Collaborative Leadership Map

Companion to Article 6: Leading when nobody is in charge

Purpose

Use this map to trace how a partnership decision becomes a commitment and an action within participating organisations. It examines the authority, influence and delivery capability needed to make progress.

This is a reflective conversation tool, not a validated assessment. It does not replace formal delegations or the governance requirements of participating organisations.

Choose one decision

Select a recent consequential decision, preferably one that stalled or depended on informal effort to move forward. Invite people involved in agreeing, authorising and implementing it. Bring the decision record and relevant commitments or delegations. Allow 45-60 minutes for an initial discussion.

Decision:

Intended outcome and people affected:

What partners believed they had agreed:

Ask participants to describe their understanding independently before comparing accounts. Preserve differences rather than replacing them with a vague collective statement.

Trace agreement into action

Stage	Who was involved?	Authority, influence or capability needed	What actually happened?	Evidence or unresolved question
Defining the problem and developing options				
Reaching collective agreement				
Authorising commitments within each organisation				
Securing resources and practical cooperation				
Implementing the decision				
Reviewing results and resolving difficulties				

Map the leadership contributions

Contribution	Who can provide it?	What can they decide or influence?	Support or involvement required
Formal authorisation			
Access to resources			
Professional or community credibility			
Understanding and translating between organisations			
Coordination of delivery			
Constructive challenge and follow-through			

One person may contribute in several ways. Several people may be needed for a single contribution. Distinguish a formal power from influence that depends on relationships or expertise.

Examine the gaps

- Where did collective agreement become an explicit organisational commitment?
- Could representatives authorise what others believed they had promised?
- Were those expected to implement the decision involved early enough?
- Did progress depend on somebody outside the formal partnership?

- Who helped secure cooperation, and how was that work supported?

- Was the obstacle unclear responsibility, absent authority, insufficient capacity or an unresolved disagreement?

- What worked well, and should be preserved?

Check assumed powers against the relevant organisation's arrangements. Record where more evidence or specialist advice is needed.

Agree the next commitment

Gap or opportunity	Proposed action	Who must authorise it?	Who will secure cooperation?	Delivery lead	Review date and evidence

Choose one or two changes that address the explanation supported by the discussion. Examples could include earlier operational involvement, a clearer approval route, explicit sponsorship or support for a boundary-spanning role. Avoid assuming that another meeting will resolve a missing commitment.

Closing question: For this decision, who can make the next necessary commitment, and what do they need in order to do so?

The Wicked Problems Hub - Pay Attention to the Partnership

Pattern addressed: The agreement-action gap: collective commitments have not been translated into the decisions and work required inside the participating organisations.