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Welcome to the sixth edition of Partnering & Procurement News. Published by the ODPM Strategic Partnering Taskforce and The National Procurement Forum in partnership with PricewaterhouseCoopers, this market intelligence newsletter will be available on a bi-monthly basis.

To receive a copy of Partnering and Procurement News, please e-mail: spt@odpm.gsi.gov.uk

If you have any comments or wish to submit content to this newsletter, please e-mail: spt@odpm.gsi.gov.uk

The views expressed in this newsletter are not necessarily those of the Taskforce, the Forum, the ODPM or Government ministers

Issue 6 - March 2004

ODPM Strategic Partnering Taskforce Final Report

On March 4 2004 the Strategic Partnering Taskforce published its final report, setting out the key findings of its 2½ year research programme. At the outset in September 2001, the concept of partnerships for service delivery was still a novelty, but the concept is now familiar to managers throughout the public sector. We suspect that the very existence of the research programme has itself had a positive impact and has stimulated the development of real initiatives. Deirdre Wells, on behalf of the Taskforce explains further.

The SPT Final Report is a short document, cross-referenced to other published sources of advice and research. We hope that this will encourage people to read and make use of it. Some recommendations may appear provocative - others obvious. Our research has taken an holistic approach to all the factors which can make or break the success of a project, and our recommendations are also broad and inclusive.

The document recommends action to be taken by local government, central government and voluntary and private sector bodies to deliver a step change in local government's capacity, skills and performance.

Visionary and persistent leadership, a focus on communication and consultation and much improved project management skills are essential, but so too are excellent market intelligence and well designed governance arrangements. We see a need for Government to incentivise and support these fundamental changes in delivery mechanisms, either retrospectively on performance or through assistance at early developmental stages.

While outcome monitoring is a well-established part of assessing performance, we found significant advantages in recommending the adoption of a standard process framework for major partnership projects, to ensure adequate risk planning and options appraisal. Backed by a programme of regular assessment and review, projects stayed healthy and focussed, but also responsive to changing environments.

Joint working between authorities is not widely practised, and when we investigated the reasons for this, we came to the conclusion that it should be looked at far more regularly as a real option. The development of 'incremental' partnerships allows for a less dramatic initial change, followed by a more gradual transition as confidence and experience grows, and we believe they could be more widely understood and used.

We recommend greater co-ordination in central government, to reflect the community-led strategies which shape those services which are the responsibility of local government, and action to recognise and reduce excessive bidding and process costs. And finally, we have drawn attention to areas where legal barriers exist which are unhelpful to the thrust of change and promoted the role of a mixed economy - voluntary, private and public - in driving forward improvements.

The programme has been supported by an enormous number of advisors from all sectors, who have both given freely of their experience and have also developed new approaches to problems – on occasion in quite lively meetings. Our heartfelt thanks to you all.

Please refer to the [publications section](#) for details on how to obtain a copy of the report.

A Partnership Approach to Commissioning Placements for Looked-After Children

In many authorities the approach to commissioning children's services has lagged behind that for adult and elderly services, primarily as a result of the guidance and developments associated with the introduction of the Community Care reforms in the early 1990s. Alan Kirkham, Head of Partnering & Procurement, Wakefield Metropolitan District Council, discusses.

Whilst there are some individual examples of good practice, many authorities have experienced difficulties in contracting and monitoring children's placements, common problems being:

- A fragmented approach with varying levels of liaison between social care, education and health.
- Under-developed inter-authority liaison for identifying and monitoring out-of-area placements and sharing good practice.
- Unnecessary duplication of accreditation.
- A lack of investment in skills development amongst the staff working in contracting.
- Immediate financial pressures (the cost of out-of-area placements is a frequently identified reason for a social services department's spending problems) leading to 'quick fix' solutions at the expense of properly managed longer-term solutions.
- Significant variations in the quality of contracts and supporting documents.
- Difficulty in obtaining current data on the availability and quality of placements in what is perceived by councils as a "sellers" market.
- Concern expressed by providers that commissioners do not appreciate some of the issues such as the cost base, the level of risk in providing children's services, and the reality of their margins.

Recent years have seen increased activity in developing a more robust partnership approach to address the issues above. Examples include the Eastern Shires, the Pan-London contract, the Association of Greater Manchester Authorities, and the West Midlands. Such projects have the ability to deliver the priorities of the Choice Protects agenda, and support improved outcomes for children identified in the Green Paper "Every Child Matters".

Whilst it is early days, the work being developed in these projects is encouraging and the following are some of the key benefits that can be achieved through sub-regional or regional partnerships that a single council would struggle to deliver.

- *The development of an agreed set of common procedures and documents for the accreditation of facilities and for contracting.* In order to ensure the appropriateness of placements, external placements should be routinely accredited and monitored. An agreed framework, in which the accreditation and monitoring undertaken by one authority in the partnership is accepted by all the others, provides for more efficient use of resources and reduces the administrative burden on both providers and commissioner
- *A common set of contract documents* enables authorities to take a more commercial approach to managing placements. This can result in financial savings (for example, by agreeing index-linked annual increases), and at the same time deliver greater certainty for providers and reduce the complexities of managing a wide variety of contracts.

- *A regional approach allows local authorities to develop market intelligence and shared qualitative measures of outcomes*, especially if a database is developed to manage and share the information. This can lead to improved choice (for authorities and children), improved management of placements, and most importantly, the potential for improved outcomes for the children in care. The emphasis must be on identifying placements close to the child's community (unless there are compelling reasons otherwise). Effective monitoring and development of qualitative data can assist in reducing the number and frequency of changes in main carers. Some existing partnerships have also benefited commissioners through enabling workloads and special projects to be shared between authorities.
- *Neighbouring authorities working together can develop improved local capacity* (for example, by tendering for the provision of specialist local placements) that may not be appropriate for a smaller authority acting alone.
- *An important principle in partnership working is engagement with all relevant agencies* (social care, education, health and other providers) in order to provide an integrated approach which places the child at the centre of all processes and decisions.
- *A regional approach enables the development of providers' forums*, facilitating improved relationships and a mutual understanding and appreciation of requirements and processes.

An important lesson from adult services is that the playing field should be level, not weighted in favour of the providers or the purchasers. For children's services the balance currently lies with the providers; tilt the balance too much the other way, and there is risk that providers will pull out of the market. The partnerships must work with providers to ensure that the outcomes benefit all, and especially the child. Finally, a learning point from the existing partnerships is that inter-authority and inter-agency working is difficult. The more organisations that are involved, the greater the difficulty in achieving consensus. But the gains must surely be worth the effort.

Further details are available from Alan Kirkham, Head of Partnering & Procurement, Wakefield Metropolitan District Council. Telephone 01924 306780 or email akirkham@wakefield.gov.uk

Partnerships in support of the promotion of well-being in later life

The changing demographic profile of our communities, with a growing ageing population, has placed the need to provide services in support of the elderly firmly on the public services' agenda. In the following two articles, we explore the ways in which public services are now responding to the needs of an ageing population and in particular how joined-up working can assist in the effective delivery of high quality support.

Living Well in Later Life: From Prevention to Promotion

One of the key challenges for Local Strategic Partnerships is making a reality of 'successful ageing'. The demographic trends which are resulting in changes to the age balance of communities offer real opportunities to promote positive understandings of ageing, to empower older people and to respond to quality standards set by individuals and local communities. Eileen Waddington, Senior Development Consultant at the Nuffield Institute for Health, examines the recent change in policy away from the prevention of illness towards the promotion of well-being.

The 1990s saw the rediscovery of prevention and rehabilitation and a number of policy drivers which supported the increased priority for prevention. These include:

- Rediscovery of rehabilitation
- Cost of continuing care
- Perverse consequence of post-1993 targeting
- Managing demand on hospitals
- Recognition of the value of low intensity support

However this approach to prevention was fairly narrowly defined around delaying or preventing the need for higher-cost, more intensive services. If we are to move towards a more comprehensive definition of prevention we need to advance more comprehensive strategies for primary prevention that are part of the wider promotion of the health and well-being agenda. Fortunately there are a number of policy drivers which are supportive of such an approach. These include:

- Promoting healthy and active life in old age (Better Government for Older People – see article which appears on page 6 of this newsletter)
- Wanless Reports - [Securing Our Future Health: Taking a Long-Term View](#), recently updated by the report [Securing Good Health for the Whole Population](#)
- Recognition of inequalities in health and life expectancy
- Local Strategic Partnerships and Community Plans
- New localisation and sustainable communities
- [World Health Organisation Active Ageing Report](#)

Taken together, these latter forces are generating a sharper focus on the promotion of health and well-being through a reduction in inequalities, the promotion of community capacity building, the reduction of social exclusion and the strengthening of local democracy.

Research undertaken by the Nuffield Institute suggests that the two most important elements of successful ageing as experienced by older people, are **control** and **interdependence**. This is in contrast to the more conventional description of **choice** and **independence** as the core public policy goals for people in later life.

What then are the implications for local partnerships struggling to get to grips with developing strategies to promote positive ageing? The Nuffield Institute proposes that what is required are holistic policy and practice developments at three levels:

- **Individual** – assessments need to take account of existing, emerging and future needs in the context of family friends and community networks. Identifying needs and resources so that individuals can be empowered to make informed decisions
- **Community** – building capacity in communities which recognises the contribution of older people and removes hurdles and barriers which result in social exclusion
- **Local and Central Government** – here the challenge is to understand policy interdependencies and to promote partnership working at all levels. Particularly important is the community leadership role of the local authority and using this to advocate for an effective cross-government approach to ageing

One of the implications of moving from prevention to promotion is that partnerships will need to extend well beyond the traditional health and social care agencies and for ways to be found to engage older people as active contributors.

Further information is available from Eileen Waddington (E.Waddington@leeds.ac.uk)
Copies of Living Well in Later Life: From Prevention to Promotion can be downloaded from the following website www.nuffield.leeds.ac.uk

The Partnership Assessment Tool is available via the [ODPM website](#).

Promoting Independence and Well-Being – Building a Strategic Partnership Approach

A radical change of approach is needed if public services are to meet the challenges of our ageing society, concludes a series of reports published on February 12th 2004 by the Audit Commission and Better Government for Older People (BGOP). Jane Carrier and David Martin discuss.

An overview of the five reports highlights the benefits of a strategic joined-up approach across the range of services that older people value, such as leisure, education, transport and community safety, as well as the NHS and social care. This approach may not cost more; it involves a better use of resources.

Older People – Building a Strategic Approach: Independence and Well-being 2, one of the five reports, describes how some authorities are developing a strategic partnership approach to independence and wellbeing, despite there currently being few incentives. Communities that do decide to adopt this approach therefore need to build support at a number of levels, including with elected members, senior officers and partner agencies. In some areas, it has proved useful to make explicit connections with the National Service Framework (NSF) for Older People's Standard on healthy active life and with Local Strategic Partnerships and community planning. Sustainable change seems more likely to occur where older people play a central role in monitoring progress.

These reports set out the indicators of good performance. They are designed to assist public bodies in developing their local approach. The Comprehensive Performance Assessment for 2005 onwards will assess councils' activities in this area. In addition, the Audit Commission will continue to work with the Commission for Healthcare Audit & Inspection (CHAI) and the Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI) to carry out the review of the NSF for older people, focusing in particular on the Standard that relates to healthy active life. In future, councils and their partners will be expected to demonstrate that the several building blocks are in place, including:

- Processes to involve older people;
- A strategic approach that goes beyond care services to address older people's priorities;
- Commitment and leadership;
- Strong and whole system partnership approaches;
- A comprehensive range of care services, including proactive support and assistive technology, that are underpinned by values of citizenship and tackling ageism;

Local strategic approaches need to address the issues that are most important to older people. They can also play an important role in promoting positive views of ageing, as well as providing focus to what can be a fragmented set of services, stimulating new partnerships and making better use of resources by reducing duplication. Although there is much that public services can do to change their approach, this shift will be helped by changes to the way in which ageing and older people are viewed and by stronger leadership from Government.

The reports can be accessed via the [Audit Commission website](#).

Further information can be obtained from Jane Carrier, Senior Manager, Public Services Research at the Audit Commission. Email j-carrier@audit-commission.gov.uk or David Martin Associate Director, Better Government for Older People. Email David.Martin@bgop.org.uk

Please note that on 1 April 2004, the Strategic Partnering Taskforce and the Local Government Association will be hosting a conference in London on "Rethinking older people's services - an integrated Tomorrow".

Further details on how to reserve places at this event can be found on the [ODPM website](#).

Valuing People – a New Strategy for Learning Disability for the 21st Century

Valuing People – a New Strategy for Learning Disability for the 21st Century was published in 2001. It is a wide ranging cross-government White Paper and the first comprehensive statement of Government policy in this area for 30 years. Steve Strong, Regional Advisor, Valuing People Support Team discusses.

Valuing People set out to change the situation for people with learning disabilities in a number of areas of their lives.

One key objective was in relation to Housing and Support, the stated objective being:

“To enable people with learning disabilities and their families to have greater choice and control over where and how they live.”

This is the first time that Housing and Support issues have been given such prominence in Government policy in this area. It is long overdue that this group of citizens should be offered the sorts of opportunities that the rest of us take for granted – the chance to choose who you live with and where you live.

As well as an emphasis on planning services around individuals and a focus on supporting an increasing role for ‘mainstream’ agencies to deliver more effectively for this group, Valuing People also places some weight on the importance of an ‘all means all’ approach.

One of the key principles in the White Paper is that the level of support needed by an individual should not dictate the choices available to them. There is growing experience that people with all levels of needs can successfully, with support, manage all types of tenure. To enable people with high support needs to be supported in a home of their own can sometimes be more expensive. This is where commissioners and providers can think more imaginatively about funding arrangements. Shared ownership can be a cost-effective way of providing homes. Systems for drawing in other sources of funding e.g. family resources, should become the norm rather than the exception.

The Valuing People agenda on Housing and Support is challenging, but increasingly people with learning disabilities and their families will be looking for choices in where, how and with whom they live. The Valuing People agenda offers a real chance to move away from the stereotyping and exclusion that this group of citizens has experienced for far too long.

Further information is available from Steve Strong, Regional Advisor in the Valuing People Support Team. Telephone 0117 984 1799 or email steve.strong@doh.gsi.gov.uk. Alternatively, please access the Valuing People website www.valuingpeople.gov.uk.

What's New?

HBS Signs with Milton Keynes

Milton Keynes Council has signed a 12-year strategic partnership agreement with HBS. The deal will provide added investment in IT and human resources as well as the streamlining of business processes in front-line services such as revenues, benefits and housing repairs.

The partnership is valued at more than £190 million and will result in investment by HBS of more than £26 million and the development of new processes and technology.

More than 600 staff will transfer to HBS from the authority which joins Bedfordshire and Lincolnshire CCs and Middlesbrough and Bath & North East Somerset Councils in signing strategic deals with the firm.

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Municipal Journal 22/01/04

Newham/Anite Contract

Newham LBC and Anite Public Sector have entered an information management partnership to tackle documentation and workflow.

The 10-year, £1.5 million contract will provide information for more than 5,000 staff within the council. The decision will enable the council to comply with the requirements of the new Freedom of Information Act and the Electronic Social Care Record project.

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Municipal Journal 12/02/04

Networking Harrogate

Harrogate BC has signed a contract with Kingston Communications to upgrade the authority's local area network. The installation of Nortel Networks' Gigabit Ethernet technology will result in a 10-fold increase in information-carrying capacity, reducing congestion at peak times. A new internal network will support both front-line and back-office staff.

Reproduced with permission from Municipal Journal

Municipal Journal 29/01/04

£46 Million Invested to Deliver Better Public Services

HM Treasury and the Cabinet Office have jointly announced the successful projects across England that will receive a share of

almost £46 million under the sixth round of the 'Invest to Save' initiative. The 'Invest to Save' initiative provides support for projects that involve joined-up public bodies working together to deliver services. The projects receiving funding are:

- Crown Prosecution Service - £27,123,000
- Small Business Service - £1,250,000
- Youth Justice Board - £1,365,000
- Community Service Volunteers - £7,331,000
- St Mungo's Inner London Detox Centre - £1,155,000
- Prison Service - £314,687
- Devon and Cornwall Constabulary - £1,100,000
- Bath and NE Somerset Social Services and Housing Services - £1,343,300
- Bristol City Council - £810,870
- Warrington Advice and Resource Centre - £458,064
- Gloucestershire City Council - £100,000
- Lincolnshire County Council - £1,092,000
- Peterborough City Council - £2,262,400

Further details are available via [HM Treasury website](http://HM.Treasury.website).

HM Treasury 04/02/04

Skills Development for Local Government: Update

Six specialist training modules for project team members have now been launched in the latest phase of the training and development programmes highlighted in the National Procurement Strategy for Local Government (see “Skills Development for Local Government” article in [Issue 4 of Partnering and Procurement News](#)). Five specialist training providers, recognised as leaders in their fields, have been appointed to deliver the programme. The modules and the relevant providers are:

| Course Module | Training Provider | Contact Details for Bookings |
|---|----------------------|---------------------------------|
| Commercial Negotiation | Maltway | Richard Walton - 020 7403 5195 |
| Building and Managing Relationships | Merlin Consultancy | info@merlinconsultancy.co.uk |
| Risk Management | Zurich Municipal | Deborah Bowler - 01252 387722 |
| Contract and Procurement Law and Tax | Projects Partnership | Charlotte Lynch - 020 7620 0888 |
| Commercial Practice Finance Law and Tax | Projects Partnership | Charlotte Lynch - 020 7620 0888 |
| Local Government Finance and Trading | IPF/Cipfa | Paul Salter - 020 8667 8180 |

4ps and IDEa were both actively involved with the selection of training partners. The first phase of the programme targets (but is not restricted to) local authorities with the highest perceived need for procurement training: those authorities rated Poor/Weak through the CPA (Comprehensive Performance Assessment) process.

The National Procurement Strategy recommends that authorities carry out a skills audit and implement a training and development programme, and this requirement, together with the subsidy provided from the ODPM Capacity Building fund (between 50% and 75% depending on CPA status), has generated considerable interest from authorities in taking up places. The other two programmes, namely:

1. building competence in strategic procurement for members and senior officers and
2. options appraisal and business cases/ PPP and strategic partnering

are in the process of roll out currently and feedback so far has been very positive.

For further information on these programmes please contact Julia Lockett on 0207 808 1492 or email: training@4ps.gov.uk.

More information can be found on the 4ps web site www.4ps.gov.uk under procurement training individual modules; here you can also obtain information from our course providers.

New Centres Of Procurement Excellence

Nine new centres of procurement excellence have been established in the UK with the express aim of driving innovative change in procurement by providing expertise to other councils and by building on existing good practice.

The launch of the new centres marks a fundamental step towards assisting local authorities across the country in implementing the National Procurement Strategy for Local Government. The new regional centres of procurement excellence are:

- North East - Gateshead Metropolitan Borough Council working in close co-operation with all other authorities in the region
- West Midlands – Worcestershire County Council working in partnership with Birmingham City Council and the West Midlands Local Government Association
- South West - Dorset County Council, building on the work of the South-West Procurement Federation
- North West - Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council working in partnership with the Association of Greater Manchester Authorities and Liverpool City Council
- South East - Kent County Council working in partnership with Surrey CC and Hampshire CC and the Berkshire Unitaries
- Yorkshire and Humberside - Leeds City Council working closely with Sheffield and North Yorkshire County Council
- East Midlands - Nottinghamshire County Council working with Derbyshire and other councils
- East of England - Norfolk County Council working in partnership with Suffolk, Essex and other counties
- London - Association of London Government on behalf of the London Boroughs, working in particular with Westminster City Council and Hammersmith and Fulham

Announcing the nine centres, Local Government Minister Phil Hope said:

"Following the launch of the National Procurement Strategy for Local Government in October 2003, today marks another important stage in our joint working with the LGA to improve public services and achieve better value for money.

"We need to be certain that the £40 billion per year that councils spend buying goods and services is managed with efficiency, innovation, resourcefulness and prudence.

"I have been keen to establish these centres as soon as possible, because we need to start now if we are going to meet the milestones set out in the National Procurement Strategy, especially those for 2004."

The joint ODPM/LGA capacity building fund will provide up to £3.6 million funding per annum for the centres for the financial years 2004/5 and 2005/6.

Phil Hope's full announcement can be found on the [ODPM website](#).

ODPM 25/02/04

e-Innovations Fund Allocations

Thirty-four cutting-edge projects to develop the Local e-Government agenda beyond the 2005 target are celebrating after bidding successfully for a £6.2 million of the e-innovations fund.

The winning ideas range from a project that offers 'virtual tours' of vacant council homes, parks and local shops and other community facilities to another project that aims to use SMS text-messaging technology to improve access to services for people living in rural areas.

The local authorities will receive a share of £6.2 million match funding to deliver their innovative ideas by March 2005. The e-innovations fund, worth £14 million overall, was announced last September and following on from this first round of winners, the second bidding round will begin in the Autumn.

Announcing the first-round winners today, Local e-Government Minister Phil Hope said:

"E-Government is not just about computers or websites. It is about improving the way people use their local services and improving their experience of dealing with Government.

"I welcome these projects that complement the work of individual councils, Pathfinders, National Projects and Partnerships already being carried out under the Local e-Government programme. The innovation, creativity and cutting-edge nature of these winning projects is encouraging and demonstrates how e-Government can be a driving force for real change in people's lives.

"I am particularly pleased to see how these projects can be 'rolled out' to other councils, saving them time and money."

The first round of support for e-innovations targets the following four themes:

- E-Learning

This theme includes the internal sharing of information and good practice, staff development and better use of e-government to assist service transformation (i.e. not mainstream education/schools).

- Bridging the Digital Divide

This includes using e-government in ways that help services to reach those socially excluded and in particular addressing the concern that e-government might lead to some people being further isolated from the support and services they need

- Emergent technology for better government

Innovative use of ICT to improve services

- Local authority e-business

Better use of ICT to improve internal business in councils, including service planning and performance management

A full list of the councils receiving funding is available via the full [press release](#).

ODPM 16/03/04

Developments in the Waste Sector

4ps have been active in the waste sector for some years, primarily in supporting Waste PFI projects. Eight projects have been completed since 1997. Local authority interest in this sector is rapidly changing as the long-term impact of meeting a range of challenging waste targets, including recycling and composting, and the EU landfill directive are recognised. Alan Burnett, Director at 4ps explains.

The increase in demand for PFI projects is now such that the Spending Review 2004 (due to be published in July 2004) will highlight the need for more PFI funding for waste in recognising the part PFI can play in meeting individual authority and national targets. 2003 has seen a major drive by 4ps to raise the importance of waste within local government and to encourage long-term thinking. The output requirements from waste strategies produced by waste authorities are also highlighting the need for significant capital investment and implementation strategies to meet the increasingly challenging targets beyond 2005/6.

As of March 2004, seven Business Cases have been approved since November 2002, three are being considered by Defra and a further five are in the course of detailed preparation. In addition, 4ps are talking to over twenty other authorities and partnerships that are preparing or considering their long term procurement options which include PFI/PPP. The drive by 4ps in 2004 is to continue supporting the development of new projects and to improve and standardise the procurement of projects thus reducing the time and cost of procurement to contract operation and monitoring. A procurement pack for waste projects, containing guidance from strategy through procurement, will be published in May 2004. A further priority is to encourage participation by industry and funders with the aim to expand the limited market capacity which in itself restricts the deal flow at any one time.

In developing this sector a number of consistent factors have emerged. Partnership working between all tiers of waste authorities is the norm. This may or may not lead to the integration of disposal and collection operations. Whatever the outcome there is a greater recognition of the need to work together to deliver sustainable and cost effective outcomes. A growing part of 4ps work is early engagement with partnerships to help develop options and ways of working together. This is about thinking long term and developing the procurement options to deliver an agreed strategy. Within this work there is greater clarity on value for money, quality of outputs and the role of short, medium and long term procurements.

As work is done to model options and costs for the long term this often highlights the practical issues in meeting future targets, the rising costs of delivering waste solutions, status of waste planning and the need to access funding sources. It is leading to a culture of setting stretched targets which are more likely to prove robust as the pressure to recycle, reuse and recover and divert will undoubtedly increase over time. We are now able to network emerging best practice in the development of these options, recognising that there is no single model that fits all situations.

Further information is available on the 4ps website - www.4ps.gov.uk or contact:

Alan Burnett - Director:
020 7808 1475

Samantha Gain - Executive:
020 7808 1493

Fred Portnell - Associate:
0207 808 1486

Pathfinder Programme Update

The Strategic Partnering Taskforce supported a Pathfinder programme of 24 local authority partnerships, selected for their potential to provide local government with a number of different models for delivering services in partnership.

The Pathfinder projects are organised by themes that focus on strategic delivery areas. Featured Pathfinders for this issue are:

Corporate and e-government

➤ Delivering Electronic Service Centres In Worcestershire

The Worcestershire e-Government Partnership includes key organisations which are taking forward the Worcestershire 'Hub' Programme. The key objective of the programme is to open a one-stop service to local communities across a range of access channels; web portal, telephone, service centres, kiosks and mobile centres. The first of these was opened in March 2003 and it is recognised that the full programme of work will take a number of years to fully realise. The key partners in the programme include:

- Bromsgrove DC
- Malvern Hills DC
- Redditch BC
- Worcester City Council
- Wychavon DC
- Wyre Forest DC
- Worcestershire CC

These partners entered a public-private partnership with Hewlett-Packard, also working in co-operation with Deloitte.

This Pathfinder has progressed well, taking pragmatic decisions along the stages up to securing its private sector partner. If current progress is maintained the Worcestershire Hub will provide tangible benefits to the citizens of Worcestershire. The key benefits of the project will be:

- Customer-focused service delivery across the partner councils and ultimately other partners
- Joint procurement of a common technology infrastructure and services resulting in economies of scale and reduced overheads
- Sharing of staff resources to handle peak demand
- A strong foundation on which to make further improvements

Further details are available from Rachel Hill, e-Government Programme Manager at Worcestershire County Council. Telephone 01905 728580 or e-mail RJHill@worcestershire.gov.uk

Education, Health and Social Services

➤ Newham London Borough Council – Local Space

Newham Pathfinder is known as 'Local Space'. It is about improving assistance to homeless people supported by the London Borough of Newham with the possibility of extension/replication to assist other local authorities' homeless households. Its aim is to create a separate legal entity that will be a purchasing agent supplying property for temporary occupation by homeless people, principally homeless families.

The business need is to have access to a wider range of temporary accommodation, to avoid the use of Bed and Breakfast hotels and augment the current alternative sources of temporary supply. The current sources of temporary accommodation supply are:

- Private sector landlords
- RSL landlords
- Council owned stock

This proposed solution is for an additional supply of temporary accommodation. In addition a key objective is to secure a more stable supply and cost of temporary accommodation, which will shield Newham from a volatile London property market.

The vehicle, so formed (Local Space), would act as a partner to Newham (and in time maybe, other client local authorities across London). The vehicle would buy properties, bring them up to standard and lease them to Newham to house mainly homeless families. The properties would be a mixture of type, including flats and houses.

Local Space, would borrow from banks to fund the property purchases. Newham have identified £50 million of housing stock with non-secure tenancies that would form this grant to the Charity subject to Secretary of State consent.

Local space is expected to deliver up to 40% of the Borough's total temporary accommodation requirements over time through direct intervention, but will be the Council supply agent for all its temporary housing procurement.

In terms of the participation in Local Space there are four main stakeholders identified:

- local government partners (Newham LBC)
- Housing Corporation
- the funder(s) (when identified and agreed)
- the broader community and interested groups

Of all the Strategic Partnering Taskforce pathfinders this is probably the one where the most risk planning needs to take place before commitments are entered. This is due to the complexity of the funding and relationship structures and the fact that £50M (in terms of value) of public assets may provide the equity as a start-up grant to the not-for-profit company known as Local Space.

Footnote

Since the preparation of this Case Study in September 2003 further discussions have taken place with the Charity Commissioners and with the Housing Corporation, resulting in the decision being taken that Local Space will be a Registered Social Landlord and therefore come under the auspices and regulation of the Housing Corporation.

For further information on this project, contact: Kamal Faizi, Divisional Director Regeneration & Sustainability at Newham Tel: 020 8555 5552 x44403 or email: kamal.faizi@newham.gov.uk

➤ AGMA - Out-Of-Area Education And Social Services Procurement Project

The Association of Greater Manchester Authorities (AGMA) identified a range of areas where joint service delivery across member authorities could achieve savings or improve performance. One of

these initiatives is the Out-of-Area Placements Project, bringing together local education authorities, social services departments, health and the independent and voluntary sector providers across the region. AGMA was formed after the abolition of the Greater Manchester Council in 1986, and comprises the 10 local authorities in the Greater Manchester region:

- | | | | |
|--------------|------------|----------|-------------|
| - Bolton | - Salford | - Bury | - Stockport |
| - Manchester | - Tameside | - Oldham | - Trafford |
| - Rochdale | - Wigan | | |

The AGMA partnership also includes two unitary authorities, namely Blackpool and Blackburn with Darwen.

AGMA has obtained a greater clarity in respect of the potential benefits of the project, and options for delivering these benefits. There is a high level ownership of the project and importantly, the project objectives are aligned to emerging Government policy for children's services and partnership working.

For further details are available from Sheela Vara, Partnerships Policy Officer. Telephone 0194 270 5725 and Steven Pleasant, Assistant Chief Executive at Tameside MBC. Telephone 0161 343 3148

Transport and Environment

➤ Shropshire Waste Partnership

The Shropshire Waste Partnership (SWP) was formed to promote sustainable waste management in Shropshire through joint working between four of the five Waste Collection Authorities and the Waste Disposal Authority.

The partner authorities are:

- Bridgnorth District Council (WCA)
- North Shropshire District Council (WCA)
- Oswestry Borough Council (WCA)
- South Shropshire District Council (WCA)
- Shropshire County Council (WDA)

The SWP works in close association with the neighbouring authority of Telford & Wrekin Council and also Shrewsbury & Atcham Borough Council. As an ODPM nominated Pathfinder organisation for waste, the SWP is pioneering the ideology of integrated waste management by a single executive body.

The SWP produced a Joint Municipal Waste Management (MWM) Strategy for Shropshire which covers a period of 20 years and sets out the objectives and proposals for waste collection, treatment and disposal that will apply across the County. The Revised Deposit Draft version of the Waste Local Plan was published in April 2003. Outstanding objections to the Plan were considered at a Local Plan Inquiry in January 2004. It is currently anticipated that the Plan will be adopted in late 2004.

Under the guidance of the ODPM, the SWP produced a Strategic Outline Case and accompanying benchmarking exercise to take stock and consider which contract arrangement best suited the waste management service sought by the people of Shropshire. The Partnership decided that a single integrated waste collection, recycling, recovery and disposal contract offered both qualitative and quantitative advantages and this was duly adopted by the SWP Board.

A cost and funding exercise determined that value for money was best obtained by striving to achieve the targets for recycling and recovery highlighted in the Prime Minister's Strategy Unit's response to Waste Strategy 2000 and the so called "enhanced" option has been adopted.

An Outline Business Case will be completed in the near future and submitted to Defra in support of a bid for PFI credits. The SWP has identified an affordability gap between capital needs for new plant and the likely capital expenditure available to the Partnership through normal local authority funding routes. The PFI funding will support a long-term outsourced contract.

The SWP Board has now agreed that a Joint Committee be formed by early summer to provide not only governance of the contract, but to undertake the statutory duties vested in the waste disposal and collection authorities. A new Client organisation will be formed and introduced ahead of the PFI contract award. The SWP believes that with the assistance of the ODPM it will provide a deliverable model solution for the provision of sustainable waste management in two tier authorities.

Further information is available from Frank Mulgrew, Executive Officer, Shropshire Waste Partnership. Telephone: 01743 255009 or email: frank.mulgrew@shropshire-cc.gov.uk

➤ Kent Fastrack

Fastrack was already an established and well publicised project when it was adopted as a Pathfinder project by the Taskforce in 2002. The project vision had developed a great deal of support and understanding amongst the local community, and acceptance in principle by Central Government and private sector organisations involved in the development of new infrastructure and major housing expansion in this part of the Thames Gateway.

Kent Fastrack is the public transport solution to the traffic problems which would otherwise occur as a result of the proposed rapid population growth in Kent Thameside. Its aim is to provide the infrastructure to run high quality, high frequency buses over a combination of new and existing carriageways. This infrastructure includes not only the engineering works necessary to create the track, but will also encompass significant investment in high technology, passenger information systems, CCTV security systems, ticketing machines, web based time-tabling and GPS monitoring of the vehicles. Key participants in the Fastrack project are as follows:

- | | | | |
|----------------------------|-----------------------------------|--|-------------------|
| - Kent County Council | - Gravesham Borough Council | - Dartford Borough Council | - Land Securities |
| - ProLogis Development Ltd | - Kent Thameside Development Team | - Department for Transport (through Local Transport Plan scheme funding) | |

A Fastrack Project Board has been established to provide strong and purposeful client partnership to drive the project forward and to facilitate efficient and effective co-ordinated action within and between partner organisations against an agreed work-plan and timetable.

Progress to date in terms of creative and imaginative strategic planning, co-operation between the three local authorities and partnership planning between the authorities and the private sector companies with a commercial interest in the area's development has been impressive. Scheme preparation for the first phase remains on course for a start of construction in 2004 and completion in 2006. A further phase, associated with development of one of the major sites in Kent Thameside, will also be completed within the same timescale and detailed discussion is underway regarding developer provision on other sites.

Further information is available from David George, Project Manager. Telephone 01474 564422 or email david.george@gravesham.gov.uk

Knowledge Source

Each publication of Partnering & Procurement News will feature organisations that are active in the area of partnerships and procurement. Our featured sources for this edition are the website of The Society of Procurement Officers in Local Government (SOPO)

Formed in 1997, the not-for-profit Society of Procurement Officers in Local Government was incorporated as a limited company in October 2001. The Society of Procurement Officers in Local Government (SOPO) engages in a range of activities to promote the strategic procurement, contracting and supplies functions. Representing over 1500 members, SOPO provides area networks and forums, along with producing guidance on best practice in procurement. Its aim is to advise local authorities throughout England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland on all procurement and supplies matters of national or general interest.

There are four types of membership:

- Full Membership - Individual Membership of SOPO is free and open to all local government officers who spend the greater part of their time on procurement and supplies
- Associate Membership - is open to local government officers who have an interest in ensuring that their procurement activities offer value for money
- Affiliate Membership - is open to individuals who are not employed within a local authority.
- Corporate Membership - is open to Private Sector organisations

The SOPO website represents a useful knowledge source for all matters of procurement. In summary, the site contains the following information:

- About SOPO – contains background details of the organisation, membership details and links to contact details of regional representatives
- News – frequently updated, comprehensive news section from a variety of public sector sources
- Reports and Publications – links to current and archived reports and publications
- Events – contains links to current and past events
- Resources – this section is subcategorised as follows:
 - CPV Codes – specifically developed by the European Union to help procurement personnel classify their contract notice
 - Web links – links to resources for public procurement professionals in both central and local government
 - Guidance – information repository on many aspects of public sector contracting
 - Standard Forms for Publication of Contract Notices (OJEC)
 - Trust and Security in e-Government
 - Job vacancies for procurement in local government
- Members Area – a comprehensive area for full members, including a very lively discussion forum, members directory, links to useful contract/tendering facilities and additional resources.

Further details can be obtained via the [SOPO website](#) and from Ken May, SOPO Secretary and Director of ESPO

Case Studies

Enable is e-Government in Action

The national strategy for local e-government proposed that the engagement and commitment of leaders and Chief Executives was essential to realising the benefits of local e-government. Taking up this challenge, a groundbreaking partnership has been developed between Warrington, Vale Royal and Macclesfield Borough Councils and private sector organisations AtoZ Supplies and UKProcure. This initiative provides a winning formula for all local authorities to meet the Government's goals for buying goods and services online and to improve efficiency. Irene Maguire at Warrington BC and Ricky Fuller at A-Z Supplies explain.

The **enable** project has provided three councils with a way to use the web as their key means by which to buy products and services easily and allow them to save thousands of pounds in time and energy. With over 50,000 orders placed by the three authorities, the **enable** project was conceived to streamline purchasing processes and realise the predictions of the Audit Commission of 70% savings. The initiative has been communicated to local authorities throughout North-West England to show them how to join **enable** and 'jump start' their own e-procurement programme – which is a requirement within the Government's National Procurement Strategy for Local Government.

It has taken two years from the initial vision and tender specification in October 2001, to the successful pilot and expansion of **enable** across the local authorities this year.

The introduction of **enable** has involved managing 27 points of integration across the three authorities and developing a website portal as a focal point for users looking to buy products. The system also provides managers with detailed information on the products purchased and has enabled them to take advantage of bulk purchasing discounts and corporate contracts for key purchases.

The **enable** system offers more than 10,000 products, which have been subject to rigorous tendering and quotation processes by AtoZ Supplies. Another key aspect of the **enable** project is ensuring defined service levels and professional human assistance, not just a faceless computerised purchasing process. The system has eliminated all requirements for paper authorisation with every step in the procurement process conducted electronically. It now provides essential management information that can be used to co-ordinate purchasing and get the best prices and service across the three local authorities.

The potential of **enable** has been recognised by its inclusion as a role model case study in the National Procurement Strategy for local government. Helen Style, Senior Procurement Adviser at ODPM, observes: "**enable** is an excellent example of the type of initiative we are trying to promote through the National Strategy and addresses a number of its key aims".

The plan moving forward is to offer other local authorities the opportunity to join **enable**. The benefits for them include time savings and the opportunity to take advantage of a proven solution that can be fully integrated with their own back-office systems. Joiners will enjoy economies of scale that are achieved from procuring through a partnership.

The successful introduction and future expansion of **enable** clearly demonstrates how an inter-authority partnership, with private sector expertise, contributes towards the achievement of the Government's National Procurement Strategy which necessitates the implementation of a web-based means of buying products and services by 2005.

For further information please contact: Irene Maguire at Warrington BC, email imaguire@warrington.gov.uk or Ricky Fuller at A-Z Supplies, email rfuller@atozsupplies.co.uk

Partnering Adur and Worthing Services (PAWS)

Background

Adur and Worthing are two neighbouring authorities on the south coast of West Sussex and share similar geographical and demographical characteristics. There is a history of close working between the two authorities and the notion of a public/public partnership using an incremental approach evolved following discussions between members and senior managers of both organisations. Key features of the partnership include:

- Predominantly "blue collar" services such as vehicle and fleet management, refuse collection, recycling and street cleaning
- Total service value of £3.8 million per annum
- Timescale to produce a single entity to deliver services by 2007 (3 stage implementation plan with savings of around £70k being expected from stage 1)
- Annual savings (upon full implementation) anticipated of £300k

The project is split into three stages:

- Stage 1 – to share resources and facilities with the aim of reducing costs and improving service quality and effectiveness
- Stage 2 – to harmonise working practices, resulting in a consistent and higher standard of services
- Stage 3 – to create a new single entity providing both Councils with high quality direct services

Both councils were keen to take an incremental rather than a large-scale approach to minimise risk and provide an exit opportunity at each stage if desired.

The main decision-making body is the Simultaneous Executive Meeting (SEM), whereby members from each council hold a meeting at the same time and at a single venue to discuss PAWS issues and then break into separate groups for voting. The two authorities have different democratic arrangements so this innovative decision making structure allows decisions to be made more quickly than via joint committee reporting but still encourages full member involvement. All members from both councils receive SEM papers and can attend the meetings. A common report format is currently being developed.

From the work undertaken the following conclusions can be made:

- The project, although in its infancy in terms of its overall aims and scope, is progressing well for the agreed phases
- The support of senior officers and members of both organisations has been important to the success of the project
- The Simultaneous Executive Meetings (SEM) governance is an interesting concept and appears to allow timely decisions

Lessons learned and issues identified

- Cross-party support has been recognised as a major issue of the continued success of the partnership. Although this support has been in place to date, the 2004 elections are widely acknowledged to be critical for the further development of PAWS and officers are constantly working to maintain political commitment to the project.
- A top-level champion is essential during the initial stages to drive the project forward
- Both councils underestimated the cultural differences that would need to be overcome during the partnership process. Joint authority briefings are now taking place on a regular basis.
- The order of implementation has been chosen deliberately to allow any “teething problems” to be ironed out on the non-public facing services prior to implementing the more “business critical” services. This will be important for the continued success of the partnership as any public dissatisfaction could affect the political commitment to the scheme.
- Discussion with staff and members also revealed the need for more robust business cases, which include full risk assessments and fully costed plans. These are to be incorporated into future business plans.

Key success factors of the partnership

- Commitment and backing of the project by both Chief Executives
- Cross-party political commitment from both organisations’ members
- The partnership has been awarded £200,000 e-government funding from the ODPM to develop e-procurement and Customer Relationship Management software

Further information is available from Les Mockford, Assistant Head of Contract Services, Worthing Borough Council. Telephone: 01903 229 259

Prepared by the Taskforce, full details of the PAWS case study are available on the [ODPM website](#)

The Entrepreneurial Public Sector

The debate over the future of the UK's public services is as crucial to business as it is to everyone else who depends upon a local council or hospital. Companies use, fund and increasingly deliver public goods, but they also recognise the vital role the public sector plays in underpinning economic and social development. The CBI believes that business needs a louder voice on public service reform, and that is why it has decided to take a new and radical approach to representing its members in this vital debate. Simon Parker at the CBI discusses.

The first step was the creation in 2002 of a Public Services Strategy Board, made up of 12 leading companies in this sector. The Board is supported by the CBI's recently created Public Services Directorate and has not been created to argue for greater use of the private sector *per se*. Instead, the PSSB believes that there is scope for a radical programme of public service reform and improvement through competition between service providers from all sectors – public, private and voluntary. It supports this because its members believe that the existence of a competitive marketplace puts pressure on everyone to innovate and improve in a way that monopolies simply cannot achieve.

Of course, the theory is worth very little without the practice, but one of the problems of operating in this debate is the lack of systematic and rigorous evidence about the effect of competition in general, and the use of the private sector in particular, on our public services. The CBI wants to improve the quality of the debate and puncture some of the more pernicious myths that surround public-private-partnerships. That is why the PSSB has commissioned a series of reports reviewing the experience of competition in a number of different markets. The first report on the prisons' sector showed impressive results from private sector involvement. Competition is currently saving the taxpayer up to £60m a year in this sector, while prisons run by business often perform better in terms of minimising escapes and maximising time out of cell and hours of purposeful activity undertaken by inmates.

The CBI has also published a major new report on the local government market which shows that although competition has the potential to improve local services, far too many councils have not embraced it as a management tool. The report finds that the private sector has generally delivered what was asked of it. However, a lack of procurement skills means that some councils are not making the most of partnerships with business.

As this suggests, one of the most important factors in creating a successful PPP is the ability to create and effectively manage a contract. This is another major strand of the CBI's work on public services. The PSSB wants to see faster, more efficient procurement of services and it is currently working closely with local and central government to make this happen.

In the coming months the PSSB plans more work in the education market and a major project designed to increase our knowledge and understanding of how contestable public service markets develop and operate. The aim, ultimately, is to understand how we can create a more entrepreneurial public sector, with strong competition allowing real improvements in our public services – no matter who delivers them.

Details of how to obtain a copy of the report and the work of the CBI are available from their [website](#). Further information can also be obtained from Simon Parker at the CBI, email simon.parker@cbi.org.uk

Technical Issues

Competitive Dialogue

On 29 January, the European Parliament approved a new European Consolidated Directive on public procurement which will introduce a competitive dialogue procedure to sit alongside the negotiated procedure. Helen Randall, Partner at Nabarro Nathanson, Solicitors, examines the pros and cons of the new procedure.

What is competitive dialogue?

The competitive dialogue procedure comes from the need for greater dialogue between contracting authorities and bidders in the procurement procedures. Cases such as the challenge to use the negotiated procedure in the Pimlico School PFI scheme highlighted the legal difficulties inherent in use of the negotiated procedure, particularly for PPPs and PFI, and the need for a more flexible approach.

The pros:

Competitive dialogue will allow authorities to conduct a phased negotiation and deselection process, provided that the contracting authority has selected this option in the OJEU notice. Authorities can therefore reduce the number of solutions to be discussed during the dialogue phase by applying pre-published award criteria. Increased dialogue with bidders during the initial stages of a procurement will enable contracting authorities to secure better value for money and demonstrate affordability in complex projects.

Competitive dialogue will allow contracting authorities to pass the burden of drawing up innovative and detailed requirements to the private sector. Private companies with expertise and experience in highly technical areas (such as ICT) are often better placed than contracting authorities to define detailed requirements in complex PFI, PPP or e-government projects.

The cons:

The authority will need to demonstrate that its procurement involves a “particularly complex contract”. It may be tricky in some instances for authorities to justify use of the new procedure and, at least initially, authorities will need to be careful when choosing whether to use competitive dialogue or the negotiated procedure.

Bidders will be required to invest greater resources during the initial stages of the process which will reduce competition. This concern may be offset by an obligatory payment to bidders provided that is fair recompense for bid costs which can amount to £1m or over for a complex PFI. It is as yet unclear how and in what circumstances obligatory payments will be made to bidders, but it is expected that the level and timing of the payment for each contract will be discussed with bidders during the dialogue phase.

It may be difficult to negotiate a final solution with bidders on the basis that the authority can only disclose details of a bidder’s outline proposal to other bidders with the consent of that bidder. Bidders

will be understandably reluctant to disclose innovative ideas which have commercial value, making it difficult for the contracting authority to engage in effective discussion based on an inter-play of ideas.

How competitive dialogue could help PPPs, PFI and complex projects

Competitive dialogue should allow a more open and frank exchange of ideas, resulting in increasingly innovative and better-defined solutions.

However, the prohibition of negotiation during the latter stages of the process may prove unduly restrictive. Whilst negotiation is encouraged during the dialogue phase, no further negotiations can take place once bids are submitted. At this stage the authority can only “clarify” bidders’ proposals and cannot negotiate commercial issues, pricing or contractual terms. This is markedly different to the process under the negotiated procedure where negotiations generally take place after submission of bids.

When will the competitive dialogue procedure come into force?

On 2 December 2003, European Parliament representatives and the Council of Ministers reached agreement. This was ratified by the European Parliament on 29 January and adopted by the Council of Ministers in February. Member States will have up to 21 months to implement the Directive into national law. This assumes the Directive will become law in the UK during 2005.

Those wishing to use the competitive dialogue procedure should understand that like any negotiation, it will take genuine commitment on both sides and appreciation of each other’s commercial constraints for it to work well.

For further information, please contact Helen Randall, Partner, Public Sector Department (Projects Group) at Nabarro Nathanson

Community Interest Companies (CICs)

The Community Interest Company (CIC) is due to be introduced as part of the Companies (Audit, Investigations and Community Enterprise) Bill. They will be a new type of company, designed for social enterprises which want to use their profits and assets for the public good. CICs will be easy to set up, with all the flexibility and certainty of the company form, but with some special features to ensure they are working for the benefit of the community. CICs will report to an independent regulator on how they are delivering for the community and how they are involving their stakeholders in their activities.

CICs will require legislation, creating a regulator, a community interest test and community interest reports. Subject to Parliament, the DTI expect the earliest date for registration as a CIC will be early 2005. For further information, please access the following documents available on the DTI website.

[Dummy set of draft regulations “The Community Interest Company Regulations 2004”](#)
[Explanatory notes on the dummy set of draft regulations “The Community Interest Company Regulations 2004”](#)

DTI website 16/02/04

Best Practice

Wakefield – Stronger Through Partnership

Wakefield Council is building the capacity of its workforce to deliver quality, citizen-focused services through a pilot scheme, which has already seen 140 senior managers going through a challenging Management Assessment Centre using a newly developed competencies framework. **John Foster, Chief Executive, Wakefield Metropolitan District Council, discusses.**

The process, in partnership with Rothwell Douglas, is a significant step change for the Council and has led to improved individual personal development plans. It has also provided a clear picture of senior staff strengths and weaknesses from the organisation's perspective. It is now being rolled out to a further 170 managers over the next six months.

The pilot was launched by the new Corporate Management Team as part of our action plan in response to the 2002 Comprehensive Performance Assessment, which rated the council as "poor". The Council is now being re-assessed and is confident of achieving significant improvement.

Key to the Management Assessment Centre and capacity pilot is a focused set of priorities and collaborative working arrangements with partners to deliver the ambitious targets in the District's Community Strategy. Examples include:

- Neighbourhood Action in partnership with West Yorkshire Police and other external agencies to tackle related crime and environmental issues
- A PFI scheme for street lighting with Amey Highways Ltd to repair, replace and maintain 45,000 street lights, signs and bollards
- Membership of the West Yorkshire Procurement Partnership, establishing a common set of procurement processes, delivering innovative solutions for e-procurement and engaging with local suppliers and businesses to "demystify" working for councils
- Working with external partners to develop new strategies, practices and procedures in Human Resources and a comprehensive training and development programme for staff and elected members
- Developing of innovative public-private partnership for the Council's Design Service
- Engaging with other authorities to provide external challenge to Wakefield's strategies and plans
- Using internationally renowned architects to develop a public space framework for the district and to design a new art gallery as part of the Waterfront regeneration project
- Working with Channel 4 and community partners to deliver regeneration projects which involves extensive engagement with local people in Castleford

Wakefield Council is transforming the way it thinks, works and acts, building the necessary capacity to deliver its commitments in the Community Strategy and putting effective partnering and procurement at the forefront of improving services to citizens.

We are building the capacity of our staff against a clear framework of competencies and identifying skills, knowledge and behaviours that are needed within Wakefield Council for their future success.

For further information, please contact John Foster, Chief Executive, Wakefield Metropolitan District Council Telephone 01924 305101 or email jfoster@wakefield.gov.uk

Gateway Reviews – The Story So Far

4ps Gateways have now been operating in Local Government for eleven months. During this time the programme, part of the National Procurement Strategy for Local Government, has become well accepted. 25 reviews have been carried out already with another 10 planned before the year end and over 200 individuals have been trained. Brain Standen, Director at 4ps explains.

Reviews conducted to date have been seen to add value. Owners of projects that have been reviewed are overwhelmingly positive and the first lessons are already emerging.

Next year we will be able to extend access to this free service significantly with 145 reviews planned to be carried out. We intend to continue to review as diverse a range of projects in a wide range of authorities. As ever our priority will be to use as many local authority officers as possible to use their experience to the benefit of the project, enabling them to gain insight into how other authorities and projects work.

*Steve Morris, Director of Finance,
Bradford City Council –*

*“We would never have known what
we didn’t know. You just need to be
open to learn from it”*

*Mike Parsons - Director of Resources,
Cambridgeshire County Council*

*“The real benefit is that it uses officers from other
authorities...exposing them to new approaches and
innovative solutions helping their project
management skills.”*

Individuals who have participated in reviews have found it to be an enjoyable and exceptionally useful educational process, some authorities are now using their reviewers to review their own project management processes. There is no cost to an authority for a review, just a commitment to put individuals forward as reviewers. This represents a double win as it is a resource development activity for the authority.

Projects Gateways have helped

4ps Gateways can help projects of varying size and degrees of complexity. Since April we have carried out reviews on projects ranging from a billion pound technology PPP for a large metropolitan authority to a traditionally procured leisure centre for a rural district council.

Geographically we have covered the country from Newcastle to Devon via East Staffordshire and Ashford. Carrying out reviews on such a diverse range of projects in all types of authorities has evidenced the value that Gateways can add in all types of environments.

Gateways look at the important questions which need to be addressed by projects before they proceed and this together with the experience organised by the review teams allows the benefits to be felt across Local Government.

Lessons learnt from reviews

The first reviews that have taken place have unearthed a number of common problems faced by similar projects. Utilising this information will help projects across Local Government identify and counter these issues. Therefore we have published the first of a series of bulletins on specific types of project.

This covers the emerging lessons learnt from those projects designed to make services more customer focused and improve service delivery through partnerships to improve ICT and business

*Phil Hope, ODPM Local Government
Minister -“Gateways are an opportunity
to really improve the quality of project
management and project delivery at
local level.”*

processes. For example, some areas found to require special attention include the capacity of the service areas to implement change, clear definition of the arrangements for project governance and active buy-in from all stakeholders to prevent resistance which can prevent the benefits being delivered.

Bulletins on different types of project will be produced after sufficient reviews have been carried out to identify generic issues. These bulletins may be found on our website.

A brief video has been created that explains the process and includes testimonials from reviewed authorities. This together with further information and other documents supporting the process are available from the Gateway Team. Most documentation can be accessed from our website.

Contact us

Further information is available on the 4ps website - www.4ps.gov.uk or contact:

Brian Standen - Director:
020 7808 1478

Michael Dent - Executive:
020 7808 1489

Avril-Marie Ives - Administrator:
0207 808 1474

Conference Reports

Strategic Partnering Taskforce and Pathfinder Authorities Open Day - Durham 3 December 2003

*Alan Ostle, Business Manager, Corporate and Legal Services at Durham CC
attended the open day and reports on the event.*

Chair of Constructing Excellence in the North East, Phil Young, set the theme for the Open Day which was demonstrated by the range of local authorities who were leading improvement through Rethinking Construction.

Robin Williams of the Strategic Partnering Taskforce explained how the Taskforce was supporting Pathfinders like Durham who were responding to pressures for improved service with leading edge strategic partnerships. Robin outlined the essentials for a successful partnership, including vision, leadership and strong performance management. There were lessons for both public and private sector organisations. For the private sector – try to understand local government values and its approach. For the public sector – be innovative and agree genuine, shared partnership objectives. For everyone, Robin promised there would be substantial best practice advice available from the Taskforce which would distil the messages and experience from the whole range of Pathfinder authorities.

Hosts of the Open Day, Durham County Council, presented on the practicalities of setting up and operating in a public/private Strategic Alliance. Andrew North, Director of Corporate Services, described the European procurement process and recommended that preparation and lead-in activity needs to be intensive to avoid a bumpy start up.

Changing the culture in both public and private sector organisations was the vector for improvement advised Burney Johnson, Head of Transport, Strategy and Design. He suggested that people were the key to unlocking the partnering potential as relationships were built through achieving common goals. Brian Tennant, Director of Service Direct, described the performance management framework which freed the Alliances from traditional constraints of lowest price tendering and the benefits of developing a business plan for all the activities of the Alliance.

Murray Easton (Balfour Beatty) and Ian Burnett (Wates) put the private sector perspective on the Strategic Alliances. There were benefits in securing a stable workload but challenges also to develop the supply chain and continuously drive cost down and quality up. Real progress had been made in delivering programmes through joint planning with the Council's team and commitment to better performance was undimmed.

Dick Fraser (Northumberland) and Michael Coulson (Mowlem) gave delegates a rare insight into the realities of forging new relationships and getting results with the example of Northumberland CC's strategic partnership. Integration of Northumberland's in-house teams with the private sector partners had reduced risks and given greater certainty of performance. Sharing training and staff meant waste was minimised and effectiveness improved.

Rethinking Construction Beacons, Middlesbrough Council, showed the way to organisational improvement through the adoption of the EFQM excellence model adapted to the construction environment. Stephen Stokoe and Jean Sauvary recounted how the Rethinking Construction Driver had steered proven transformation of performance at Middlesbrough.

Rethinking Children's Services – 27th January 2004

As part of the series of "Rethinking Services" events, the SPT and the LGA jointly held a day conference on the 27th January focussed on the practicalities of integrating children's services across the public sector. Councillor Alison King of the LGA chaired the event. Vic Citarella, Executive, Strategic Partnering Taskforce attended the event and explains further.

The opening speaker, Derek Collins, took people through the work of the Taskforce. He drew on the experiences of pathfinders in Rotherham, Manchester, Stockton, Barnsley and the Association of Greater Manchester Authorities to illustrate a number of key messages namely the importance of:

- ✓ Sustained political and managerial commitment
- ✓ Clarity of objectives
- ✓ Starting from users' views of needs
- ✓ Investment in project management
- ✓ Realising that partnership is not an easy option
- ✓ The potential pay off from multi-authority working

There followed a number of speakers demonstrating how their stakeholders were bringing the partners in children's services together - namely Andrew Christie from Hammersmith and Fulham, David Hawker of Brighton and Hove and Rob Hutchinson of Portsmouth.

Andrew described the measured thinking in his borough and the incremental partnering style being developed through the Children's Trust pilot. David took the delegates through the way in which Brighton had merged its education and children's social services functions. There was evidence too at Portsmouth of an incremental style, but this time building from very local and community foundations with children, young people and family engagement was the cornerstone.

Margaret Hodge, Minister for Children, Young People and Families, reminded the audience of the genesis of the Green Paper in Lord Laming's report into the death of Victoria Climbié and the consequent indictment of the current service arrangements as showing:

- ✓ failure to intervene
- ✓ poor coordination
- ✓ failure to share information
- ✓ absence of accountability
- ✓ staff recruitment and retention problems
- ✓ poor management
- ✓ lack of effective training

The Minister went on to spell out the vision of an integrated service between education, social care and health. She stressed the challenge of the child being the centre of this vision and not organisations, the professions or a particular dominant ethos or culture. She was clear that this did demand organisational change in local government with a prevalence of Children's Trusts being in place by 2006, with a Director of Children's Services and a lead member in every authority. She stressed the need for multi-disciplinary team working, a common assessment framework, joined up inspection and local safeguarding boards as the glue that will meld practitioners together. Her vision concluded by emphasising the significance of the workforce reform task to tackle staff skills shortfalls, excessive workloads, rewards, training, recruitment, retention and managerial leadership.

Delegates were left under no illusions on the areas where the Government would legislate in the widely anticipated Children Bill that has been since published on 3 March 2004.

Harry Catherall, Executive Director in Blackburn with Darwen explained how Blackburn are developing a network of 12 Children's Centres using the Children's Trust pilot as the vehicle for change and development.

The speaker's contributions were rounded off by some thoughts from Glenys Jones of Sunderland about the way forward.

The event additionally included 5 high calibre workshops.

Publications

SPT Final Report

An electronic copy of the Final Report is available on the [ODPM website](#). Printed copies cost £16 for the Final Report (with a CD Rom containing the knowledge programme) and £13 for the annexes to the Final Report. Copies of both documents can be ordered from ODPM Publications, PO Box 236, Wetherby, West Yorkshire, LS23 7NB. Telephone 0870 1226 236 Fax 0970 1226 237 or email ODPM@twoten.press.net

The Taskforce have produced a series of Technical Advice Notes (TAN) on issues relating to Strategic Service Partnerships. The following represent the most recent additions to the [ODPM website](#).

TAN 9 – January 2004

Incremental Partnering for Public/ Private Partnering

This Technical Advice Note has been issued in three parts:

- Part 1 - an assessment of the merits of incremental partnering
- Part 2 - a technical assessment of legal issues and
- Part 3 - a case study of one form of an incremental partnership

TAN10 – January 2004

Employment Alternatives to TUPE Transfers

Government Policy has sought to ensure that TUPE will apply to outsourcing arrangements in the public sector in order to protect terms and conditions of transferring staff.

This paper considers a case study taken from the London Borough of Bexley and the management services provided by Caxton FM who are part of the Kier Group.

TAN11 – January 2004

Reducing Bidding and Process Costs in PPPs

This Technical Advice Note examines ways that might be used to alleviate the problems of high bidding costs. It is not intended to be an in-depth study but a brief explanation as to why high costs occur and offers a collection of practical suggestions to help alleviate the difficulties that high costs can cause.

The thoughts in this paper have been developed by leading practitioners working with the Taskforce in discussion with local authorities and also incorporate the results of a limited consultation exercise with private sector providers.



Useful Links

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The Employers Organisation

Layden House
76-86 Turnmill Street
London
EC1M 5LG
Tel: 020 7296 6781
Web: <http://www.lg-employers.gov.uk>

Improvement & Development Agency and IDeA Knowledge

Layden House
76-86 Turnmill St
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Tel: 020 7296 6693
Web: <http://www.idea.gov.uk>
IDeA Knowledge: knowledge@idea.gov.uk

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Web: <http://www.4ps.co.uk>

Audit Commission

1 Vincent Square
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The Local Government Procurement Forum

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