

Working better together? Case study

Financial challenge in Hammersmith and
Fulham Borough Partnership



Cross cutting

Case study

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 **audit**
commission

Background

- 1** Local strategic partnerships (LSPs) have a responsibility to bring together local services to deliver a shared vision for the area. But creating highly effective partnerships is difficult and LSPs must operate across a complex policy environment.
- 2** The public sector 7S model has been used to interpret the findings from the LSP study. This model enables LSPs to understand how to bring a series of interdependent elements together to achieve their long-, medium- and shorter-term goals. The seven elements of the model are super-ordinate goals, three transformational elements and three transactional elements. The transformational elements are most important when policy problems are complex.
- 3** An effective LSP needs to link both transformational and transactional activities to achieve its goals. The transformational elements of the model are staff and skills (including culture and leadership), style (identity and how the LSP comes across) and synergies (achieving better results collectively than working alone). The transactional elements are standards (frameworks for partnership working and quality standards), steering (using internal processes to drive change, for example through resource pooling) and systems (performance, resource and accountability).

Long-term objectives

- 4** The Hammersmith and Fulham Borough Partnership was established in 1999. Its current sustainable community strategy (SCS) to 2015 has been recently updated to deliver a 'Borough of Opportunity'.
- 5** The SCS has seven long-term priorities: reducing crime and anti-social behaviour; promoting home ownership and housing opportunities; a cleaner, greener borough; a top-quality education for all; delivering high-quality, value-for-money public services; setting the framework for a healthy borough; and regenerating the most deprived parts of the borough. These priorities are being delivered through the new local area agreement (LAA).

Transformational elements

Leadership and culture

- 6** The Borough Partnership is chaired by the Council leader and its chief executive chairs the Local Public Service Board (LPSB). Core team and administrative support to the Partnership are provided by local authority staff.
- 7** Partnership skills are recognised as important. The most recent Primary Care Trust chief executive was tested on his partnership skills during the interview process, which included a panel of peers.

Meetings and joint working

- 8** The LSP has a member handbook that covers each of its layers, roles, responsibilities and behaviours.
- 9** Meetings of the Borough Partnership are themed to enable discussion to take place. Before each meeting, a working lunch is provided to encourage informal networking between partners.

The benefits of joint working

- 10** Effective partnership working is improving access to services and reducing health inequalities. Initiatives include the White City Collaborative Care Centre, a one-stop shop for primary health services, which is aimed at providing integrated adult and children's care services in a deprived part of the borough.
- 11** Synergies have also been achieved around crime. For example, the ambition to reduce crime and anti-social behaviour reflects what residents say is their greatest concern. A crime summit was held for partners and residents to discuss how to tackle crime and anti-social behaviour. The Council, with the Police, has also implemented an innovative pilot of intensive policing 24 hours a day, seven days a week in two high crime areas. This has led to reductions in crime and the fear of crime in the borough. This has in part been funded by the private sector.
- 12** The LSP has made significant progress in increasing the level of economic activity and generating employment. For example, a major scheme at White City when it is complete is expected to employ over 5,000 people.

Transactional elements

Getting things done

- 13** The Partnership and the LAA is taken forward and co-ordinated within the Council by the Finance and Corporate Services directorate. This recognises the importance of resource management.
- 14** Partners routinely use performance information to drive improvement and address under-performance. For example, the LSP considered a cross-agency evaluation of partnership performance in responding to ‘high-cost, high-need families’ and, as a consequence, put in place arrangements for better co-ordination and information-sharing practices between key agencies.

Common frameworks for collecting and sharing performance information

- 15** The Hammersmith and Fulham LSP has a layered approach to governance. The Borough Partnership provides vision and direction. The LPSB leads on strategy and performance and manages the LAA – a three-year delivery plan for the SCS priorities. The operational partnerships, such as the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership and the Children and Young People’s Partnership are responsible for programme planning and delivery.
- 16** There is a clear accountability structure from the operational partnerships to the LPSB and then to the Borough Partnership.
- 17** The Partnership has a standard approach to data quality. Each partner has a designated officer responsible for ensuring that data is maintained and shared using the agreed data quality standards.
- 18** The Partnership has an agreed performance management framework for the LAA and an approach to sharing information and data through the use of the Council’s CorVu performance system.

Systems for understanding and influencing performance, resources and risks

19 To overcome partners' perceptions that financial systems and data were hard to understand, and to strengthen joint working across the LSP, Hammersmith and Fulham has opened up its medium-term financial strategy process to peer challenge.

'We're involving the major partners in looking at our whole budget and challenging aspects of how we spend our money, including the area based grant.' LA chief executive.

'We're going to focus first on budget, which is controllable by the LSP or can be influenced by the LSP. That is essentially the area based grant, but we want to go beyond that. We're hoping to get some reciprocal arrangement to start looking at their budgets.' LA finance manager.

20 Performance data is presented to the Partnership using a template, therefore ensuring a consistent approach to LAA performance reporting.

21 Partnership working has been enhanced with the development of the Public Health Strategic Alliance. This partnership structure is designed to better enable partners to target resources, underpinned by effective research and health analysis, to improve the health of the community and to maximise capacity through cross-cutting work.

Learning Points

Transformational learning

- Testing partnership skills at interview can help to make a difference to shared community leadership.
- Encouraging informal networking is important to building effective relationships.
- Partnership working can achieve tangible synergies and increase performance levels across the LAA priorities.

Transactional learning

- Having clearly defined roles for layers within the LSP is important for performance improvement.
- Opening up financial systems to peer challenge helps partners to understand each others' flexibilities.
- Research and analysis are critical to informing priorities for improvement.

Questions for LSPs and their partners to consider

- 1 How well does your LSP recognise the importance of both the transformational and transactional elements and their interdependence?
- 2 How well does your LSP take a layered approach to performance and resource management?
- 3 How well does your LSP facilitate networking between partners?
- 4 How well do partners understand each others' financial management systems?

Further information

Copies of the national report *Working Better Together? Managing local strategic partnerships* are available at www.audit-commission.gov.uk/lsp and www.improvementnetwork.gov.uk/lsp

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