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## THE CHALLENGES OF WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE PUBLIC SECTOR

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Public private partnerships expose the working face of the public sector requiring them to innovate, manage risks effectively and bring in projects on time and within budget. The public sector cannot always do this on its own and harnessing the motivation and efficiency of the private sector help deliver its programmes and boost the quality and quantity of public investments.

The public sector is increasingly working cross departmentally to deliver far reaching agendas such as climate change, obesity or safer communities. These cross-department and cross-sector partnerships are delivering more effective results in sustainable development. At the core of the success is the pooling of competencies from private sector and civil society as well as the public sector. This way of working requires the public sector to develop a whole new set of competencies and know-how in setting and maintaining common goals and jointly monitoring results. The key to delivering successful partnership initiatives is in creating a solid partnering process.

The most challenging aspect of working across government departments or even units with the same department is that civil servants do not see themselves in a "corporate" context, or as part of a department, rather simply as doing an individual job. Getting civil servants to be more "corporate" and having a shared vision of "corporate" goals is the greatest challenge. In addition, the management of a partnership is a special kind of leadership challenge. It requires capacity in dealing with cross-sector differences, fostering dialogue abilities and ensuring performance at the same time.

Partnerships are currently improving public services in transport, judicial systems, prison service and defence not only providing capital leverage, but just as importantly utilising other sectors skills, innovation, efficiencies and capacity and combining with the credibility and public trust brought by the public sector.

The Chief Secretary of HM Treasury has recently stated that the public sector would like to learn from private sector working practices and generate imaginative approaches to delivering public services, adding value to public investments.

However, for the public sector this remains a challenge too far. The restrictions of the procurement process and the civil service hierarchical management structure results in a failure of the public sector to respond to innovative ways of working and work with transparency and consensus, thus missing opportunities to allow the private sector to contribute.

Only in a true partnership, where all parties enter into a mutually rewarding arrangement, pool resources regardless of monetary value (i.e. creativity, energy and trust) and overcome the traditional master and servant contract relationship, can HM Treasury realise its vision.