working or who are

experiencing problems with partnership working), it is envisaged that this will be of use to that group. The end to which this learning is put is important. The end could be to bid more effectively into government funding streams, but this may only entail better awareness of government priorities, rather than 'better' policy formulation and delivery to achieve sustainable development objectives.

However, like all guides of this sort, it is anticipated that the Guide will also be useful as a contribution to the wider literature on partnership working.

5. Testing and results

Having come up with the idea of using a decision tree to allow practitioners to locate themselves and 'find their own way' through the guide (mainly after Robinson 2003, see Robinson's decision tree in Appendix I and compare this with our Decision tree number two in Figure 3 above) we tested this approach at the Transport Practitioners Meeting with the Steering Group, and with our local authorities. All liked the approach so we populated it and linked it with the factors from the literature and from experience which contribute to success. The case examples were checked off with their respective local authority contacts and then the Guide went to internal review.

In terms of testing, most of the DISTILLATE academic partners' input to Project D was to the other product D2. Further, much of the input was to the earlier stages of the 'decision tree' concept before D1 and D2 had been split into separate products. Hence, it is not easy to retrospectively separate out what referred to partnership working specifically. DISTILLATE partners suggested that the link between the decision trees (one, two and three) be made explicit. Instead we took the approach in Project D1 to separate them out completely so as to identify what task each decision tree performed: choosing whether to use the guide now, choosing an approach to partnership working and choosing a strategy for implement it. Thus their use is sequential but they do not 'flow' into each other. DISTILLATE partners also identified that the need for partnership working needed itself to be upfront. They also suggested that the tool should be web based. While D2 is web based, due to fitting in with other DISTILLATE Guides, this D1 Guide is not.

However, most of the input from partners took place before the first public outing of D1 which was at the Transport Practitioners' Meeting, Manchester, 25th July 2007. An afternoon session was planned and held under the title "Partnerships as a Key to Success in Transport and Regeneration Projects" and this attracted 11 attendees from PTEs (including TfL), a range of local authorities, national and private sector including consultants). At this workshop session, previous DISTILLATE thought on partnership working was presented: we presented the idea that barriers to successful implementation resulted from siloed thinking often caused by different departments becoming 'entrenched'; and different sectoral interests often caused by different agendas. We also presented some of our findings on suggested factors that would enable partnerships to form and to keep working. This DISTILLATE list became the basis for our longer list of 19 factors which is reproduced from the Guide in this Report as Table 5 (above). Our initial list is below in Figure 5 as it was presented at TPM.

The main steer provided by the practitioner attendees at TPM was that the Guide should not be too long (18 pps was suggested) and that the decision trees should ideally have no more than 5 layers. The Guide is in fact 18 pages (24 including the five case studies). Further, one TPM attendee provided a Welsh case study for completeness: there had been no Welsh partner in DISTILLATE.

Enabling and maintaining partnerships	
Enabling partnerships	Maintaining partnerships
Similar goals	Close physical location
Two way needs	Clearly defined mandatory requirements
Financial gain or added value	Champions at all levels
Mandatory requirements	Political/high level support
Clear links between policies	Consistency of staff/personnel
	Communication

Figure 5: The 'first' DISTILLATE list of factors which was shown at TPM (by Carolyn Snell)

Drafts of the Guide were sent to local authority partners including those whose authorities were represented by case studies. Clarifications of wording and minor changes to wording were made as a result. Comments on later drafts of D1 were also received from the Steering Group which resulted more detail being added to the Guide on how the Factors which contribute to successful partnership working might be realized. The cases were also extended to include a Scottish case study. One Steering Group member asked that we identify who were key stakeholders but it was felt that this lay outside the remit of this D1 Guide and was handled sufficiently in the Decision Makers' Guidebook (May 2005) sections 3 and 5 in any case. Users of the Guide are referred to that.

The Guide was also presented at the final DISTILLATE UK workshop held at DfT in London on 22nd January 2008. At this the links between D1 and the Project E funding Guides were particularly picked up upon by practitioners. The importance of successful partnership working was emphasised by practitioners and by attendees at the highest levels of governance. The importance of making the Guide available not only to local authorities but also to consultants and other stakeholders was made so the decision was strengthened to make this DISTILLATE Guide open access on the web.

Finally, a full and final draft was sent out to 9 attendees at the London January workshop who had expressed an interest in it. As a result, two errors in the DTP process were identified and these were corrected before uploading the Guide to the DISTILLASTE website.

6. Conclusions

The principal objective of this project was to develop ways of overcoming the barriers to effective development and delivery of sustainable urban transport strategies and schemes. In order to do this, this Guide presents transport and other local authority practitioners with a simple *handbook* to allow them to work in partnership more effectively with the stakeholders necessary to delivering sustainable urban transport systems.

The Guide was informed by a study of internal and inter-organizational structural and cultural barriers (such as privatization and different disciplinary working practices) and its contents were informed by a study of best practice from other sectors and internationally. Further, already-extant guides – although often of a high quality – often either solely direct practitioners in how to get others to work in partnership with transport (rather than also enlightening transport practitioners how to work in larger partnerships) or else they do not lead practitioners through a simple step-by-step approach to

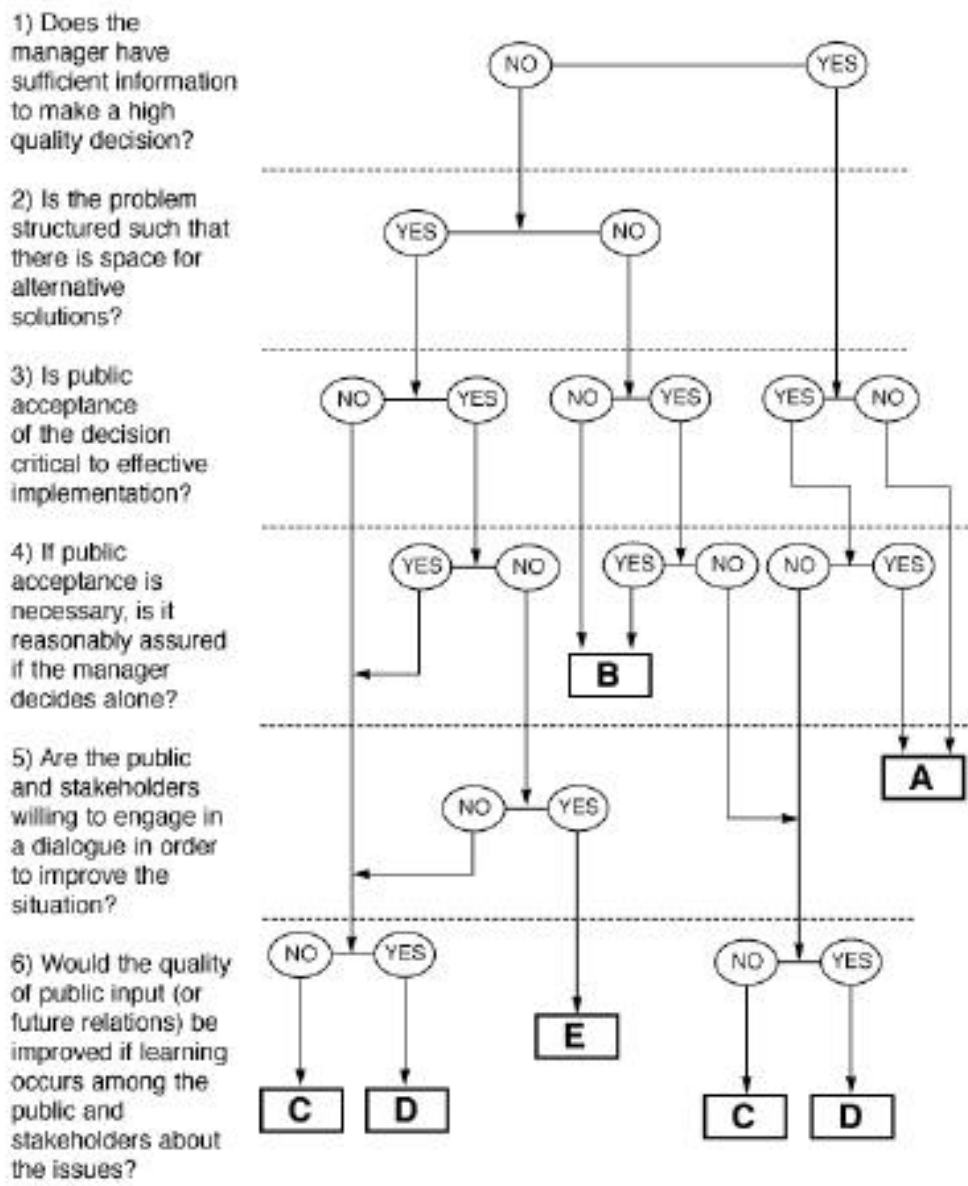
partnership working, the need for it, and how to do it as this Guide does. The Guide also directs practitioners to these other high quality guides as appropriate, thereby providing a single, easy access Guide for practitioners to use.

The guide is timely as there are current real prospects for better partnership working given the opportunities afforded by Local Area Agreements, City-Region planning and so on. However, these partnerships can often be complex. Nonetheless, partnership working can have a bearing on the successful delivery of transport. As this Guide has been designed to meet a need identified by practitioner-partners within DISTILLATE it will be of use to a wide range of practitioner and local authority officers as well as a contribution to the applied literature on partnership working.

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Appendix 1: Robinson's tool for choosing the appropriate depth of public participation in decision-making



The "Vroom-Yetton" decision tree for selecting public participation methods for government decision making.