6 Rules for Successful Shared Service Partnerships

Division of Local Government Services
Rule 1: Know your own mind

- It is not always entirely clear what each partner around the table wants
  - Figure it out in advance

- Politically and managerially, each partner needs to know what it wants to achieve – and why
  - Is there potential for commitment?
Rule 2: Know your partner’s mind too!

• Work with who you know
  ✓ Start with confidence
  ✓ Forge lasting partnerships based on a shared set of ambitions

OR

• Learn about your partner and their culture
  ✓ Develop a relationship – let it evolve
Rule 3: Take the leap, but look first

• Courage to commit to a partnership is essential

• Find a great partner by:
  ✓ Conducting a thorough analysis
  ✓ Creating a sound financial plan
  ✓ Establishing commitment

• Leadership with a focus on delivery
  ✓ Someone must take the lead – focus on outcomes
Rule 4: Agree in advance

• Don’t put off hard stuff until the last minute
  ✓ Can cause partnerships to fall apart just before or after the agreement is signed
  ✓ Know your concerns; and address them up front

• Know what you are getting into
  ✓ No surprises on either side
  ✓ Business case and agreement must identify costs and benefits

• Have an exit strategy
  ✓ Create dispute resolution process
  ✓ Have a break-up plan – just in case
Rule 5: Take opposition seriously

• Sharing services can result in substantial change
  ✓ Identify potential obstacles and be prepared to mitigate them

• It’s more than job’s changing – it’s people too
  ✓ People see careers at risk – on both sides
  ✓ Commit to addressing the real worries faced by the people affected

• Sharing services are not always “soft” options
Rule 6: Invest in the relationship

- Doesn’t end when the agreement is signed
- Contract management is critical
  ✓ Plan to meet and discuss it regularly
  ✓ Then do it
- Good governance depends on resources, capacity and a positive attitude
- Prepare the parties for a culture that drives improvement and innovation