

Partnership Value

About Grant Thornton

We help improve the effectiveness of public service delivery and have particular expertise in those areas that span public, private and third sectors. Our team combines consulting expertise across these sectors with previous experience of successfully delivering public services through partnership

environments. We work with clients to co-develop the approaches that will address specific issues and equip them to use and evolve them going forward.

Our wider government, health and education teams bring a broad range of experience of wider partnership working across local and central government, health, education and

other public services and the private and third sectors. This experience includes complex multi-agency regeneration initiatives, commissioning and organisational design, integration strategy and implementation, multi-agency programme design and initiatives, improving third sector and SME engagement.

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Contact us

For more information, please contact:



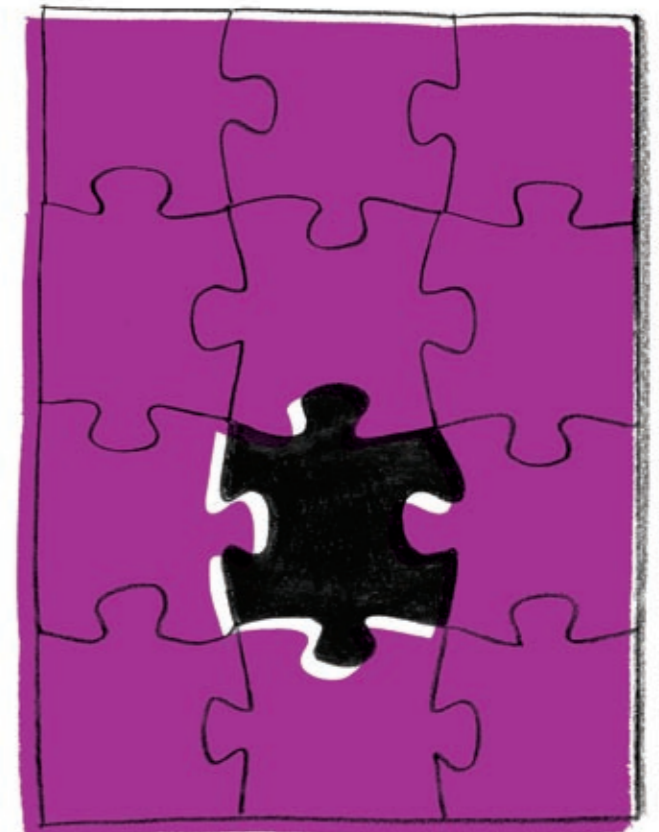
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Are you maximising value from partnerships?

Public services face the twin challenges of delivering ever more integrated services while operating within an increasingly resource-constrained environment. Collaborative working will be key to addressing these challenges, building on a range of relationships that have evolved over time. How can partnership arrangements be designed to maximise value?

The changing partner landscape

Across the public sector, organisations have been working to deliver both specific and shared targets to provide improved outcomes and meet rising customer expectations. To achieve this, much of recent management attention has been directed on internal structures and processes. This will rightly continue, but it is becoming increasingly important to seek improvements across the operation of partnerships.

Whether managed via commissioning, direct contracting or strategic alliances, existing partnerships have often evolved organically rather than by design. A whole systems perspective will ensure resources are effectively prioritised and the maximum value is realised. However, our experience suggests that it is often difficult to take a holistic view. This is because:

- partnership priorities may be heavily influenced by legacy relationships
- the various sectors and organisations involved have undergone restructuring and other significant change
- key contributors may be under-represented in partnership arrangements, while others may be over-represented in relation to their impact on the end service delivery.

Our views are consistent with the Audit Commission's recent review of Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs). This noted that most LSPs have not assessed the costs and benefits of joint

working and lack mechanisms for assigning mainstream resources towards achieving the goals of Sustainable Community Strategies and Local Area Agreements. The new Comprehensive Area Assessment is likely to identify further scope for improvement in partnership working, as is the Total Place initiative.

Our approach to delivering partnership value

Our approach supports partnerships in delivering their objectives more effectively and ensures value is maximised. This includes tools to help each organisation better manage its own network and also support the development of formal partnerships such as CDRPs or LSPs.

For each organisation

Each organisation should view its network as an asset which can be managed alongside other key resources, such as human and financial. It is often the case that an organisation's network will have the following characteristics:

- it is acquired by (often ad hoc) investment in structures and relationships
- its value is its ability to provide a vehicle for service delivery at minimal cost and risk
- its value may be enhanced or diminished by the impact of apparently unrelated initiatives within the organisation

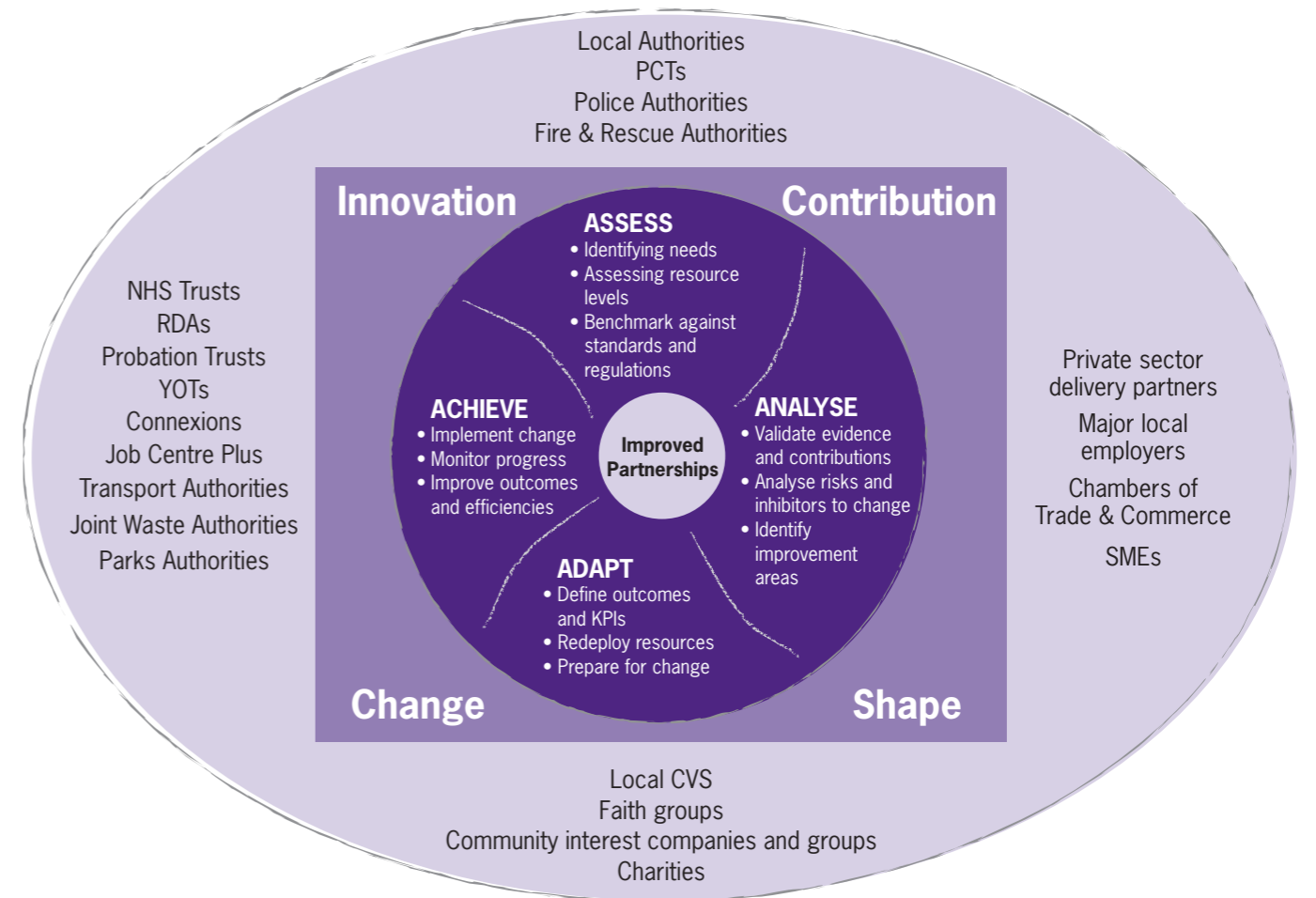
- its operation will benefit from the prioritisation of the type and level of interaction with different partner agencies – even though organisations can be reluctant to prioritise.

This approach identifies short term gains and also builds the capability to continuously improve an organisation's partnership relationships.

Across partnerships

Starting from the perspective of specific customer groups or service outcomes, our approach to develop partnership effectiveness focuses on four dimensions:

- **Contribution** – assessing and analysing the value and potential contributions of partners
- **Shape** – working with partnerships to shape and prepare for new and improved ways of working
- **Change** – focusing on improved outcomes and implementing change
- **Innovation** – sharing learning and stimulating innovation across the partnership.



How we work

We assess how effective the partnership is in identifying local needs and priorities, and to what extent resources are allocated and prioritised against their needs. With an understanding of the value of the contributions made within the partnership network, we analyse and identify the potential areas for improvement and the inhibitors to change across the partnership network.

Focusing on shaping an improved partnership, we work with key stakeholders to define shared outcomes and performance targets. We adapt the way a partnership works, redeploying resources to focus on the priorities at a strategic and operational level, reviewing barriers to improvement and ensuring the partnership is prepared and ready for change.

At the heart of our approach is the view that partnerships should be seen as systems. In order to achieve change we deliver targeted solutions and support that enable a smooth transition to new and improved ways of working. We also ensure that partnerships have the tools to monitor progress and stimulate innovation to continuously improve outcomes and efficiencies for all stakeholders.

Improved outcomes

Our approach is simple, effective, but ultimately sustainable. It empowers partnerships to recognise their own potential and helps make change stick.

This systematic approach based on service outcomes and client groups will deliver improved service outcomes through:

- more **effective service planning** – with a clearer view of shared priorities partners can recognise and collectively address the points at which these diverge from the priorities of each organisation
- improved **service design** – with the greatest involvement of those who will have the greatest impact on service delivery
- better **use of resources** – facilitating the migration of funding to the areas delivering highest return
- more **efficient use of partnership time** – recognising the partnership structures themselves can be highly time consuming and some of this effort may be refocused.