



ADAPTING TO DELIVER in this edition...



With the UK national debt of around £1.4 trillion, the public sector faces one of the biggest 'squeezes' in its history, and the imperative to work together collaboratively could not be greater.

With predictions of public service cuts of 10 to 18 per cent in the headlines, the focus of this year's PtP Annual Conference on 4th December was on the future of partnership working. Just days later, OnePlace, the Audit Commission's independent overview of local public services (<http://oneplace.direct.gov.uk>) published the long awaited Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA) reports, highlighting how each area has been able to deliver and improve services through effective partnership working.

In the next few years partnerships will need to adapt and deliver in the

headwinds of economic recession, financial crisis, climate change, and an ageing population.

At the PtP conference, keynote speakers Roger Gough (Localis), Tony Bovaird (INLOGOV), and consultant Davy Jones put existing forms of partnerships into context, agreeing that the landscape will look very different in ten years' time. Workshops on the current Total Place pilots examined the challenges and successes of these trials in Kent, Sunderland, and Worcestershire and the 'parallel place' experiment in Suffolk.



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Cherwell Job Club

Cherwell LSP attributes the success of local Job Clubs to effective partnership working. In February 2010 the LSP will officially launch a revised Sustainable Community Strategy which reflects the priorities for the local area including the challenges in the current economic climate.

The Banbury Job Club, the first of its kind in the UK, was launched in January 2009. Initiated by Tony Baldry MP, it is an innovative partnership between Cherwell District Council, Oxfordshire County Council, Oxford and Cherwell Valley College, Job Centre Plus, the Oxfordshire Economic Partnership Council, employers and learning providers. In June the Bicester Job Club was launched following the same successful model. Attended by local employers looking to recruit, there are up-to-date local job listings; on-line computers to help search and apply for jobs; free training courses and advice for residents thinking of starting a business; and experts on hand. These Clubs have helped over 1,000 people find work.



New money for efficiency and transformation

Minister for Local Government Rosie Winterton has announced a further £31 million investment from the government's Efficiency and Transformation Fund into the nine Regional Improvement and Efficiency Partnerships (RIEPs).

The money is to fund innovative projects that will drive up standards and deliver savings. The RIEPs have already reported savings of more than £1.7 billion in the last financial year through service transformation and better procurement. Improvement and Efficiency South East (IESE) is to receive £4.6 million of the total for distribution.

This is in addition to funds available to English local authorities through the CLG's Customer Led Transformation Fund, which

is being distributed via IDeA. This is a 100 per cent capital fund which cannot be used for ongoing spending, but can be used on initiatives such as: licenses and online assets, community engagement, and dissemination of learning. Information about this fund is on the IdeA Customer Insight and Social Media online Communities of Practice (CoPs). For more details, contact Alexandra Marshall, IdeA: alexandra.marshall@idea.gov.uk 020 7296 6212.



partnership-wide sustainable procurement

The combined impact and reach of the bodies represented on partnerships – spanning public, private and voluntary bodies – means they have enormous potential to contribute to the local economy and cuts in greenhouse gas emissions. The double imperatives of cutting local government expenditure by 10-18 per cent in the next few years, and reducing CO2 emissions by 80 per cent by 2050, will require coordinated action across society and close collaboration between local government and all its partners.

Be Birmingham (the Local Strategic Partnership) has grasped the nettle with a Sustainable Procurement Compact, the first in the UK. The idea has now taken root in the south east region, on the Isle of Wight.

The Be Birmingham compact is a commitment by all partners to join forces and harness their buying power to benefit all the citizens of Birmingham. The procurement expenditure by Birmingham City Council is estimated at approximately £900 million annually; and the combined procurement budgets of the Be Birmingham partnership amount to about £6 billion annually. These budgets bring with them the power to transform markets and make a major contribution to driving the way in which the local economy develops.

The Compact was launched on 12 March, when it was signed by twelve partners including Birmingham City Council, the Birmingham East and North Primary Care Trust, the Government Office for the West Midlands, the West Midlands Fire Service, and Jobcentreplus. More organisations have since registered interest in joining the Compact.

Strategy. Procurement officer Heather Pearce, says 'There's a lot of focus on the Flexible Framework and we have formed three subgroups: culture and training; toolkits and knowledge; and monitoring and evaluation. The main obstacle is that procurers don't know how to do it sustainably, so we are launching training in the new year. We focus not just on the environment but also on the social and economic impacts of procurement.'

The Isle of Wight's Sustainable Procurement Project, being funded by the PTP Central Fund, forms part of the Eco Island Transformation programme, driving out inefficiencies in council supply chains. The combined annual spend of public sector partners on the Island is estimated at £1 billion. A set of Guidelines with 'ready to use' specifications for tender documents will be produced by a consultant and project management will be by the Island's Rural Community Council. The Isle of Wight Council will provide support by offering training and employment opportunities to local businesses and islanders. Principal Officer Jim Fawcett says 'This builds on existing good practice and will extend the work of the South East Sustainable Procurement Project by connecting all Island Strategic Partnership member organisations. We will be taking a broad view of sustainability to ensure the project maximises social, economic and environmental benefits.'

“ We estimate the total annual spend of public sector partners at £1 billion ”

“ Harnessing our combined buying power benefits our citizens ”

The Compact is a voluntary commitment, has no contractual status and is not legally binding. It is in effect a day-to-day tool to help achieve the objectives set out in Birmingham's Sustainable Community



Banbury Job Club
Expert employment help and advice

When: Every other Friday: Nov 6th, 20th and 4th and 18th December
Time: 11am - 1pm
Venue: The Mill Banbury, Spiceball Park, Banbury OX16 5QE

For more information
email: info@banburyjobclub.com
or telephone 01295 221863
www.cherwell.gov.uk/jobclubs

Cherwell DISTRICT COUNCIL NORTH OXFORDSHIRE

Supported by Cherwell District Council, Oxfordshire County Council, Tony Baldry MP and partners

the future of Partnership Working

PTP ANNUAL CONFERENCE 4 DECEMBER 2009 THE BRIT OVAL, LONDON SE11



Over a hundred delegates from partnerships across the south east region attended the third annual Progress through Partnership conference, held on 4 December 2009, at the Brit Oval, London. Top speakers including Professor Tony Bovaird, Roger Gough from thinktank Localis, and consultant Davy Jones set out their visions of the future of partnership working.

DEBATE FROM THE FLOOR:

- Can partnerships be effective without a share of mainstream funding, and should there be a standard system to achieve this?
- Should partnerships or councils have the commissioning role?
- Would a Conservative administration, moving against 'quangos', mean councils regained the commissioning role in partnerships?
- Should partnerships do citizen engagement directly, or is that the role of elected members?
- Is there too great an obsession with partnership structure and performance management?
- How can a service focussed on the needs of the end-user be designed?
- Should partnerships be 'invisible' to the end-user, to reduce confusion, and if they are 'invisible' does it also mean they are unaccountable?
- Should partnerships be elected – in the long term, in place of councils?
- Are efficient partnership workflows possible in two-tier areas?
- Has partnership-working 'gone too far'? Is there now a 'fog of partnerships'?

A call for greater localism and more freedom was made by keynote speaker Roger Gough. Starting with the history of councils working collaboratively, Roger pointed to the formation of the multi-purpose authority in the 1880s to the 'rise of the quangos' a hundred years later. The Localis view is that progress made by Local Strategic Partnerships has been stifled by the 'straightjacket of the National Indicator set'. Localis argue that the monitoring process of LAAs is 'clunky and costly', and little 'real money' is attached. A radical set of solutions could be considered. Firstly, LSPs could be more effective if they had their own legal identify. Partners' mainstream budgets could be top-sliced to resource partnerships and give them



commissioning powers. The idea of LSPs taking on a commissioning role, said Roger, "needs to be on everyone's radar."

Professor Tony Bovaird gave an overview of which forms of partnerships have been adopted in the UK, posing the question: which have lasted the best? He highlighted international experiences of partnership working in the US, France, Germany, the Netherlands and Australia, noting 'waves of outsourcing of municipal services' and the 'whole of government movement' in Australia, a similar concept to Total Place.

More efficient

Strategic rationales for partnerships are identified by Tony as: economies of scale, economies of scope – 'more varied is more efficient', and opportunities for mutual learning between partners. This latter aspect of partnership working tends to be under-exploited, reports Professor Bovaird. Partnerships can also be viewed as a form of 'relational contracting', to overcome the fact that 'spot purchasing' is wasteful and uneconomic, and that in-house provision can be unimaginative and expensive.

Difficulties identified include too great an emphasis on partnership evaluation, which Tony Bovaird likened to pulling up a plant repeatedly to check it is growing well! He concluded that a test of partnership is sharing – where it does not exist, perhaps

Davy predicts that climate change will become the number one issue for councils over the next ten years. Whereas national and international political progress on the issue is erratic, Davy sees a key role for local government. According to the latest polls, 85 per cent of people consider climate change a 'significant threat', ahead of political leaders on this issue. www.davyjonesconsultancy.co.uk.



things can be better achieved through different arrangements. Tony predicts that partnerships are likely to continue to flourish in the public sector, and those that work should be encouraged with greater resourcing.

Davy Jones identifies eight underlying policy drivers which he foresees as having the most influence on the public sector over the next few years, emphasising that they are inextricably linked, and act together on decision-making.

Clean sheet of paper

Programmes such as Total Place are a response to the sheer scale of the savings required in the current economic crisis, said Davy. It is a major restructuring, involving thinking almost from a clean sheet of paper about expenditure and outcomes, and how to eliminate duplication. The involvement of service-users in such restructuring is crucial.

The collapse in trust in politics, leading to record lows in voter turnout, is also a dangerous development, according to Davy, pointing to the 'highly unpleasant' electoral alternatives which exist. A lack of accountability in LSPs could be tackled

The idea of LSPs taking on a commissioning role needs to be on everyone's radar



by changing to a 'single commissioning model', or elected LSPs.

Elected LSPs?

Further factors influencing policy are: demographic changes and an ageing population; migration; new ways of working including the shift from a focus on council delivery towards a holistic approach to place. Multi-agency working and an increasingly centralised system of running local services can add to the complexity.

Challenging delegates who questioned citizen involvement in LSPs, Davy referred to extensive literature showing the benefits of an active and politicised population. Confidently anticipating an 'Amazon-style' ratings system for local government services, Davy pointed to the internet is an empowering force providing more 'voice and choice'.

For future partnerships there are four simple choices, according to Davy Jones:

- Partnerships with scrutiny by elected members – 'but scrutiny has no real teeth';
- Electing leaders, eg police chiefs, but this route leads away from collaborative partnership working;
- The single commissioning model; or
- A new form of partnership which is elected.

COPIES OF ALL PRESENTATIONS FROM THE CONFERENCE ARE AVAILABLE ON THE PTP WEBSITE



More highlights from the PtP Annual Conference

key issue workshops

Workshops at the PtP Conference explored lessons so far from the three Total Place pilots (Kent; Gateshead, South Tyneside, and Sunderland; and Worcestershire) and the Suffolk 'parallel place' project. There were also sessions on the scrutiny of partnerships, the challenges of partnership working to develop an MAA, wider issues for LSPs, and performance management of partnerships.

PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT OF PARTNERSHIPS

Presenters: Rob Ormerod, Hampshire County Council, and Sian Campbell, PtP Programme Manager

This session looked at how well Local Area Agreement (LAA)s are working, to what extent they contribute to efficiency, and how a performance management system could be better designed.

LESSONS LEARNT:

- Performance management needs to be a learning process, not just a reporting process. There was a sense that the amount of reporting required has tended to get in the way of learning.
- It is difficult to assess the success of LAAs because they are so new. However, there is a sense that they work best in a unitary context, in which a strong focus is unimpeded by the complexities of two-tier working.
- Cross partnership working drives improvements to LAA delivery: with more projects but less duplication. However, beneficial 'byproducts' of the work can go unrecorded.
- It is healthy to have targets as expressed in the LAA and it acts as a driver for positive behaviour. However the right targets need to be identified at the outset.
- The best-designed performance management system would facilitate collaborative learning.
- It would be based on the right 'area' – which is not necessarily county-wide.
- When it is not feasible to achieve a target in a certain time period (eg, in LAAs, in three years) there needs to be a route allowing this to be acknowledged.

TOTAL PLACE PILOT IN KENT ON SINGLE ASSET MANAGEMENT

Presenter: Martyn Ayre, Kent County Council

The PtP conference session on the Kent Total Place pilot revealed some thought provoking early lessons around its partnership approach to Single Asset Management.

LESSONS LEARNT:

- KCC has gone to some lengths to map clusters of publicly owned assets against utilisation rates (including local authority property, schools, PCT buildings, fire service etc). This was seen as a key method of capturing partner 'buy in' to the development of a single Asset Management Strategy.
- Asset management was also seen to be attractive to partners as it offers a physical demonstration of public sector efficiencies and can increase public participation through increased partnership working.
- The single asset management approach also offers the potential to develop public private partnerships, in particular releasing public assets for multiple-use.
- The Kent example also highlights a broader set of partners around asset management – citing the example of the MOD who have shown early interest in the approach in order to integrate ex-servicemen in more mainstream public access ports.
- Longer term, Kent highlighted the importance of 'visioning' and asking what happens beyond the Total Place pilot. This involved securing a governance structure for asset management which will hold some legacy for the county.
- Finally, delegates reflected on the potential to embed a single approach to asset management into future KCC procurement procedures, to create long-term changes in organisational cultures.

TOTAL PLACE PILOT IN GATESHEAD, SOUTH TYNESIDE AND SUNDERLAND ON ALCOHOL AND DRUGS MISUSE

Presenter: Paul Robinson, Head of Policy, Performance and Partnerships, South Tyneside Council.

Each Total Place pilot has been allocated £250K by the Treasury to February 2010. Total Place has been defined as 'Allocating provision by need across a locality, rather than via separate institutions, to lead to better services at a lower cost.'

Initial ideas on the project prioritised 'kids drinking on the street'. However this was reconsidered following engagement with a wide range of partners – a medical consultant highlighted that the real issue is saving lives at risk from chronic alcohol or drug misuse. Paul and the team hypothesise that the top 20 per cent of 'customers' (as they term the users of alcohol and drug services) account for 80 per cent of the cost. Indications are also that on-licences (eg pubs) cause less of the problem than off-licenses. To date, the pilot has involved mapping customer pathways, agreeing data sharing protocols for the priority families and pushing for more flexible funding streams.

LESSONS LEARNT:

- Total Place requires much more sharing than usual, and eliminating duplication.
- Sharing information can be obstructed by each agency at team level, even when agreed at Chief Executive level, so a Data Sharing Protocol needs to be agreed at an early stage.
- Briefing elected members is extremely time-consuming if not organised.
- A mapping of alcohol treatment 'pathways' indicates that people are repeatedly assessed by different agencies. Therefore the pilot is developing a single person assessment system.
- At the Whitehall level, this project is in 'a giant tug of war' with the economic benefits of the alcohol industry.
- Potential 'wins' have included working with prolific and priority offenders, including integrated offender management.
- The biggest challenge in Total Place is 'letting go', and choosing who is to lose control between the three areas.

LSP MOVES

Milton Keynes

Wendy Lehman became the new Chair of Milton Keynes LSP in October this year. Chief Executive of Milton Keynes Citizens Advice Bureau, Wendy is confronted daily with the problems faced by local people: the MK CAB dealt with more than 34,000 client contacts last year, a 6 per cent increase over the previous year, with a 22 per cent increase in the number of issues presented. Wendy is also the LSP's elected member for the Voluntary and Community Sector on the Milton Keynes Partnership Committee, the Local Delivery Vehicle for the expansion areas of Milton Keynes.



Surrey

Cllr Beryl Hunwicks has been re-elected Chair of The Woking Partnership. She says, 'Cuts are going to be necessary, and it is crucial to get information out to people. A section on our Partnership has been included in the booklet that went out to all residents with their community charge literature, Your Guide to Local Services in Woking (an A-Z of services). People need to know they are getting value for money.' Cllr Hunwicks is also a trustee of the Woking People of Faith Forum which seeks to bring people of different faiths together to promote understanding between them.



West Sussex

Brian Hughes, Assistant Chief Executive at NHS West Sussex is now Chair of Arun LSP, with Romy Jones, Strategic Development and Implementation Manager at the University of Chichester as Vice Chair. Brian has been in the NHS for over 34 years managing hospitals and service delivery. Asked if he sees the LSP pooling a budget in the future, he said, 'The NHS Act 2006 gives councils and PCTs the statutory basis for working in partnership and pooling budgets; for LSPs pooled budgets present too many problems in terms of governance and trust at the moment. However, Total Place is exciting because it uses virtual budgets. Multi agency working with virtual budgets and pooling could work very well.'



Please help us keep up to date by letting us know about any changes within your LSP: alison@seemp.co.uk

PtP Events

Generating Value for Money through Partnerships – A Leading Conference for Elected Members

19th February 2010, LGA Local Government House, times tbc

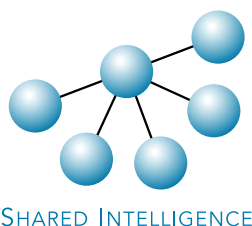
The event will feature a panel debate with top speakers on how partnership working can cut costs and improve efficiencies in the times of austerity ahead.

Faith working in partnership

The Mole Valley LSP held Surrey's first faith working in partnership event on 5th November, bringing together faith groups and the LSP. Chaired by LSP Chair Nick Ronald, keynote speakers were Canon Chris Rich, Director of Social Responsibility and Chair of the South East England Faiths Forum, Darren Mephram, Chief Executive of Mole Valley District Council and Jenny Moore, Manager of social enterprise B@titude. The day resulted in a range of projects which the LSP and faith groups plan to work on together. Nick Ronald, Chair of Mole Valley's LSP, said 'There was a real buzz throughout the day. There is now a wide range of projects which the LSP and faith groups plan to work on together.'

Attendance is free of charge for most PtP events.

To book a place, please email Janine at PtP: janine@seemp.co.uk. For more information on PtP events, please see our website at www.progressthroughpartnership.org.uk



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