

**DRAFT**



# **MODERN LEADERSHIP**

## **FOR**

# **MODERN LOCAL GOVERNMENT**

**John Jackson**

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## **BACKGROUND**

In 1997, a new Government was elected in the UK with a strong mandate to reform local government. Neither the Government nor the Local Government Association was prepared to accept any longer the poor performance found in a number of local authorities. A new law imposed a performance management regime ('Best Value') on all English local authorities. I helped to manage the Bill through Parliament and to support local authorities in its implementation.

It soon became clear that the introduction of performance management by itself was not enough. There had to be buy-in by the leadership of a local authority in order to create a conducive environment; there had to be a systematic exchange of best practice so that local authorities could learn from each other.

A leadership development programme was offered to interested local authorities, based on peer review against an agreed benchmark. It was effective. The Leadership Benchmark that is a central feature in this document was derived from this English initiative. Through the Council of Europe (CoE), it was adapted and introduced into a number of countries.

The CoE's Centre of Expertise for Local Government Reform, set up by the Summit of Heads of State in 2005, recognised that many local authorities needed support to transform themselves so that they could deliver better local government. The Centre later introduced the 'Leadership Academy' to offer a deeper focus on local government leadership, particularly in countries of Eastern Europe where decentralisation is a hot topic. The Academy offers a 3 x 3-day programme to senior elected representatives and local government officials over a period of several months. Other programme designs are possible. This booklet supports that programme in particular.

JJ  
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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The contents of the Leadership Academy have been inspired not only by the experience of both myself and colleagues over many years but also by numerous publications on leadership. The majority of such publications have focused on the private sector, but they have contained many insights that can usefully be adapted to local government.

Dr Katalin Pallai has also offered valuable contributions from her own experience of local government in Hungary and of acting as a co-trainer in the Leadership Academy. Likewise, each time I run the Leadership Academy, I learn much from the participants.

I am particularly grateful for the insights derived from the publications listed below:

- Publications of the Council of Europe, VNG International and UNDP
- A Manager's Guide to Leadership (Mike Pedler, John Burgoyne, Tom Boydell)
- Organisational Culture and Leadership (Edgar H Schein)
- Leadership Theory and Practice (Peter Northouse)
- Psychology of Leadership (Harry Levinson)
- The 18 Challenges of Leadership (Trevor Waddock and Shenaz Kelly-Rawat)
- Strategic Leadership in a Learning Society (Rohlin, Skarvard and Nilsson)
- Leadership (Keith Grint)
- The Arts of Leadership (Keith Grint)
- Leadership: Limits and Possibilities (Keith Grint)
- Leadership Landscapes (Tom Cummings and Jim Keen)
- HBR<sup>1</sup> on Developing Leaders
- HBR on Leadership
- HBR on Leading through Change
- (Re)(Organise) for Resilience (Ranjay Gulati)
- Strategic Speed (Davis, Frechette Jr and Boswell)
- The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People (Stephen R Covey)
- The 8<sup>th</sup> Habit (Stephen R Covey)
- Emotional Intelligence (Daniel Goleman)
- The New Leaders (Daniel Goleman)
- Bowling Alone (Robert D Putnam)
- The Naked Leader (David Taylor)
- Employees First (Vineet Nayar)
- Creating Culture Change (Philip Atkinson)
- Understanding Organisations (Charles B Handy)
- Servant Leadership across Cultures (Trompenaars and Voerman)
- The Six Sigma Way (Pande, Neuman and Cavanagh)
- The Fifth Discipline (Peter Senge)

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<sup>1</sup> Harvard Business Review

## INTRODUCTION

This booklet is written particularly for the leadership of local authorities at a time of rapid transition. It seeks to help them understand the nature of modern leadership and to apply it throughout their organisation to:

- (a) *Strengthen their organisational capacity.*
- (b) *Enhance their role in community leadership.*
- (c) *Secure the provision of high quality public services, good governance and community development.*

**The starting point is the set of challenges that local authorities face. Leadership starts with understanding and tackling those challenges, and subsequently delivering high standards of performance.**

The foundation principle of this booklet is that **everyone has the capacity for leadership**; it is a role of leadership **to bring out the leadership in others**. This is particularly important where local authorities are moving away from a centralised, hierarchical, bureaucratic background where power is retained at the top.

'Where are local authorities moving to?' is the question as power is delegated. 'Delegating power to whom?' is the next question. Too often, the delegation of power stops at the Mayor.

**Delegating power to staff and the community** within agreed parameters will release creative energies throughout both the organisation and the community; this will make the organisation itself even more powerful.

This booklet is therefore written for all those in local government who know within themselves that they have leadership ability and who want to take on more responsibility to deliver better local government.

There are many programmes to support local authorities ranging from consultancies in strategic planning to training in citizen participation. Many are excellent. However, in many cases they have been seen as imposed or imported. Their impact is often not sustained, nor is their full potential realised, nor are they joined up, nor do they engage the community effectively.

***Leadership turns initiatives from being externally-supplied to internally-driven.***

One reason for this weakness is that the organisational environment is not mature enough to support the initiative or to link it to other initiatives. This means that when the initial funding stops, or key personnel move on, the initiative falters. Good leadership takes ownership of such initiatives because they understand their potential importance, and ensures their integration and sustainability.

It is the leadership of a local authority that has the power to establish the right environment. Without the right environment, an initiative might continue, but achieving standards of excellence will be all but impossible.

## SECTION 1 MEETING THE LEADERSHIP CHALLENGE

### 1. Understanding leadership

It is not possible to agree a common definition of leadership; everyone has their own perspective.

Some think of leadership in terms of great people who have had a major impact. Some think of ordinary people taking a lead in a particular situation. Some think of competent managers. Some don't like to use the actual word, perhaps because of a connotation with dictatorial behaviour or a perception of their own inability to make an impact.

There are languages that do not even have a direct translation of the word 'leadership'. It could possibly be derived from an old Nordic word meaning 'navigate'.

But everyone seems to understand what leadership means; **they know it when they see it.**

*Imagine a dark night. There is no moon; it is impossible to see anything.*

*You are in your garden and moving slowly and carefully forward, your hands stretched out to make sure you do not bump into anything.*

*Suddenly, you touch something curved and smooth. You realise that you are holding the tusk of an elephant; you feel around and take hold of its trunk. You then know there is an elephant in your garden.*

*Like an elephant in the night, you know what leadership is when you feel it.*

Leadership is not the same as management, though good management requires leadership skills such as facilitating and team-working.

- **Management** is more about routine delivery, about working within set parameters to carry out known tasks, about minimising risks, about delivering efficiency and effectiveness.

*Management is about doing things right; leadership about doing the right things. Seek to do the right things right.*

- **Leadership** is more about delivering change, about going beyond set parameters, about managing risks, about crossing boundaries – organisational, personal, group, traditional – in tackling a challenge.

A person does not exercise leadership when he/she is alone; leadership only works through **relationships** with other people. It is not just about how we manage those relationships; it is as much about how they manage those relationships.

**Leadership is earned**; it is about how we create the relationships and the environment in which other people want to work with us and follow our lead.

**Leadership starts with a challenge.** Leadership is a way people can respond to challenges. Whether the challenge is large or small, it can still be through the exercise of leadership that we meet the challenge and make a difference.

**We all have the capacity for leadership.** We face challenges in everyday life, but not all of us choose to exercise leadership in responding to a particular challenge. In some situations:

- ✓ *We may recognise that we do not have the necessary expertise and that others are better equipped.*
- ✓ *We are not ready to face the consequences.*
- ✓ *We may prefer to keep a low profile.*
- ✓ *We may not have the courage that is required.*

Or we may say 'yes' to the challenge and work with others to meet it. **Leadership is a choice we have the power to make.**

Leadership is not something we are born with. Rather, we must all **learn** the skills and practices of leadership; indeed, everyone in one way or another has learnt some leadership skills. How is this so? **From the very experience of tackling challenges, and learning from that experience.**

*How many of us are parents? What about good parents? How did we learn to become a good parent? Did we learn the skills from our own parents? Did we read about them in books on parenting? Did we discuss it with friends?*

*Perhaps all of these. But our greatest teacher is the child itself. We learn from the child's reaction to what we do. We learn to be gentle or forceful, to ignore or pay attention. We adapt our approach to the circumstances. Gradually we develop an approach to bringing up our child in the way he/she best responds to, in the way we think best.*

Learning leadership skills is similar to bringing up a child:

- *Through experience, and through learning from that experience.*

- *Through exercising leadership in different situations in our own way and gradually building expertise and confidence out of that experience.*
- *Through finding the courage to say 'yes' to the ever more difficult challenges that confront us.*

***The best way to learn leadership is by leading.***

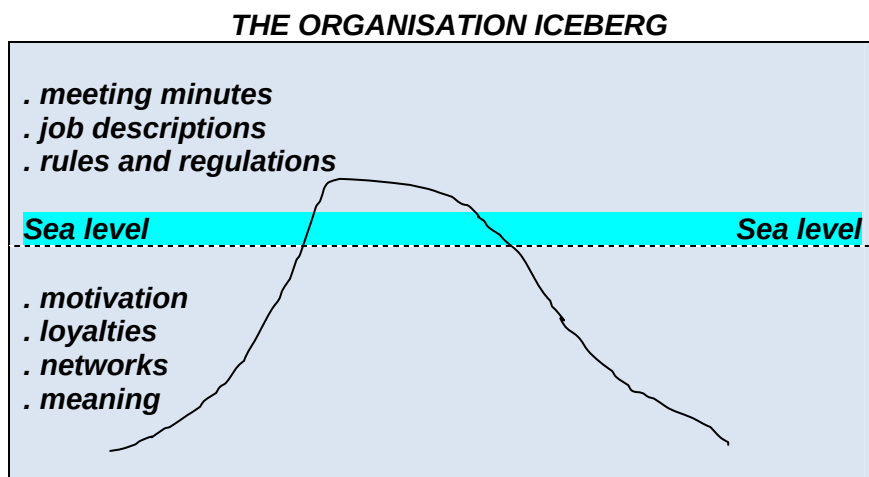
Traditional, authoritarian leadership is still commonly found in local authorities at all levels. It will use directions to get things done and staff will have been conditioned to acting upon them. Not acting necessarily to achieve high standards but at least to do what is necessary.

Such use of authority can get things done, can meet deadlines, but will find it difficult to get staff to do their best, to innovate, to achieve high levels of performance.

This kind of leadership operates at the formal level:

- *Though meetings and minutes of meetings where action is set down while responsibilities for outcomes may remain opaque.*
- *In job descriptions where specific duties define the limits - rather than the opportunities - for action.*
- *In formal reports that may reflect what the leadership wants to hear rather than challenge the status quo.*

Indeed, this is not leadership; it is the use of formal authority. Leadership gets below the formal mechanisms of power; it reaches out to the unseen elements of an organisation, to the motivation and feelings of staff, to their loyalties, to informal communications networks that criss-cross not just a local authority but local government itself.



It is here, in the hidden parts of an organisation – in that part of the iceberg below the surface - where change happens, where staff find meaning in their work and develop the will to do their best, where good teamwork is born, where the extra mile is run.

**This is where leadership operates, where challenges get tackled because people want to tackle them, because they see their work contributing to public value, because they want to do their best.**

## **2. Different perspectives on leadership**

Just like we might recognise an elephant at night in our garden by touch, by smell, by noise or by its outline against the background, so we recognise leadership in different ways.

### **a) By the person himself / herself**

Some people seem to have particularly attractive qualities that make us want to work with them. They have a degree of charisma; they are popular in a group.

But this aspect of leadership in itself has its limitations. Such people may demonstrate good leadership in one situation but not in another; they may be effective in the office but not in the field, or in good times but not in bad. They may show skills in communications and empathy but lack courage and determination.

***Who should rule us: the wisest or the most popular?***

If teams or organisations come to depend on leadership based only on the person, what happens when the person leaves? Person-focused leadership may be good for the short term, but not necessarily for the long term. By making such a person indispensable, the team or organisation may be storing up trouble for itself.

**How relevant to leadership are space and time?**

On the other hand, when **popularity and competence** combine in leadership, achievement can be both considerable and sustained as circumstances change. In a rapidly changing world, this is a powerful combination.

### **b) By the results achieved**

Leadership is often associated with achievement. It is easy to say that success has been the result of the leadership of a particular person; a Mayor is given the credit when a local authority is praised for a new development.

However, it may be difficult to see the direct link of cause and effect between the Mayor himself/herself and the success of the development. The Mayor may be getting the credit in his/her representative role rather than as a result of good leadership.

Other factors, such as luck or economic growth, may have had a bearing on the results. Individual staff or elected representatives within the local authority may have made a greater contribution.

Sometimes, despite good leadership, the end is failure because the wider environment is too strong to be changed or economic recession intervened.

Leadership without results can lead to a loss of confidence. **But leadership that delivers good results creates a momentum in the local authority on which further success can be built.** Staff and elected representatives feel good about their achievement. Celebrating success is a quality of good leadership.

*When things go wrong, I take the blame; when things go right, I give credit to the team.*

**c) By following the right process**

This is typical of **bureaucracies**, where promotion often depends on how long we have served in the organisation, our knowledge of the system, our loyalty to the hierarchy and to traditional ways of doing things.

The organisation provides a 'comfort zone' to staff; it becomes their 'family'; it offers sustainability for initiatives. But an organisation is slow to change. Understanding the organisation is the first step in modernising it.

Many bureaucrats become 'organisation persons'; they know both the written and unwritten rules back to front; they know the right thing to do, the right way to behave; they have connections with the people who control the levers of power.

**Such people have valuable experience in using the organisation's structures and processes.** That expertise is recognised. This applies to a range of people in the organisation at different levels of responsibility.

*What kind of organisation would we ourselves build in exercising our leadership capacities?*

But such people tend to find it difficult to react quickly to events, to take personal initiative or to respond to changes in the wider environment. Creativity is limited. The status quo remains unchallenged to safeguard promotion prospects, the wider picture ignored to ensure 'quick wins'. Honest feedback on their work is difficult because of the need to protect the hierarchy.

The parameters within which staff are used to working are the administrative boundaries of the organisation itself rather than its purpose; they are afraid to cross or extend those boundaries despite new needs, opportunities and technologies in the wider world.

**Greater importance is given to stability than to change.**

In some circumstances, stability is important. But where integration within an organisation is combined with such leadership skills as 'thinking out of the box' and challenging the status quo, the organisation becomes better equipped to tackle the changes that the future inevitably brings.

**d) By holding the right position**

**Position gives power for a particular purpose**; of itself, it does not give leadership. It is the same with wealth or the capacity to intimidate. Power itself can be used to make people do things, both good and evil, through techniques such as rewards, fears and punishments; but by itself it does not generate motivation or commitment; it does not get staff to give of their best. This is not leadership; it is no more than the exercise of authority.

***Leadership determines the nature of the organisation.***

But where good leadership is combined with the power of position, great things can be achieved. In a modern organisation with limited hierarchies, success comes because the leadership has **decentralised power**, sharing authority and responsibility with key members of staff in a way that increases the power of the organisation as a whole.

**This is how leadership harnesses the energies of all the staff for a common purpose.**

**Good leadership allows organisations to maximise the use of individual expertise, take initiatives, make quick decisions, respond to change and compete at the highest levels.**

Such organisations depend to a great extent on the staff to whom responsibilities have been **delegated**; the task of management is to facilitate their work and give them opportunities to exercise their own leadership rather than impose control and create inflexible barriers.

But at the same time the staff member must become **accountable** for the outcomes they are asked to achieve. Delegation should take place within agreed parameters.

On the other hand, such delegation can give a staff member the opportunity to follow a personal agenda at the expense of the organisation. The shift of emphasis to this kind of individual accountability requires **trust and competence**. Building trust and competence is the art of leadership.

The risks in such delegation have to be managed carefully. Risk management is a key skill of good leadership.

### **The right combination**

Leadership is derived from a **combination** of these different aspects:

- *Leadership as person*
- *Leadership through results*
- *Leadership by process*
- *Leadership from position*

Any one of these aspects may need to be given more importance in a specific circumstance (see chart below).

| <b>EXAMPLE OF CIRCUMSTANCE</b>                                                               | <b>LEADERSHIP BALANCE</b> |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| <i>To bring efficiency into a disorganised local authority</i>                               | <b>Process</b>            |
| <i>To bring hostile staff and elected representatives together to share a common purpose</i> | <b>Person</b>             |
| <i>To manage a difficult or urgent situation</i>                                             | <b>Position</b>           |
| <i>To generate further resources</i>                                                         | <b>Results</b>            |

**Good leadership is derived from using the right balance between these four aspects in the light of the situation.**

## **3. Why is leadership important now?**

### **a) Decentralisation**

Decentralisation is more and more seen as a powerful factor in the way governments go about their work. Where monopolies have failed to deliver rising living standards, decentralisation is becoming a core policy. Where local authorities grow in confidence, where local people and organisations get more engaged with their own local government, a demand for even further decentralisation is heard.

Decentralisation is a priority among the criteria for greater integration within Europe.

As a result, Mayors and Local Government Associations focus on their advocacy function, seeking the transfer of more competences along with the commensurate level of resources.

Yet, in many cases Governments are reluctant to meet this demand; or they might transfer competences but with insufficient resources. Ministers may say

that they do not have enough confidence in local authorities, that local authorities lack the necessary expertise.

Of course, many people in power like to keep hold of their power. This is human nature. A robust case for decentralisation must be made if the natural barriers to sharing power are to be overcome. Local authorities must not only be efficient and effective, but **demonstrate** efficiency and effectiveness.

Decentralisation does not happen with a big bang except, perhaps, at the beginning. It continues through a series of **negotiations** over years as confidence and competence develops.

**Governments must be convinced that local authorities will manage significant public resources not only efficiently and ethically but also for the benefit of both the local community and the country as a whole.**

Such a demonstration will come, not so much from the Mayors arguing the case as advocates from a position of power but through their leadership capacity, by showing that local authorities can properly exercise their functions, successfully tackle the challenges they face, and achieve high standards of performance.

**Local authorities must demonstrate that they can deliver good local government. This is why leadership is important now.**

**b) Local demand and higher standards**

Local authorities also face growing demands from local people and organisations. Globalisation and modern communications give them an ever-widening window on the outside world.

They see the success of local government elsewhere; they see what is possible; they ask for better services and greater participation; they want good governance; they want jobs and higher standards of living.

**Good governance is not about managing better. It is about opening up new opportunities, reaching out more widely and deeply within the community, working with businesses and NGOs, cooperating with neighbouring local authorities to tackle challenges that are shared, tackling poverty and unemployment, working across traditional boundaries.**

**This is why leadership is important now.**

- ✓ *There are a range of services to be delivered to the highest standards.*
- ✓ *There are a wide range of relationships that have to be well managed.*
- ✓ *Local people must be satisfied.*
- ✓ *The local authority must be an attractive place to work if competent professionals are to be recruited.*
- ✓ *Finance is always less than what is needed.*
- ✓ *Elected representatives need support if they are to do an effective job.*
- ✓ *The ethics of the local authority must be above reproach.*

Managing such a complex institution, sustaining high standards and dealing with an ever-changing environment requires high levels of stamina and skill. This is why leadership is important now.

#### 4. Trends in local government

Local government moves forwards (and sometimes backwards) at different rates in different countries. Modern local authorities reflect a move from a focus on delivering services to a wider emphasis on engaging the community, tackling major challenges (eg unemployment), making use of inter-municipal cooperation (IMC), working in partnership with the private and voluntary sectors, and ensuring strong local accountability.

| <b>CURRENT TRENDS IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT</b> |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|-------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1.                                        | <i>Developing a range of techniques to engage local people and organisations in the work of local government, ranging from citizen surveys to informal dialogue, from communications strategies to neighbourhood committees, from focus groups to e-government.</i>                                                                              |
| 2.                                        | <i>Engaging all elements of the community - ethnic minorities, youth, elderly people, people with disabilities and others outside the mainstream - and giving equal opportunities to women.</i>                                                                                                                                                  |
| 3.                                        | <i>Working with businesses and NGOs to harness their capacities and expertise for the wider benefit of the community.</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| 4.                                        | <i>Recognising the growing awareness and intelligence of citizens and their demand to play a greater role in designing and evaluating services and in influencing the priorities for future economic, social, environmental and cultural development.</i>                                                                                        |
| 5.                                        | <i>Recognising that services cannot just be delivered through individual service departments; rather, service provision must be 'joined-up' across departments with proper mechanisms of planning, coordination and evaluation and an emphasis on teamwork.</i>                                                                                  |
| 6.                                        | <i>Acknowledging that staff are a municipality's most important asset, that if local government is to excel, staff must be motivated and enabled to give of their best, that they must be trained, trusted and supported with delegated authority, that they need to see local government as an attractive career with an attractive salary.</i> |
| 7.                                        | <i>Determining that the only standard to aim for is excellence, that local people and organisations have the right to excellence, and that poor performance is no longer acceptable.</i>                                                                                                                                                         |
| 8.                                        | <i>Working with neighbouring local authorities to tackle challenges that cross administrative boundaries.</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| 9.                                        | <i>Acknowledging that local government must rid itself of corruption,</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |

***that decision-making must be transparent, that all processes must be clear, that any culture of impunity is eliminated.***

***Ask yourself: How closely does my local authority reflect these trends?***

**As centralised control reduces, the need for leadership at all levels increases.**

Good leadership recognises and responds to these trends because they challenge the status quo. The leadership must begin to think 'out of the box', encourage innovation, search out best practice, insist on higher standards.

## **5. Meeting the challenge**

The challenge for each local authority is to deliver good governance by developing vision, capacities and practices to:

- ✓ *Make best use of **staff and elected representatives**.*
- ✓ *Achieve **high standards** in a broad range of functions.*
- ✓ *Increase the community's **engagement** with the local authority.*
- ✓ *Deliver **ethical local government**.*

**Local authority leadership starts with the challenge.**

The way the leadership responds to the challenge will be different in the light of both the institutional capacity of the local authority and their own skills, attitudes and attitudes. Even in local authorities where management is good, the more serious challenges, like poverty and environmental pollution, may still remain. How can you make a difference?

***The bottleneck is usually at the top of the bottle.***

If the local authority is to have a serious impact on these more difficult local issues, it may well have to change its approach. Change is a permanent factor in modern local government.

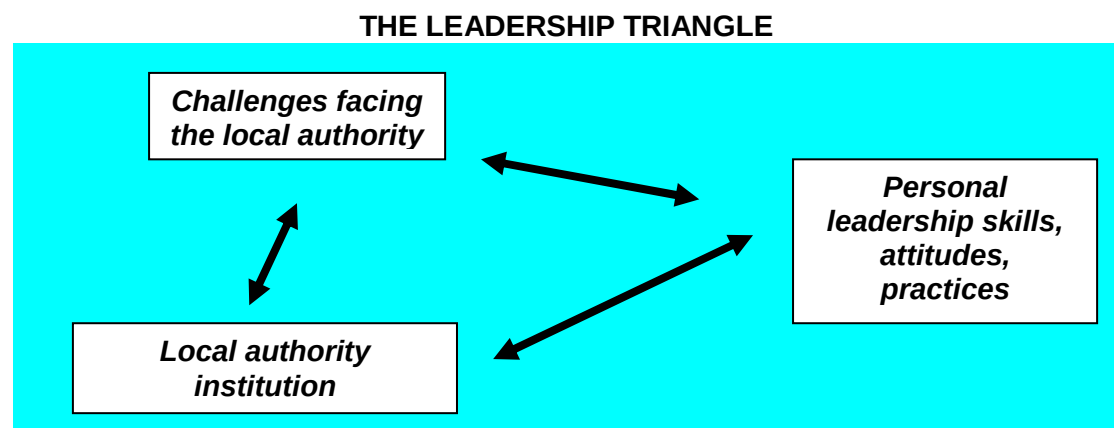
Local authorities must adapt to meet the challenges. Each local authority institution will be different; it must find its own way. There are no right or wrong approaches, no clear solutions. That is why good leadership is necessary, otherwise the challenges can be tackled with no more than good management.

The challenge and the institution are the first two factors. There is a third factor that will influence how the leadership might respond to the challenge; that is the set of leadership skills, practices and attitudes of each individual.

For example, some may prefer a head-on approach rather than a negotiated arrangement because their diplomatic skills are not so strong or they sense the need for quick and strong action.

Others may move forward cautiously because they prefer to reflect deeply before they take action or because they are preparing themselves well before they challenge the status quo.

The three factors look like this:



**Good leadership builds on the dynamic between these three factors.** A good leadership approach will differ in the light of each of these factors.

The challenges are set out in more detail in the box below; they are drawn from the **Benchmark of an Effective Democratic Local Authority** (Leadership Benchmark) prepared by the Council of Europe. Every Mayor is invited to use this Benchmark, whether through self-assessment, consultancies, training programmes or peer review, to:

- ✓ ***Assess how well their local authority is performing against the criteria.***
- ✓ ***Identify improvement action to be taken.***

## **CRITERIA FOR THE EFFICIENCY AND EFFECTIVENESS OF A LOCAL AUTHORITY**

### **INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY**

#### **1. Vision and strategy**

- *Develops a realistic vision and a set of values in consultation with local people and organisations, balancing short and long term requirements.*
- *Ensures that priorities reflect the ambitions of stakeholders and are widely shared.*
- *Develops and communicates policies and strategies, welcoming contributions from others.*
- *Monitors whether strategies and plans are being achieved, updates them to reflect changing circumstances.*

#### **2. Political management.**

- *Mayor, Assembly and Executive develop strategic objectives and priorities after consultation with stakeholders.*
- *Elected representatives ensure close communications between the local authority and local people and organisations, and seek to represent their needs in local policy-making.*
- *Mayor and Assembly work well together, recognising and making good use of their respective roles and capacities in the interest of the community*
- *Mayor and elected representatives work well with officials, each respecting the role and expertise of the other. there is a proper balance of power between the Mayor and Head of Administration; communications between the policial and executive sides are good.*

#### **3. People management**

- *Values all staff and elected members; helps them play a constructive role with proper support and resources.*
- *Applies effective personnel disciplines and promotes career opportunities.*
- *Delegates responsibility to managers where appropriate and supports innovation.*

#### **4. Communication**

- *Reaches out to all groups in the community, maintains dialogue and helps them become engaged with local government.*
- *Keeps elected members, staff and local people well-informed about its policies and performance, and consults them on its plans.*
- *Ensures all elected members are contactable and have the interests of local people at heart.*

#### **5. Transparency and accountability**

- *Leads by example, setting high standards of behaviour and performance.*
- *Decision-making arrangements are well publicised and understood so that they are open and transparent; committees are open to the public and their work is well documented and accessible to the public.*
- *Protocols exist for treating conflict of interest; a complete register of the interests of elected representatives is available.*
- *Procurement process is transparent and complies with regulations and*

*local protocols*

### **SERVICE PROVISION**

#### **6. Planning and review**

- *Has clear planning arrangements at community, corporate and service levels for both short and medium term.*
- *Demonstrates clear mechanisms for scrutinising the performance of local services.*
- *Assures horizontal coordination among services, with collaborative cross-boundary working.*
- *Reports clearly and in public on performance results and future plans.*
- *Consults elected members, staff and service users on the design of local services.*

#### **7. Innovation and change**

- *Challenges the status quo, and introduces new ideas and better ways of doing things.*
- *Seeks out good practice, disseminates lessons and provides learning opportunities.*
- *Uses project management effectively to introduce change and deliver specific goals.*

#### **8. Service management**

- *Manages services efficiently and effectively, in a way that delivers value for money, encourages staff to give of their best, and takes account of the views of service users.*
- *Uses objectives, priorities, performance indicators, standards and targets in all services to drive up performance, and monitors them regularly to inform policy and planning, and to demonstrate accountability.*
- *Compares its performance to the best in other authorities and sets targets for improvements.*
- *Carries out fundamental performance reviews of service provision in order to deliver real improvement.*
- *Has a well-developed and well-publicised complaints procedure that is accessible to all citizens through a range of channels; complaints information is analysed and used to improve services.*

#### **9. Resource management**

- *Financial planning is based on a multi-year outlook and finances are managed in a sustainable manner.*
- *Manages finance transparently to achieve maximum benefit, deliver value for money, and avoid unmanageable risk.*
- *Makes best use of assets.*
- *Ensures that resource management responds to the objectives and priorities of the local authority.*

#### **10. Partnerships and cooperation with other suppliers**

- *Secures opportunities for private companies and NGOs in the delivery of public goods and services.*
- *Encourages Public-Private Partnerships in activities where this arrangement can result in efficiency increase*
- *Contracts out services in domains where the inclusion of external providers can improve service quality*

- Assures transparency and on-going monitoring of partnership arrangements.

### **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

#### **11. Citizen participation**

- Keeps citizens informed; requests, listens and responds to local views, and welcomes feedback on users' experience of services.
- Creates opportunities for local participation in the design and delivery of services.
- Develops neighbourhood bodies to ensure citizen participation in local decision-making.
- Encourages registration and voting.

#### **12. Alliance-building**

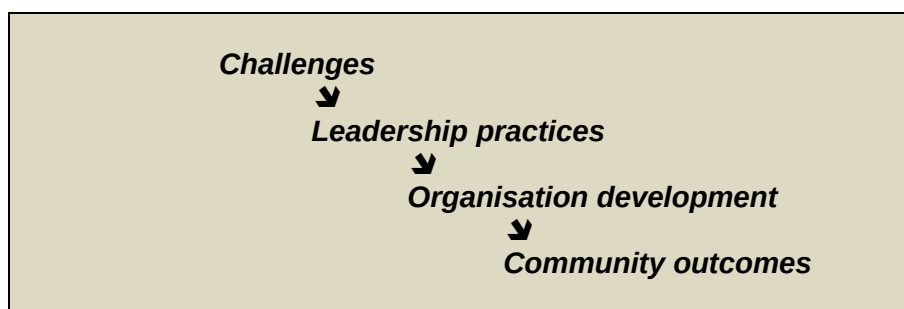
- Builds strong partnerships (eg for service delivery) with local organisations, with neighbouring local authorities and other local tiers of Government.
- Creates opportunities for local organisations to contribute to effective local governance.
- Makes best use of international opportunities for cooperation.

#### **13. Community leadership**

- Strengthens the capacity of the organisation to support the development of the community.
- Ensures substantial and on-going two-way communications between the local authority and its stakeholders.
- Establishes special institutions that can create a sense of common purpose and can tap into the knowledge, strategies and resources of all stakeholders.
- Facilitates contacts among partners, brokers initiatives and harnesses energy and resources for the better future of the community.

## **6. Building the institution**

The means for meeting the challenge lie within the local authority. Good leadership will focus on strengthening its organisation. In this way, an initiative can be sustained. How do we recognise a strong local authority?



Characteristics range from clarity of shared vision to the effective use of team-working. The criteria set out in the following pages identify what makes a local authority strong.

Of course, the leadership should not think that tackling a challenge is up to them **alone**, acting directly on the problem. It is the local authority as an institution - its staff and elected representatives - that needs to develop the sense of purpose and the capacity to deliver effective services, good governance and community development, whether directly through its own staff or indirectly by working in partnership with other organisations.

**This is the first task of the leadership of a local authority – to strengthen the institution so that effective action does not depend each time on the leadership itself but comes naturally from the organisation as a whole.**

## **7. Working with other local authorities**

**A key dimension of a modern local authority is that it can no longer be fully constrained by its administrative boundaries.**

*An effective local authority will seek solutions to challenges facing the community in line with the boundaries of those challenges rather than the boundaries of its administration.*

### **Inter-municipal cooperation (IMC)**

Many of the challenges faced by a community **cross administrative boundaries**. This includes, for example, dealing with poverty and needing to exploit economic opportunities. A local authority may be well-run within its boundary but it may still fail to have an impact on these deeper issues.

The local authority cannot resolve such issues by itself, because the causes of the issue or the scope of opportunity crosses into the territory of neighbouring local authorities.

**In such cases, local authorities need to work together in cooperation under an IMC arrangement, and with other partners as appropriate, to share capacity, resources and expertise, create larger economies of scale or attract higher levels of investment. Only in this way can such challenges be successfully tackled.**

*“You can achieve through IMC what you cannot achieve on your own”*

This is difficult. **Many local authorities have inherited a culture of non-cooperation; many are just too small to deliver good government; local autonomy is valued too highly.** In order to avoid compulsory amalgamation (which usually does not work), the leadership of local authorities must learn to work jointly with their neighbouring local authorities to identify and understand such shared challenges and to tackle them together.

IMC often starts on an informal basis. For example, Mayors may come together to arrange a particular event such as a festival and a school event.

| <b>THE BENEFITS OF IMC</b>                                                                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                                                                              |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>If you lead a small rural local authority, unable to attract good staff, lacking legal capacity, unable to improve roads ...</i></li> </ul>              | <i>... then sharing staff (lawyer, HR specialist, engineer) and equipment with neighbouring local authorities would create capacity.</i>                                     |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>If your local authority cannot afford modern waste facilities, if the environment looks unkempt ...</i></li> </ul>                                       | <i>... then joining up with neighbouring local authorities to establish and manage a common waste disposal facility would make it affordable through economies of scale.</i> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>If there are elderly people in your local authority without access to proper care, or if there are schools with insufficient students ...</i></li> </ul> | <i>... then contracting with a neighbouring local authority to share the care homes and schools would make better use of existing facilities.</i>                            |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>If there are tourist opportunities in your local authority but you cannot attract investment to develop facilities ...</i></li> </ul>                    | <i>... then working with neighbouring local authorities to draw up a common Local Economic Development Strategy will provide greater opportunities for development.</i>      |

Many IMC initiatives fail to get off the ground or find that they cannot be sustained. They may become victims of parochialism or party-political opposition. To be effective, IMC requires a **culture of cooperation** and a supportive environment. Preparations should be exhaustive, making good use of feasibility studies, legal and financial advice, and cross-party agreement.

**IMC is the way forward, but this will only work with the right leadership<sup>2</sup>.**

<sup>2</sup> The CoE, in partnership with UNDP and OSI, have prepared an IMC Toolkit and Training Guide. These are essential tools for any local authority leadership that wishes to pursue the IMC option.

## 8. Working in partnership

Local authorities need to recognise that local government belongs to all the community; that the local authority is not just an institution looking after its own interests.

Each organisation in the community has both a stake in local government and something to offer. It is for the local authority to engage those organisations through a partnership approach to achieving the goals that they share.

For example, many NGOs have experience and expertise in working with youth and elderly persons but may lack sufficient capacity to maximise their impact; businesses offer jobs but need the right incentives and a supportive business environment. Universities have capacity for relevant research and training programmes.

**The strongest local authorities will harness the will and expertise of different organisations in a shared approach to the development of their community** (see Section 2 for more detail on partnership-working with private companies and NGOs).

## 9. Community leadership

Community leadership reflects the role of the local authority not just in managing itself but in giving leadership to the whole community. This role has implications for the local authority. It is the duty of the leadership to:

1. Recognise the stake of other organisations in local government, harness the energies that they can bring, and negotiate their respective engagement.
2. Treat them as real partners, sharing a common purpose and maintaining open communications and mechanisms of cooperation.
3. Listen to their concerns and priorities and act upon them.
4. Move beyond the local authority's strategic plan to community planning (to which the local authority's own strategic plan contributes).
5. Establish mechanisms of on-going communications with the organisations (eg a Community Council, Annual Community Report) to sustain their on-going engagement and give legitimacy to the relationships.

This means that, whereas traditional leadership mainly worked through individual relationships, modern leadership also works through **community relationships**. The whole of the local authority needs to understand this bigger picture.

- *The political and the executive areas of the local authority must work together in their complementary roles so that the whole of the local authority is engaged for the good of the wider community.*
- *The local authority must welcome opportunities for working with community organisations.*
- *The local authority must lead, and community organisations must participate, in developing a vision and strategy for the whole community.*
- *The local authority must work with its partners to plan, monitor and evaluate the delivery of the community strategies.*

**Indeed, in a modern local authority there may be dozens of partnership agreements, because the starting point for any initiative is the economic, social, environmental or cultural environment within which the challenges need to be met.**

## **10. Citizen participation**

Community leadership also means an **active relationship** with local people. The local authority's leadership should never forget that their job is to represent the local community – local people and organisations - to understand their aspirations and share their concerns. This responsibility underpins all other responsibilities.

### **Informal conversations**

Communication channels need therefore to be established - links that connect the dialogue among officials on planning and decision-making to '**informal conversations**' between officials and citizens. This dialogue should allow citizens to:

- *Develop a shared understanding of current activities and future plans.*
- *Adjust plans and activities taking place in the community to the work of the local authority in order to create synergy and benefits for all.*
- *Feel of active sense of responsibility towards the community.*
- *Establish the norms and rules of open and constructive dialogue across the community; these are essential for peaceful co-existence.*

***Local people and organisations become meaningful partners in local public affairs through effective communications with their local authority.***

A local authority that effectively connects to the community gains informed and responsible partners. It can tap into a vast pool of information, support and resources. **This is the foundation of good local governance.**

### **Spaces for participation**

There are four different kinds of 'spaces' for public participation:

|                          |                                                                                                                                                                              |
|--------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>CLOSED</b>            | <i>Where only the formal decision-makers or specific invitees can enter. Decisions are made behind closed doors and stakeholders do not have insight into the process.</i>   |
| <b>INVITED</b>           | <i>Where the local authority sets the rules and retains discretion over who can enter. They invite only selected stakeholders.</i>                                           |
| <b>OPEN</b>              | <i>Where any interested stakeholder can enter. This gives free access to participation. Representation needs to be fairly organised if this approach is to be effective.</i> |
| <b>CLAIMED / CREATED</b> | <i>Where spaces are created by other forces - often less powerful groups against the formal authorities. These spaces may emerge from a common concern.</i>                  |

The type of space and the culture of discussion make a big difference to the power of the stakeholders to shape the agenda and raise specific issues.

In closed and invited spaces, it is often easy to identify bias, even when it is not intended. Also, participants tend to be mutually supportive; they may refrain from challenging differing opinions. Such spaces promote privilege; they may therefore help to reinforce the status quo, leave assumptions unchallenged and promote discrimination and exclusion.

There are different types of participation:

- **Information-sharing:** *is the 1-way flow of information that serves to keep people informed to provide transparency and build the local authority's legitimacy.*
- **Consultation:** *establishes 2-way information flows by sharing information and gathering reactions and feedback. The relationship between the local authority and stakeholders is not balanced as the results are non-binding for decision-makers.*
- **Shared decision:** *is usually the consequence of joint problem-solving or planning, where control over the decisions is shared. This is useful where stakeholders' knowledge, information, capacity, resources or experience is valuable.*
- **Devolved decision:** *is a mechanism that transfers control over decision-making, resources, and activities from the local authority to the stakeholders. This means that the stakeholders, acting autonomously, can plan and implement projects and policies without significant involvement or oversight from the local authority.*

**The deepest levels of engagement come with devolved decisions.**

## 11. New leadership skills, attitudes and practices

The new trends in local government mean that the right leadership skills will be different from those used traditionally. For example, where the leadership seeks to work in partnership with other organisations, they will need to:

- *Understand and respond to the interests of the other stakeholders.*
- *Move beyond their comfort zone where they have authority towards managing relationships that are not under their direct control.*
- *Depend more on skills of communication, negotiation and influencing than on directing and controlling.*

The leadership skills and practices used for managing an organisation are not in themselves enough; they need to be supplemented by skills and practices necessary for their wider community leadership role.

| <b><u>THE CHANGE IN FOCUS OF LEADERSHIP PRACTICE</u></b> |            |                                      |
|----------------------------------------------------------|------------|--------------------------------------|
| <b>LEADING THE ORGANISATION</b>                          | <b>→→→</b> | <b>LEADING THE COMMUNITY</b>         |
| • <i>Management</i>                                      | ✓          | <i>Working through relationships</i> |
| • <i>Spending to budget</i>                              | ✓          | <i>Generating resources</i>          |
| • <i>Building the information system</i>                 | ✓          | <i>Sharing information</i>           |
| • <i>Efficient staff</i>                                 | ✓          | <i>Responsible staff</i>             |
| • <i>Focus on organisation's future</i>                  | ✓          | <i>Focus on community's future</i>   |
| • <i>Directing</i>                                       | ✓          | <i>Influencing</i>                   |
| • <i>Containing risk</i>                                 | ✓          | <i>Managing risk</i>                 |
| • <i>Delivering services</i>                             | ✓          | <i>Focusing on development</i>       |

This approach brings the local authority's leadership closer to the people who elected them. **Local accountability** therefore becomes more important.

*Modern leadership welcomes local accountability, knowing that it is a powerful force to ensure effective performance.*

## 12. The leadership matrix

We thus come to the leadership matrix that brings together:

1. *Personal leadership skills, attitudes and practices.*
2. *Vehicles for strengthening the local authority as an organisation.*
3. *Performance standards at which an effective local authority will aim.*
4. *Outcomes sought in both the organisation and the community.*

The matrix overleaf sets out these different factors and their relationships.

| LEADERSHIP SKILLS                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |   | ORGANISATION VEHICLES                    |                                         |   | ORGANISATION CHALLENGES            |   | OUTCOMES                                                     |                                                          |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|---|------------------------------------|---|--------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>Exercising power</i><br><i>Seeing other perspectives</i><br><i>Giving a sense of purpose</i><br><i>Managing risk</i><br><i>Crossing boundaries</i><br><i>Sharing information</i><br><i>Networking</i><br><i>Listening</i><br><i>Facilitating</i><br><i>Asking challenging questions</i><br><i>Communicating</i><br><i>Motivating</i><br><i>Delegating</i> |   | <i>Developing direction and strategy</i> | <i>Creating a learning organisation</i> |   | <i>Vision and strategy</i>         | → | <i>High levels of capacity and expertise</i>                 | O<br>R<br>G<br>A<br>N<br>I<br>S<br>A<br>T<br>I<br>O<br>N |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |   | <i>Managing change</i>                   | <i>Setting up new structures</i>        | → | <i>People management</i>           | → |                                                              |                                                          |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |   |                                          |                                         | → | <i>Communications</i>              | → |                                                              |                                                          |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | → | <i>Promoting partnerships</i>            | <i>Creating powerful teams</i>          | → | <i>Public ethics</i>               | → |                                                              |                                                          |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | → | <i>Establishing networks</i>             | <i>Promoting innovation</i>             | → | <i>Political management</i>        | → |                                                              |                                                          |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |   | <i>Fostering diversity and inclusion</i> | <i>Promoting open communications</i>    | → | <i>Service planning and review</i> | → | <i>Strong community leadership</i>                           |                                                          |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | → | <i>Improving processes</i>               | <i>Valuing staff</i>                    | → | <i>Innovation and change</i>       | → |                                                              |                                                          |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | → | <i>Transforming the culture</i>          | <i>Managing performance</i>             | → | <i>Service management</i>          | → | <i>Economic, cultural, social, environmental development</i> | C<br>O<br>M<br>M<br>U<br>N<br>I<br>T<br>Y                |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |   | <i>Benchmarking</i>                      | <i>Creating a dynamic organisation</i>  | → | <i>Resource management</i>         | → |                                                              |                                                          |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |   | <i>Being accountable</i>                 |                                         | → | <i>Working in partnership</i>      | → |                                                              |                                                          |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | → | <i>Promoting public participation</i>    | <i>Managing conflict</i>                | → | <i>IMC</i>                         | → |                                                              |                                                          |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |   | <i>Delivering public value</i>           | <i>Ensuring transparency</i>            | → | <i>Citizen participation</i>       | → |                                                              |                                                          |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |   |                                          |                                         | → | <i>Building alliances</i>          | → |                                                              |                                                          |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |   |                                          |                                         | → | <i>Community leadership</i>        | → | <i>High quality public services</i>                          |                                                          |
| <b>LEADERSHIP FOUNDATIONS</b><br><hr/> <i>Self-awareness</i><br><i>Mindset</i><br><i>Emotional intelligence</i><br><i>Leadership styles</i><br><i>Personal integrity</i>                                                                                                                                                                                     | → |                                          |                                         |   |                                    |   |                                                              |                                                          |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | → |                                          |                                         |   |                                    |   |                                                              |                                                          |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |   |                                          |                                         |   |                                    |   |                                                              |                                                          |

## SECTION 2     STRENGTHENING THE INSTITUTION

Good leadership in a local authority does not seek to be the centre of attention all the time. If the local authority is to succeed in delivering the best outcomes for the community, it will do so largely through the commitment and expertise of its staff and elected members.

*Surveys suggest that the two most respected strengths of leadership are will-power and humility*

**Strengthening the institution** must be the first goal of the leadership. Without a strong organisation, any change initiatives will not be sustained.

The first section of this Manual set out the various challenges facing a local authority and how modern leadership might approach such challenges. Such challenges need to be tackled across the local authority in all its functions. High performance standards need to be achieved in the following areas:

| LOCAL AUTHORITY FUNCTIONS                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. <i>Vision and strategy</i></li><li>2. <i>People management</i></li><li>3. <i>Communications</i></li><li>4. <i>Transparency / accountability</i></li><li>5. <i>Political management</i></li><li>6. <i>Planning and review</i></li><li>7. <i>Innovation and change</i></li></ol> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>8. <i>Service management</i></li><li>9. <i>Resource management</i></li><li>10. <i>Partnerships</i></li><li>11. <i>Inter-municipal cooperation</i></li><li>12. <i>Citizen participation</i></li><li>13. <i>Alliance building</i></li><li>14. <i>Community leadership</i></li></ol> |

### 1.     Organisation culture

The **criteria** for high performance standards in these areas were set out in the Benchmark in the last section. To what extent is the **organisation** capable of achieving such standards? The leadership needs to focus on modern ways of strengthening the organisation, such as:

- *Using teamwork more effectively.*
- *Ensuring strategies are shared and feasible.*
- *Following a relevant performance management approach.*
- *Establishing a professional communications system.*

But the first task of the leadership is to introduce a culture that would support a modern organisation, so that staff and elected representatives actually want to introduce new ways of working.

**Every organisation has its own culture. Culture is about how things are done, the attitudes staff have, the way managers operate.**

You may want to give yourself a glimpse of the organisation culture in your local authority by asking your staff and elected representatives to answer the survey questions<sup>3</sup> below:

| <b>No.</b> | <b>QUESTION</b>                                                                                                         | <b>% WHO ANSWER 'YES'</b> |
|------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| <b>1</b>   | <b><i>Do you have a clear understanding of what your local authority is trying to achieve?</i></b>                      |                           |
| <b>2</b>   | <b><i>Are you enthusiastic about your team's / organisation's goals?</i></b>                                            |                           |
| <b>3</b>   | <b><i>Do you have a clear 'line of sight' between your tasks and your team's / organisation's goals?</i></b>            |                           |
| <b>4</b>   | <b><i>Are you satisfied with the work you have accomplished at the end of each week?</i></b>                            |                           |
| <b>5</b>   | <b><i>Does your organisation fully enable you to achieve clear objectives?</i></b>                                      |                           |
| <b>6</b>   | <b><i>Do you feel your manager trusts you to achieve high standards?</i></b>                                            |                           |
| <b>7</b>   | <b><i>Does your organisation foster open communications, sharing information and respecting differing opinions?</i></b> |                           |
| <b>8</b>   | <b><i>Is your organisation receptive to new ideas?</i></b>                                                              |                           |
| <b>9</b>   | <b><i>Does your organisation hold people accountable for results?</i></b>                                               |                           |
| <b>10</b>  | <b><i>Do you fully trust the leadership of your local authority?</i></b>                                                |                           |
| <b>11</b>  | <b><i>Do you have trusting, cooperative relationships with other groups / departments?</i></b>                          |                           |
| <b>12</b>  | <b><i>Do you regard local people and organisations as important customers of your work?</i></b>                         |                           |
| <b>13</b>  | <b><i>Does your organisation give priority to achieving high standards?</i></b>                                         |                           |
| <b>14</b>  | <b><i>Are you motivated by being of service to the community?</i></b>                                                   |                           |
| <b>15</b>  | <b><i>Does your organisation facilitate team-working?</i></b>                                                           |                           |

***What does the response tell you about the way things are done in your local authority?***

Set out below are some of the dimensions of an organisation culture. In finding the right balance, it is important for the leadership to know where on the spectrum their local authority lies, and to assess whether the current balance is right for the challenge ahead and what might be done, if anything, to improve the balance.

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<sup>3</sup> Drawn from The 8<sup>th</sup> Habit by Stephen R Covey

## DIMENSIONS OF ORGANISATION CULTURE

### Process-oriented

*How things are done, correctness, procedures, risk averse, routine, decisions by group, change takes a long time*

### Job-oriented

*The job matters more than anything, delivery, doing things on time*

### Parochial

*Strong organisational identification, loyalty to the team / department / organisation*

### Closed system

*Difficult to join, glass ceilings, cliques, change is internally driven, plans and targets proliferate, provider rather than enabler*

### Tight control

*Micro-management, high degree of measurement, enforcement policies and procedures, hierarchy*

### Normative

*Correct practices, rules and regulations, homogeneous language and practices*



### Results-oriented

*Outcomes matter more than processes, every day is different, risk, thinking outside box, decisions by individuals, quick change*



### Staff-oriented

*Organisation concern for employee learning, capacity and welfare*



### Professional

*Strong professional loyalties, resistance to corporate initiatives*



### Open system

*Diverse, influenced by stakeholders, services delivered through various means, partnership working, enabler rather than provider*



### Loose control

*High discretion roles, freedom to experiment and innovate, flexible working practices*



### Pragmatic

*What matters is what works, flexibility, customer orientation, diversity and tolerance*

Another way of looking at culture is through the typical cultural features of a successful local authority. These are set out below. They can act as a form of **Benchmark** against which the leadership of a local authority might compare the cultural features of their own local authority and decide what action, if any, they might take to move their local authority forwards.

### **CULTURAL BENCHMARK OF A SUCCESSFUL LOCAL AUTHORITY**

#### **OPENNESS**

- **Consultation**: *The local authority is open to stakeholders and has ways of consulting them; it bases its aspirations on their needs and expectations; stakeholders know this and feel it is worthwhile making their views known.*
- **Receptiveness**: *The local authority's elected representatives and staff are open to scrutiny, feedback and challenge; stakeholders believe the local authority makes good use of their opinions.*
- **Mutuality**: *the local authority's elected representatives and staff know they are reliant on stakeholders to contribute to the local authority's outcomes and to help the local authority have an impact.*

#### **ASPIRATION**

- **Results focus**: *Stakeholders can see their priorities reflected in the local authority's priorities and clear performance indicators and targets help everyone know what is planned and what is being achieved.*
- **Unanimity**: *There is a common sense of purpose and an understanding of the contribution that the elected representatives, staff and stakeholders make.*
- **Confidence**: *The local authority's elected representatives, staff and stakeholders are confident in their ability to achieve the things they strive for.*

#### **LEADERSHIP**

- **Inspiration**: *People have faith in the local authority's leadership and believe in the vision that together they have articulated.*
- **Practicality**: *People believe they can rely on the leadership to stay focused, have clear priorities and put in place the practical measures needed to turn the community's aspiration into reality.*

- **Integrity:** *The leadership listens and acts in a way that promotes fairness, trust and equality.*

#### **ORGANISATION**

- **Appropriateness:** *The systems and procedures embody the values of the local authority.*
- **Utility:** *People find the systems and procedures help them do their work better.*
- **Diversity:** *The organisation is open, flexible and responsive in its working arrangements.*

#### **EMPOWERMENT**

- **Commitment:** *People are dedicated to the shared goals and to the outcomes the local authority is trying to achieve.*
- **Learning:** *Staff are encouraged to gain the awareness, knowledge and skills necessary; effort and achievement are rewarded; people are challenged and helped to do better.*
- **Latitude:** *Staff are empowered to use their discretion, creativity and innovation to achieve given outcomes.*

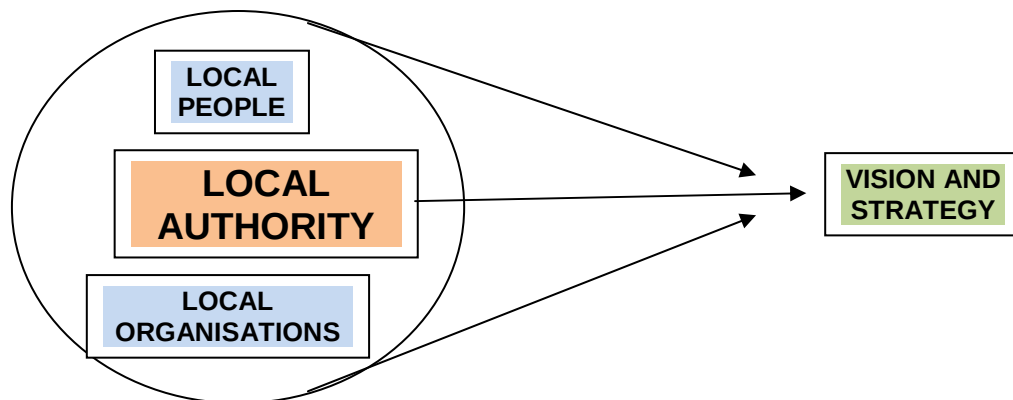
#### **ACHIEVEMENT**

- **Outcomes:** *People can easily see the difference the local authority makes to local governance and social, economic and environmental well-being.*
- **Excellence:** *The local authority is recognised for being among the best and for achieving best practice.*
- **Reputation:** *The local authority enjoys a reputation among stakeholders, the Government and other local authorities for making a positive contribution to local government.*

## **2. Vision, values and strategy**

A good local authority knows where it is going. **It has vision - a view of a credible and attractive future, a sense of direction.** This will be the vision of the community as a whole, developed in dialogue with local people and organisations and articulated by the local authority. It is the vision that drives standards of excellence.

When conditions are changing and the future is uncertain, creating a shared vision is a key challenge for the leadership.



A dynamic, cohesive community lives by a set of values. They will include, for example, the importance of:

- a) *Reaching out to all members of the community in fairness and respect, whatever their religion, race, gender or ability.*
- b) *Encouraging creativity in tackling the challenges they face, so that new businesses can be more easily established, new approaches to service provision explored, constructive relationships between all stakeholders – public, private and voluntary – developed.*
- c) *Communicating openly, so that everyone is aware of the performance and plans of the local authority, while the local authority knows of their needs and interests.*
- d) *Being transparent, so that public processes (eg seeking construction permits and social support mechanisms) are easily understood and followed, and that decisions are not made behind closed doors.*

A good local authority also has a clear set of **values** that underpin its management and leadership; they reflect how the staff and elected representatives will be expected to behave.

| EXAMPLES OF ORGANISATION VALUES                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>Learning from mistakes.</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Giving staff authority.</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Sharing good practice.</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Seeking the best.</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Valuing diversity.</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Challenging existing practice.</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Demanding results.</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Putting citizens first.</i></li> </ul> |
| <i>What if values clash (eg public service with profit)?</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |

The vision and values of a local authority provide the foundation for drawing up their **Strategic and Operational Plans**; they also provide the basis for a **sense of purpose** among staff and elected representatives.

A sense of purpose adds the **energy** necessary for delivering the vision.

**Having a vision, a set of values and a strategy underpinned by a sense of purpose gives the leadership the power to make a significant impact in the community.**

The leadership needs to involve staff and elected representatives as well as the local community in developing this vision and sense of purpose; let them become the inspiration.

A leadership that ignores the knowledge, needs and intelligence of local people and organisations will be making strategic decisions partly in the dark and will not be able to harness their support for a common purpose. Any such strategy will be the local authority's strategy, not the strategy of the community as a whole.

### **Strategic thinking**

Behind an effective Strategic Plan lies strategic thinking. **Good leadership will promote strategic thinking throughout the organisation.**

| <b><i>REQUIREMENTS OF STRATEGIC THINKING</i></b> |                                                                                                                                                   |
|--------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b><i>Space</i></b>                              | <b><i>Giving space to people for discussion and learning.</i></b>                                                                                 |
| <b><i>Big picture</i></b>                        | <b><i>Explaining the strategic context of the local authority's work and plans.</i></b>                                                           |
| <b><i>Feedback</i></b>                           | <b><i>Seeking and sharing comments on strategies in the light of their implementation.</i></b>                                                    |
| <b><i>Participation</i></b>                      | <b><i>Facilitating the participation of all stakeholders while ensuring decisiveness.</i></b>                                                     |
| <b><i>Framework</i></b>                          | <b><i>Creating a climate where existing working methods and activities can be challenged and changed to fit the vision and strategy.</i></b>      |
| <b><i>Experiment</i></b>                         | <b><i>Enabling responsible experiment and the sharing of learning and good practice.</i></b>                                                      |
| <b><i>Learning</i></b>                           | <b><i>Encouraging a 'solve and learn' rather than a 'blame and punish' approach to problem-solving.</i></b>                                       |
| <b><i>Personal example</i></b>                   | <b><i>Personally and visibly setting an example of a learning attitude and an approach that welcomes new and better ways of doing things.</i></b> |

**Everyone needs to understand the bigger picture** so that they can not only see how their own work contributes to the local authority's strategic objectives, but can also contribute from their own experience to the development and implementation of the vision and strategy.

The starting point is to understand the challenges faced by the local authority. What is the organisation trying to do? What are the obstacles? How can they be overcome? These are the everyday questions in the workplace. There must be space for everyone to think about them.

**What has been learnt from previous experience, from each other, from the experience of other local authorities, from best practice?**

The leadership challenge is to use dialogue and discussions that lead to shared understanding and commitment, to get people to think about the future and find the motivation to walk those extra steps and do things they may not have done before.

Achieving the vision depends on learning. A positive attitude to **continuous learning** is important. The inability to learn is a threat to an organisation. We may not get the strategy exactly right the first time, but if we are confident in our ability to learn, we will move forwards.

### **3. Communications**

Communications is a critical function of a local authority. Research shows a clear link between investment in communications and the quality of services.

**The most effective local authorities invest in communications and seek greater professionalism in the function.** This is a primary responsibility of the leadership, as good communications starts with them.

#### **Internal communications is important because:**

- ***Staff need to understand the leadership's priorities; they want to see how their work affects, and is affected by, other parts of the organisation.***
- ***The leadership needs to understand the realities of front-line staff. Elected representatives should know how their local authority is performing if they are to be accountable to the local community.***

#### **External communications is important because:**

- ***Local government belongs to local people. The local authority's leadership is accountable to them. To hold their local authority accountable, the local people need to be well informed; they need to***

*understand what the local authority is doing and why. The leadership of the local authority therefore needs to listen to their views.*

- *Local authorities are at the **centre of many communities and networks**, local people and organisations, the LGA, Government and public agencies, the voluntary and private sectors. All need to be kept informed, and to be listened to, if their support is to be harnessed.*
- *Local authorities have a **strong interest in the national policy, legislative and financial frameworks**. They need to ensure that those responsible for influencing and amending the frameworks are aware of the views of local government itself, of the challenges that local authorities face, the opportunities they could exploit, the additional responsibilities they could take on.*
- *Local authorities need to project a **positive image among the public** if they are to strengthen public support. A key player is the media; the relationships between local authorities and the media need to be close. Journalists and broadcasters need to see local government as an interesting subject; they will do this if there is public interest.*

***Communications means informing, explaining, promoting and listening.***

Communications is the responsibility not just of the leadership. **All staff and elected representatives have an important communications role to play** – front-line staff in direct touch with service users, elected representatives in touch with citizens, managers in touch with front-line staff, the leadership in touch with community organisations.

***Sharing information is power – both to the individual and the organisation.***

Communications is not just a **technical** issue; it is also a **cultural** issue. Staff and elected representatives must have pride in good communications; they will have pride if they see the value of communications. They must want to listen and learn, to keep people informed; they must welcome the **sharing of information**. The tone is set by the leadership.

### **Communications strategy**

Good leadership will ensure that the local authority uses a communications strategy to direct its communications effort in a professional manner.

The conditions for effective communication with the different stakeholders are different. Connecting to citizens is a very different challenge than communicating with organisations or government agencies.

Communications is a prelude to collaboration. While collaboration with partner organisations is based on issues and expertise, the local authority is still accountable to citizens. Local people need to understand how and why the local authority relates to the various organisations within the community.

***Keep in touch; informal dialogue is just as important as formal communications.***

Multiple communications channels and messages are needed to connect the local authority to the world of citizens, to engage them in local public affairs, to raise their awareness. In this way, community members can become meaningful partners in the local public affairs.

**The strategy will therefore identify the:**

- ✓ ***Main audiences***
- ✓ ***Key messages***
- ✓ ***Range of communications vehicles.***

| <b>KEY COMMUNICATIONS MESSAGES</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <b><i>Internal communications ensures that staff know the priorities of the leadership and that senior managers know the realities of the front line.</i></b></li> <li>➤ <b><i>External communications generates shared understanding of the local authority's goals and strategy and harnesses support for its activities.</i></b></li> <li>➤ <b><i>There is a clear link between the quality of communications and the effectiveness of the local authority.</i></b></li> <li>➤ <b><i>A Communications Strategy gets the right message to the right people at the right time, using appropriate spokespersons and the best communications vehicles; a wide variety of channels is essential.</i></b></li> <li>➤ <b><i>Communications is as much about listening as about telling, particularly for the local authority.</i></b></li> <li>➤ <b><i>In a complex world, communications must be professionally managed.</i></b></li> <li>➤ <b><i>Without a good Communications Strategy, the local authority will find it more difficult to harness the support of local people and organisations.</i></b></li> <li>➤ <b><i>Be pro-active; better to have the media involved than to be ignored.</i></b></li> <li>➤ <b><i>Link the formal decision-making processes of the local authority with 'informal conversations' between officials and community members.</i></b></li> </ul> |

The communications strategy will create opportunities for feedback from both internal audiences (staff and elected representatives) and external audiences

### **COMMUNICATIONS SELF-ASSESSMENT**

| <b>SUCCESS FACTORS IN COMMUNICATIONS</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | <b>HOW WELL DO YOU ACHIEVE THEM?</b> | <b>ACTION</b> |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|---------------|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>The local authority gives importance to internal and external communications.</i></li> <li>2. <i>All personnel (staff and elected representatives) are committed to good communications.</i></li> <li>3. <i>All personnel are trained in communications.</i></li> <li>4. <i>Personnel feel they are well informed about the work of the local authority.</i></li> <li>5. <i>Stakeholders understand the rules, duties and goals of their local authority and have realistic expectations of what it can and should achieve.</i></li> <li>6. <i>Local people and organisations feel they are well informed about the work of the local authority.</i></li> <li>7. <i>The local media feel they are well informed about the work of the local authority.</i></li> <li>8. <i>The local authority's policies and plans for communications are realistic.</i></li> <li>9. <i>There is an up-to-date Communications Strategy that is used to direct communications.</i></li> <li>10. <i>It is clear who speaks on behalf of the local authority, what the main messages are, who the key audiences are.</i></li> <li>11. <i>The local authority uses a wide range of communications tools.</i></li> <li>12. <i>The local authority is good at listening and getting feedback.</i></li> <li>13. <i>The local authority makes good use of the media.</i></li> </ol> |                                      |               |

(local people and organisations, national bodies, media). It will identify opportunities for sponsorship through advertising to help cover the costs. It will identify any obstacles to be overcome to ensure good communications.

The strategy will be implemented through a series of communications projects (events, publications, programmes).

**How much does your local authority invest in the professionalism of its communications function? How well does it communicate?** You might like to make an assessment, using the self-assessment exercise above.

Even better, you may like to ask a representative sample of staff and elected representatives to carry out the assessment; you might then organise a workshop to see what can be done to drive up the standards of communications to those of the best.

#### 4. Performance management

**Performance management is an approach used by modern local authorities to drive up standards of performance.** It starts with effective strategic and operational planning and uses job descriptions, performance indicators and performance appraisal wisely.

A performance management approach provides the right **information** to staff and elected representatives, as well as to the public, on how the local authority is performing in its priority areas. Managers can use this information to set targets and identify areas where performance should be celebrated or improved.

| <b>MANAGING PERFORMANCE</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>Learn from the best</i></li><li>• <i>Celebrate achievement</i></li><li>• <i>Create a 'learning' organisation</i></li><li>• <i>Welcome an external perspective</i></li><li>• <i>Challenge poor performance</i></li><li>• <i>Focus on what must change</i></li></ul> |

A performance management approach can identify weaker areas of organisation capacity or service provision, and initiate a **fundamental performance review** to identify issues, learn from best practice and make the changes necessary to raise standards.

A performance management approach can be used to **assess the satisfaction of citizens** with the performance of the local authority and ensure that the local authority's priorities and standards reflect the interests of local people and organisations.

A performance management approach can help to **align the personal objectives and tasks of staff** with the local authority's strategic objectives and plans to ensure a coherent approach to its work.

### **Risks**

However, there are risks in the way performance management is used. It may be used to control staff; it may be seen as just a paper exercise; data can be manipulated to show better results; it may cause an overload of information.

It is essential that performance management is introduced sensitively, that staff and elected representatives understand why it is being introduced and how they can use it to raise standards. If operational staff do not have confidence in managers, performance management will not be effective.

**All managers will need to be trained to use performance management constructively.**

#### **ELEMENTS OF A PERFORMANCE CULTURE**

- *A commitment by the leadership and managers to effective strategic planning and service planning.*
- *A willingness by the leadership and managers to accept bad news, learn from mistakes and take action to address performance problems.*
- *A focus on a few well-defined priorities and related performance indicators.*
- *A clear link between strategic priorities, performance indicators and targets, service plans and staff appraisal and reward systems.*
- *A clear and effective process for communicating the importance and use of performance management throughout the local authority.*
- *The publication of performance data in the public domain (eg in an Annual Performance Report) in an attractive and understandable way.*
- *Widespread understanding and ownership of the local authority's performance management system.*
- *A system of incentives for managers and staff to achieve targets.*
- *A willingness to celebrate personal and team achievement.*
- *A close tie-up between performance information and key strategic and budget decisions.*

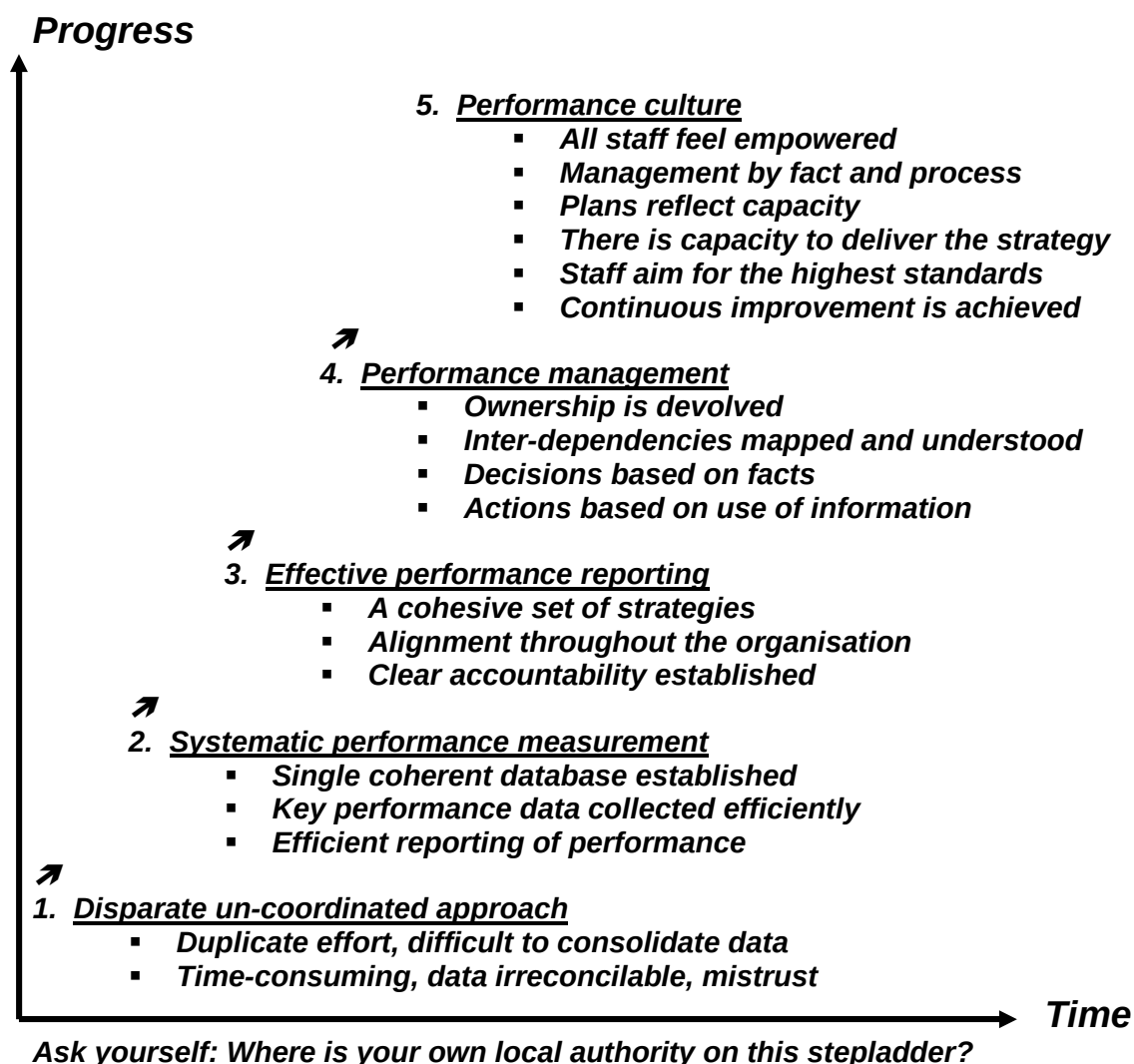
## Culture

**Performance management is both a technical and a cultural approach;** it is up to the leadership to ensure that there is a performance culture. If there is no performance culture, a performance management approach will fail.

A performance management approach can be used to motivate staff to do their best. Staff can use the information to improve their own personal performance and to ensure good two-way communications between them, their managers and other units. **Staff must want to make good use of performance management.**

It takes some years to build up maturity in performance management as experience is gained, lessons are learned and staff come to master its possibilities. Set out below are five steps in achieving a performance culture.

### **STEPS TO A PERFORMANCE CULTURE<sup>4</sup>**



<sup>4</sup> INPHASE Software (UK) Limited

The chart below offers a **starting point** for assessing our own local authorities in a way that identifies strengths and weaknesses and gives us a way forward.

Are you ready to test your own organisation against the criteria below? What action can you take that would lead to better results?

| <b>PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT QUESTIONNAIRE</b> |                                                                                                                                   | <b>SCORE</b> |
|---------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|
| <b>1</b>                                    | <b><i>Does the municipality have clear corporate priorities?</i></b>                                                              |              |
| <b>2</b>                                    | <b><i>Are priorities informed by local consultation and by analysis of local needs?</i></b>                                       |              |
| <b>3</b>                                    | <b><i>Is delivery of priorities measured?</i></b>                                                                                 |              |
| <b>4</b>                                    | <b><i>Are there relevant plans to support delivery?</i></b>                                                                       |              |
| <b>5</b>                                    | <b><i>Are the plans clear? Do they have clear targets?</i></b>                                                                    |              |
| <b>6</b>                                    | <b><i>Are the plans monitored regularly? Is action taken if they are not being delivered?</i></b>                                 |              |
| <b>7</b>                                    | <b><i>Do you use any performance management system?</i></b>                                                                       |              |
| <b>8</b>                                    | <b><i>Is performance information used?</i></b>                                                                                    |              |
| <b>9</b>                                    | <b><i>Are resources linked to the priorities?</i></b>                                                                             |              |
| <b>10</b>                                   | <b><i>Is there an annual report setting out the results of monitoring outcomes and examining performance against targets?</i></b> |              |
| <b>11</b>                                   | <b><i>Is there a public discussion on the performance of the municipality?</i></b>                                                |              |
| <b>12</b>                                   | <b><i>Are there targets for individuals to deliver their part in the plans?</i></b>                                               |              |
| <b>13</b>                                   | <b><i>Would better performance management help to improve services?</i></b>                                                       |              |

**Rate criteria on scale 1–5 (1=not at all; 2=not very; 3=quite; 4=very; 5=totally).**

## 5. Focus on staff

**Staff are a local authority's greatest asset.** The leadership's role is to treat them as such and create conditions so that they give of their best.

But in how many cases are they treated as such? To what extent is their full potential used? Do they – and the elected representatives – give 100% of their commitment and competence? To the extent that they do not, what prevents them?

**Ask each member of staff if he/she is using 100% of his/her potential.**

## **Recruitment**

The starting point is **recruiting the right person to the right job at the right time**. Good recruitment counts for at least 80% of the person's potential contribution. **Training can only build on that; it cannot be a substitute.**

There are obviously external constraints on recruitment into local government, and it is quite possible that a local authority in itself can have little influence on them; but working with their Local Government Association may help to identify and reduce those constraints.

***Good leadership will ensure that recruitment is based on merit rather than connections.***

Good leadership will intervene, as far as is necessary, to ensure that job advertising is effective, job descriptions are clear, managers are competent in interviewing, and there is professional HR support.

## **Training**

Training begins with **induction**, followed by generic and specialised training. Good leadership will ensure that staff develop their capacity to the full.

### **CRITERIA FOR GOOD TRAINING**

- ***Staff get the right training at the right time.***
- ***Staff want to use training, no matter how senior they are, to do their job better and enhance their career prospects.***
- ***The training used is of high quality and available when needed.***
- ***A range of approaches to training are used, including short courses, self-learning, seminars, workshops, coaching, mentoring, short-term secondments to other organisations, study visits.***
- ***Training is managed through the HR unit within a clear set of responsibilities.***
- ***All managers actively encourage staff development.***
- ***There is a good performance appraisal process that allows each member of staff to develop a Personal Development Plan each year.***
- ***There is clear strategic responsibility for training in the local authority, a good training plan and an adequate training budget.***
- ***Good use is made of expertise that already exists in the local authority.***

### **Teamwork**

Individual performance is enhanced by good teamwork. Good leadership will encourage team-working. Team-working allows different departments to focus more effectively on problems that cross boundaries.

The culture of the local authority is a key driver for team-working. Staff and elected representatives must want to work together in teams; they must see the value of team-working; they must learn to respect the skills and perspectives of other members of the team; they must share information; they must subordinate their personal interests to the interests of the team.

***Leadership encourages team-working by listening, delegating and facilitating.***

### **Discipline**

The best discipline is personal discipline. Personal discipline is encouraged in a culture where responsibility is delegated and individual accountability is given importance. Grievances need to be heard; poor discipline needs to be tackled hard.

In the end, a good local authority cannot afford poor performance, and discipline procedures need to be applied robustly. **A culture of impunity is incompatible with effective local government.**

### **Delegation**

**A key role of the leadership is to cultivate staff so that they can take on more and more responsibility themselves.** This will extend the capacity and effectiveness of the local authority as staff become less hampered by the need to refer decisions up the line and more confident in their approach to tackling the challenges they face.

Also, taking on greater responsibility gives a person a greater pride in achievement, more meaning in their work, more opportunity for creativity, increased motivation.

The condition, of course, is that the staff member can manage responsibility. Any delegation of authority should set out the parameters within which the staff member can take decisions and become accountable. Managers must be trained to avoid micro-management. **Coaching** is an important technique in training staff to be responsible.

### **Performance appraisal**

A formal system of performance appraisal can get the best out of staff or can impose tedious bureaucracy. Each member of staff should have the chance to sit down with his/her manager formally once a year to:

- ✓ *Assess performance against objectives and performance indicators agreed at the beginning of the year.*

- ✓ Acknowledge strengths and identify areas for further development.
- ✓ Offer feedback to the manager on how he/she is managing in order to identify possible improvements.
- ✓ Consider objectives and performance indicators for the following year.
- ✓ Draw up a Personal Development Plan for the following year.

The formal meeting should be supplemented with informal meetings during the year. Each staff member should be confident that he/she is being kept informed of wider issues and that the manager understands the working environment, the obstacles to be tackled and the opportunities to be exploited.

The performance appraisal system is easy to abuse. **Managers must be trained for it.** It is a key role of the leadership to ensure that the performance appraisal system enhances staff performance and does not become a bureaucratic nightmare or a process that staff come to fear, hate or ignore.

### **Managing upwards**

Managers should not be given responsibility for performance appraisal unless they are ready to hear the views of staff on **the quality of their own management**; they should appreciate the value of 'managing upwards', and therefore of 'being managed upwards'.

### **MUTUAL EXPECTATIONS OF MANAGERS AND STAFF<sup>5</sup>**

| <b>MANAGER GIVES:</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | <b>STAFF GIVE:</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <i>Work as agreed in JD, aligned to annual plan</i></li> <li>➤ <i>Clear guidance; parameters for personal initiative</i></li> <li>➤ <i>Means to achieve objectives</i></li> <li>➤ <i>Clear information; good communications</i></li> <li>➤ <i>Access to colleagues</i></li> <li>➤ <i>Attractive working environment</i></li> <li>➤ <i>Fair representation</i></li> <li>➤ <i>Appreciation for work done</i></li> <li>➤ <i>Opportunities to learn and increase expertise</i></li> <li>➤ <i>Problem-solving abilities</i></li> <li>➤ <i>Confidence in senior management</i></li> <li>➤ <i>Leadership</i></li> <li>➤ <i>Integrity</i></li> <li>➤ <i>Constructive performance appraisal</i></li> <li>➤ <i>Career advice</i></li> <li>➤ <i>Personal development support</i></li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <i>Execution of job to best of ability</i></li> <li>➤ <i>Focus on outcomes as well as outputs</i></li> <li>➤ <i>Honest self-assessment of achievement</i></li> <li>➤ <i>Good quality of work</i></li> <li>➤ <i>Sensible and honest use of local authority's reputation, time and resources</i></li> <li>➤ <i>Respect for rules</i></li> <li>➤ <i>Respect of colleagues</i></li> <li>➤ <i>Cooperation in developing policies and plans</i></li> <li>➤ <i>Team-working</i></li> <li>➤ <i>Confidence in management</i></li> <li>➤ <i>Transparency and integrity</i></li> <li>➤ <i>Creative thinking</i></li> <li>➤ <i>Motivation</i></li> </ul> |

<sup>5</sup> Drawn from The New Leaders by Daniel Goleman

The idea of 'managing upwards' puts responsibility on managers not so much to manage staff directly but to **create an environment in which staff can maximise their performance**. Who best understands such an environment but the staff themselves? What do managers and staff expect of each other (see chart above)?

For this reason, managers must be ready to listen and provide support; this is an important leadership role.

#### **Putting HR into performance**<sup>6</sup>

The difference between average and excellent performance will mainly lie with the staff. There are 3 key characteristics of staff that deliver excellent performance:

- **Clear purpose**: Do I know where we are going and why?
- **Team-working**: Am I committed to working with others to get there?
- **Flexibility**: Am I willing to try different ways to get there?

| <b>ASSESSMENT OF QUALITY OF STAFF</b>                    |                                                                                                            |                  |
|----------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|
| <b>CLEAR PURPOSE</b>                                     |                                                                                                            |                  |
| <b>1</b>                                                 | <b><i>Staff have a shared understanding of strategy at detailed level</i></b>                              | <b>1 2 3 4 5</b> |
| <b>2</b>                                                 | <b><i>Staff focus their efforts on the critical priorities</i></b>                                         | <b>1 2 3 4 5</b> |
| <b>3</b>                                                 | <b><i>Strategy is translated into concrete, achievable goals</i></b>                                       | <b>1 2 3 4 5</b> |
| <b>TEAM-WORKING</b>                                      |                                                                                                            |                  |
| <b>4</b>                                                 | <b><i>We have commitment at all levels to success of the strategy</i></b>                                  | <b>1 2 3 4 5</b> |
| <b>5</b>                                                 | <b><i>We assign capable, dedicated staff to strategic initiatives</i></b>                                  | <b>1 2 3 4 5</b> |
| <b>6</b>                                                 | <b><i>The spirit of teamwork and cross-boundary cooperation is evident throughout the organisation</i></b> | <b>1 2 3 4 5</b> |
| <b>FLEXIBILITY</b>                                       |                                                                                                            |                  |
| <b>7</b>                                                 | <b><i>Staff stay open and flexible in the way goals are met</i></b>                                        | <b>1 2 3 4 5</b> |
| <b>8</b>                                                 | <b><i>Staff maintain a bias for action while adjusting for circumstances</i></b>                           | <b>1 2 3 4 5</b> |
| <b>9</b>                                                 | <b><i>Staff capture and communicate what they learn from their work</i></b>                                | <b>1 2 3 4 5</b> |
| <b>Scoring: 1 = low; 5 = high</b>                        |                                                                                                            |                  |
| <b>Add ratings and divide by 9.</b>                      |                                                                                                            |                  |
| <b>Score: &lt;3 – development needed; &gt;4 – strong</b> |                                                                                                            |                  |

When clear purpose, team-working and flexibility come together among staff, they deliver better performance; they add value to local government.

<sup>6</sup> This section has been inspired by Strategic Speed by Davis, Frechette and Boswell.

The leadership of a local authority might wish to assess how extensively these qualities can be found among their staff by using the assessment above.

There are 4 leadership practices that experience suggests play a critical role in promoting these three foundations of excellent performance: clear purpose, team-working and flexibility:

- 1. Driving strategies**
- 2. Supporting initiatives**
- 3. Managing climate**
- 4. Making use of experience**

The table below identifies ways in which each of these practices can strengthen these HR characteristics. By strengthening them, the leadership can strengthen the contribution of their staff to the work of their local authority.

| <b>HOW LEADERSHIP PRACTICES STRENGTHEN HR FACTORS</b> |                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                     |                                                                                                                      |
|-------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>LEADERSHIP PRACTICES</b>                           | <b>CLEAR PURPOSE</b>                                                                             | <b>TEAM-WORKING</b>                                                                                                 | <b>FLEXIBILITY</b>                                                                                                   |
| <b>1. Driving strategies</b>                          | <i>Ensuring staff understand strategic direction and their role in supporting it</i>             | <i>Emphasising importance of each person's buy-in and contribution</i>                                              | <i>Increasing staff awareness of external and internal conditions and their implications for strategic decisions</i> |
| <b>2. Supporting initiatives</b>                      | <i>Defining specific objectives, roles, action plans</i>                                         | <i>Ensuring all staff know exactly how their job and behaviour contribute to the success of the local authority</i> | <i>Keeping hands on the 'steering wheel' so adjustments can be made as necessary</i>                                 |
| <b>3. Managing climate</b>                            | <i>Giving opportunities for open dialogue about goals and objectives</i>                         | <i>Setting stage for collaboration and teamwork across the local authority</i>                                      | <i>Encouraging ownership, flexibility and confidence in making decisions and pursuing objectives</i>                 |
| <b>4. Making use of experience</b>                    | <i>Allowing time to formulate and discuss goals and reflect on progress towards meeting them</i> | <i>Expecting each staff member to have a perspective, offer insights and contribute to team learning</i>            | <i>Enabling staff to learn from experience and best practice, applying lessons quickly to emerging problems</i>      |

**Ask yourself: How well do you think your local authority encourages clear purpose, team-working and flexibility among the staff?**

## 6. Joint working

A local authority working alone cannot hope to resolve all of the major challenges the community faces. Such challenges, like the need for more economic development or the importance of helping elderly people maintain a good quality of life, are very demanding and have many interested parties.

**For example, the private sector can create jobs and provide access to skills, investment and entrepreneurialism; the voluntary sector may offer additional capacity and access to volunteers and best practice in youth work, environmental protection and family support; it can reach out to ethnic minorities and disadvantaged groups.**

**In many cases, smaller local authorities in particular can work with neighbouring local authorities in a form of ‘inter-municipal cooperation’ (IMC) to make particular services and projects affordable and manageable.** Such projects may include:

- *Building infrastructure.*
- *Running a care home for elderly people.*
- *Managing a waste management service.*
- *Sharing legal and HR expertise.*

Smaller local authorities can even set up **joint offices** if they have good leadership. IMC can provide an economy of scale or access to resources and expertise that would not otherwise be possible (see Section 1). Joining such IMC projects with business or NGO expertise and resources will make such initiatives even more effective.

| <b>ADVANTAGES OF PARTNERSHIPS</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ <i>Bringing in new skills and expertise.</i></li><li>➤ <i>Creating economies of scale.</i></li><li>➤ <i>Extending the range of services and raising their quality.</i></li><li>➤ <i>Making better use of specialized knowledge.</i></li><li>➤ <i>Ensuring local services are better ‘joined-up’.</i></li><li>➤ <i>Tackling tough challenges.</i></li><li>➤ <i>Managing demand better.</i></li></ul> |

Partnership-working with private companies and NGOs is not just a technical matter of project management. Staff and elected representatives must **welcome** such cooperation. They must:

- *See the benefits and share a common purpose with the partner.*
- *Understand the interests of the partner and seek to understand issues from the partner’s perspective.*

- *Share a performance management approach and dispute mediation mechanisms in which both sides have confidence.*

Partnership-working is especially a cultural issue. Does the local authority really want it? Is the leadership willing to accept working across geographical and institutional boundaries where they do not have sole control? Are the partners sufficiently aligned in structure and processes to make a success of partnership-working?

**It is for the leadership to establish the kind of culture that makes partnership-working not just acceptable but welcome.**

It is important to invest sufficient time and effort in establishing the right initial conditions and creating a good process for developing the partnership together. **Trust, transparency and good communications are essential.**

Look for the 'match' or 'alignment' between the local authority and the potential partner (see the Partnership Development Tool below).

**Success also depends on how the partnership evolves and matures. Good partnerships can develop opportunities not seen at the beginning. Poor partnerships sap energy and take years to untangle.**

#### **CONDITIONS FOR EFFECTIVE PARTNERSHIP**

- **Strategic match** – *do the partners complement each other in terms of assets, competence and services?*
- **Organisational match** – *are the partners compatible in terms of structures and cultures?*
- **Expectations match** – *do the partners have similar motivation and expectations of the project?*
- **Cultural match** – *are the 'ways of doing things' in each partner compatible?*

**To assess success, you might want to consider the following questions:**

- *How open is the partnership? Does the agreement allow for the sharing of knowledge about best practice, costs and customers?*
- *What opportunities are built in to evaluate the way the partnership is working?*
- *What processes exist for the parties to learn from each other?*

The key challenge is how the partners **manage the differences** between them over time. How well do they learn from the experience? How well do they share knowledge, skills and understanding? How well do they adjust their expectations of the partnership?

***At the core of a successful partnership  
are trust and confidence in each other.***

The leadership of a local authority has a key role in introducing the right environment so that partnership-working is welcome, effective and sustainable, whether with businesses, NGOs or other local authorities.

### **PARTNERSHIP DEVELOPMENT TOOL<sup>7</sup>**

| <b>A. <u>Assessing the potential</u></b>                                                                   | <b>Strongly agree</b> | <b>Agree</b> | <b>Don't know</b> | <b>Do not agree</b> | <b>Strongly disagree</b> |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|--------------|-------------------|---------------------|--------------------------|
| <b>1 We will gain substantially from the partnership</b>                                                   |                       |              |                   |                     |                          |
| <b>2 We can specify how the partnership can create value for us</b>                                        |                       |              |                   |                     |                          |
| <b>3 Our partner will gain substantially from the partnership</b>                                          |                       |              |                   |                     |                          |
| <b>4 We can specify how the partnership will create value for our partner</b>                              |                       |              |                   |                     |                          |
| <b>5 Our partner and ourselves understand each other's corporate strategies and see them as compatible</b> |                       |              |                   |                     |                          |
| <b>6 Both we and our partner have a track record of good partnership working</b>                           |                       |              |                   |                     |                          |

| <b>B. <u>Designing the partnership</u></b>                                                                             | <b>Strongly agree</b> | <b>Agree</b> | <b>Don't know</b> | <b>Do not agree</b> | <b>Strongly disagree</b> |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|--------------|-------------------|---------------------|--------------------------|
| <b>7 Our partnership has a clear vision and joint purpose</b>                                                          |                       |              |                   |                     |                          |
| <b>8 Our partnership is based on shared values and principles</b>                                                      |                       |              |                   |                     |                          |
| <b>9 Our partnership has clear joint aims and objectives</b>                                                           |                       |              |                   |                     |                          |
| <b>10 Our partner agrees on the scope and limits of joint working</b>                                                  |                       |              |                   |                     |                          |
| <b>11 We have adequately discussed each other's areas of non-partnership work and how this affects the partnership</b> |                       |              |                   |                     |                          |
| <b>12 We have discussed with our partner how this partnership fits</b>                                                 |                       |              |                   |                     |                          |

<sup>7</sup> Drawn from A Manager's Guide to Leadership by Pedler, Burgoyne, Boydell

|                                                                                                                     |  |  |  |  |  |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|--|--|--|--|
| <i>in with other alliances, networks and partnerships</i>                                                           |  |  |  |  |  |
| <b>13</b> <i>We have agreed the joint task requirements and designed the interface between the partners</i>         |  |  |  |  |  |
| <b>14</b> <i>We have agreed rules of conduct to promote fairness, trust and joint working</i>                       |  |  |  |  |  |
| <b>15</b> <i>The outcomes of our partnership can be clearly linked to each other's contribution</i>                 |  |  |  |  |  |
| <b>16</b> <i>We have a process for discussing how benefits can be shared relative to the partner's contribution</i> |  |  |  |  |  |
| <b>17</b> <i>Each partner has senior people committed to the success of the partnership</i>                         |  |  |  |  |  |
| <b>18</b> <i>There is strong ownership of the partnership within each organisation</i>                              |  |  |  |  |  |

| <b>C. <u>Managing the partnership</u></b>                                                                                            | <b>Strongly agree</b> | <b>Agree</b> | <b>Don't know</b> | <b>Do not agree</b> | <b>Strongly disagree</b> |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|--------------|-------------------|---------------------|--------------------------|
| <b>19</b> <i>There are agreed success criteria that will be used by each partner</i>                                                 |                       |              |                   |                     |                          |
| <b>20</b> <i>We have jointly identified early successes</i>                                                                          |                       |              |                   |                     |                          |
| <b>21</b> <i>The partners have a clear and agreed process for monitoring progress on both the goals and the processes</i>            |                       |              |                   |                     |                          |
| <b>22</b> <i>We have an agreed process for understanding and bridging any gaps that may appear at the interface between partners</i> |                       |              |                   |                     |                          |
| <b>23</b> <i>We have established a joint learning agenda for developing the tasks, processes, skills and knowledge</i>               |                       |              |                   |                     |                          |
| <b>24</b> <i>We jointly reflect and agree new ideas to try out</i>                                                                   |                       |              |                   |                     |                          |
| <b>25</b> <i>The arrangements enable us to reconsider our goals and working arrangements and modify them as appropriate</i>          |                       |              |                   |                     |                          |
| <b>26</b> <i>We have a declared intention to look for new opportunities for collaboration</i>                                        |                       |              |                   |                     |                          |

## 7. Public ethics, transparency and accountability

### Citizens' rights

**Local government is government of, by and for local people.**

Citizens should expect good local government as a right. **The local authority is their local authority.** They should expect their local authority to act **in their interest**. The rights of citizens are implied in Article 3 of the European Charter of Local Self-Government:

***“Local self-government denotes the right and the ability of local authorities, within the limits of the law, to regulate and manage a substantial share of public affairs under their own responsibility and in the interests of the local population.”***

A key aspect of good local government is its **ethics**. Local people and organisations want clean local government. If you ask local people, they are likely to say that they want their local authority to:

- ***Be fair and transparent.***
- ***Reach out to all parts of the community.***
- ***Make a difference.***
- ***Be efficient and effective.***
- ***Deliver value for money.***

If local people and organisations do not trust their own local authority to act in their best interests, they will not support it. In such circumstances, the local authority will not be able to harness the community's resources in a shared sense of purpose; it will be much weaker as a consequence.

### The national environment

**Local government works within parameters established by central Government and Parliament.**

Central Government inevitably has a national interest in local government because a significant proportion of public resources is spent locally. Any competent Government will have particular interest in such aspects as the:

- *Implementation of specific national policies at local level.*
- *Maintenance of public expenditure standards.*
- *Achievement of specific performance standards where there is a national interest (eg school results).*
- *Fairness of elections.*

**Public ethics** is one of those aspects. The national framework may include, inter alia, rules for local authorities for recruitment, drawing up Codes of Ethics and establishing Ethics Committees. This is one driver of local authority action.

However, in practice, influence on local government comes from many sources; some of this influence can have a seriously negative effect on public ethics. For example:

- *Where local government pay is low and officials have little sense of public service, performance is poor. Who sets local government pay scales?*
- *Where political parties dictate senior appointments without regard to the required experience or expertise, the local authority's own staff lose their commitment. Who can protect the integrity of senior management?*
- *Where the law permits all-powerful Mayors to ignore their local Assembly and local representatives to ignore local people, the views of local people and organisations may too easily not be taken into account. Who can influence the law?*

Poor performance by local authorities, low commitment by officials and low levels of democracy are 3 factors that deny citizens their right to good local government and compromise the **integrity** of local government. While it is easy to blame the national environment for such circumstances, **there is much that the leadership of local authorities can do to make the best of a difficult environment.**

***People do not pay taxes to provide local government jobs for the unemployed; get rid of non-performers.***

Whatever the main external influences, the first responsibility for ensuring that local government is ethical - that the local authority has integrity - falls on the shoulders of its own leadership. **Ethical local government is essentially a local issue.**

### **Local responsibility**

One important way of improving the quality of local government is to increase the involvement of the community in local affairs. After all, it is the needs of local people and organisations that the local authority is there to meet. It is they who:

- *Know best what is important for the community.*
- *Can best assess the quality of the services they receive and identify what more needs to be done.*
- *Know where the local authority is not fair or transparent.*
- *Pay taxes and fees to finance the costs of local government.*

To really participate in local government, local people and organisations need first to be **aware** of the role and operations of their local authority. They need to understand what a local authority can do to make a difference locally. They need to understand their own responsibilities for local government.

***“Local government is a public service; we will live up to the expectations of the people we serve”***

**Information on their local authority’s performance helps local people and organisations to see if it is acting in their best interests;** the local authority must be ready to share information in public on what it is doing and how well it is doing it.

The local authority must be able to **listen** to the views of local people and organisations on the kind of future they want for their community and the challenges they face; it must acknowledge their priorities; it must be ready to accept public criticism of their own shortcomings and respond constructively.

**The engagement of local people and organisations in the work of the local authority is the foundation of local accountability. The initiative lies with the local authority. The relationship between a local authority and the people it serves is a matter of leadership.**

***A good Strategic Plan reflects the community’s vision as much as the local authority’s objectives.***

### **Trust**

That relationship can only be built on **trust**. What can the local authority do to build trust? Trust is derived from a number of sources:

- ✓ *The willingness of officials and elected representatives to be open about their performance.*
- ✓ *The transparency of the decision-making processes so that local people and organisations understand why and how decisions are made.*
- ✓ *The quality of communications.*
- ✓ *The determination to stamp on corruption, eliminate corrupt practices and avoid conflicts of interest among elected representatives.*
- ✓ *The extent of consultation with local people and organisations on matters of important local interest and the constructiveness of its response.*

Where citizens know that their local authority exercises **integrity** in its decision-making and realise that they can **contribute** to the decision-making themselves, they have no reason to suspect that officials and elected members are putting their own interests first.

***Representatives are elected to serve the people; always remember that.***

Trust is built on **dialogue**. Communities are better off and local people and organisations more satisfied when there is dialogue between themselves and their local authority. This generates mutual understanding, a more shared responsibility for local affairs and wider support for the local authority's work.

**THE 7 PRINCIPLES OF PUBLIC LIFE**  
(Committee on Standards in Public Life, UK)

**Selflessness:** Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest. They should not do so in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends.

**Integrity:** Holders of public office should not place themselves under any financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organisations that might seek to influence them in the performance of their official duties.

**Objectivity:** In carrying out public business, including making public appointments, awarding contracts, or recommending individuals for rewards and benefits, holders of public office should make choices on merit.

**Accountability:** Holders of public office are accountable for their decisions and actions to the public and must submit themselves to whatever scrutiny is appropriate to their office.

**Openness:** Holders of public office should be as open as possible about all the decisions and actions that they take. They should give reasons for their decisions and restrict information only when the wider public interest clearly demands.

**Honesty:** Holders of public office have a duty to declare any private interests relating to their public duties and to take steps to resolve any conflicts arising in a way that protects the public interest.

**Leadership:** Holders of public office should promote and support these principles by leadership and example.

**Trust is incompatible with corruption.** Fertile conditions for the growth of corrupt practices arise where there is a lack of transparency, where the interests of the community as a whole are subordinated to the private interests of groups of elected representatives or officials, where single individuals have **discretion and monopoly** over key processes like the issue of construction permits.

In such conditions, decisions are taken opaquely. The real performance of the local authority will be hidden; staff become demoralised; it is difficult to plan anything.

***Corruption stinks; let local authorities smell sweet.***

On the other hand, some officials or elected representatives may not see the need for public dialogue, may not appreciate the need to keep the public informed of progress, may not have the courage to expose themselves to public scrutiny. On the other hand, there are citizens who have no interest in local affairs.

***A fish rots from the head.***

This becomes a vicious circle – a lack of dialogue discourages citizens from inquiring into local matters. Consequently, there is little pressure on the local authority to increase dialogue. **It is for the leadership of the local authority to change the attitudes that lie behind these circumstances.**

### **Ethical standards**

**The challenge facing the leadership of local authorities is to create legal and administrative structures and processes that will ensure transparency and accountability, and reduce the incidence of corruption.**

A community will be most interested in 4 key dimensions of a local authority:

| <b><i>BECOMING ACCOUNTABLE</i></b>                                                                                                                            |                                                                                                                                                      |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b><i>Honesty, integrity, transparency</i></b></li> <li>• <b><i>Service quality and accessibility</i></b></li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b><i>Policy and budget priorities</i></b></li> <li>• <b><i>Performance, value for money</i></b></li> </ul> |

It is useful to examine each of these factors in your local authority. Why are they important to the community? What obstacles stand in the way of strengthening them? What can you do, in your leadership role, to strengthen them and increase local accountability?

***Where monopoly and discretion come together in a single post, there lie the seeds of corruption.***

At the core of ethical local government lies a set of **principles** (see example above). The important challenge for a local authority's leadership is to adopt

ethical standards with enough understanding of both their meaning and their implications for public administration.

### **A Strategy for Good Public Ethics**

Such standards can be set out in a strategy for public ethics and promoted by the leadership of the local authority. This would demonstrate to local people and organisations the determination of the local authority to deliver ethical local government.

***Where a process (eg applying for a permit) is lengthy and complex, someone will happily pay a bribe to jump the queue. Check the process before blaming the official.***

The standards may cover:

- ***Ethical leadership*** that will express the clear will of the local authority, accentuate the particular responsibility of managers, promote an ethical culture and learn from best practice elsewhere.
- ***The ethical management of human resources***, beginning with clear rules for recruiting competent staff, developing their expertise and advancing their career.
- ***The establishment of clear rules of procedures*** that reflect transparency and reduce opportunities for unethical behaviour.
- ***The preparation of documents and organisation structures***, such as a Code of Ethics and an Ethics Committee.
- ***Community involvement*** through which the local authority listens to local people and organisations, consults them on matters of importance and welcomes their participation.
- ***Approving action taken by staff*** in situations where they see unethical behaviour and where the management does not react to it or is the actual perpetrator.

***Remember two words: transparency and accountability – transparency to the world, accountability to local people.***

**Ethical leadership requires personal involvement and integrity.** The style of leadership in a local authority will affect all its stakeholders. It is important for the leadership to understand the expectations of those stakeholders so that it can be seen to be behaving and performing with integrity.

- Ministry of Finance expects value for money, as it seeks to balance competing priorities for public funding; line Ministries expect high standards of local services.
- Local people expect good services that respond to their needs.

**Expect high standards from your staff; they deserve nothing less.**

- Businesses want a business-friendly environment; they want to be able to bid for contracts on a transparent basis.
- Unemployed young people would like help (eg skills training, business incubators, access to 'business angels', support services) to help them become entrepreneurs.
- NGOs want to contribute expertise and capacity to extend social services and defend people's rights.
- Staff want to find meaning in their work and achieve high standards.
- Local elected representatives want to sort out local issues and bring community benefits for local people and organisations.

**Expect the best of your local authority; local people deserve nothing less.**

**Important measures that a local authority can take to improve public ethics are:**

- ✓ Ensure local authority information is reliable, comprehensive and timely.
- ✓ Give access to public information (eg through information offices and customer service points).
- ✓ Ensure transparency in public procurement and other processes.
- ✓ Map all processes to identify and eliminate duplication, wastage and monopoly.
- ✓ Prevent conflicts of interest (eg through the declaration of gifts and the introduction of codes of ethical behaviour).
- ✓ Provide training in ethical local government to all staff and elected representatives.

- ✓ Undertake Fundamental Performance Reviews where performance is seen to be poor.
- ✓ Undertake Process Reviews where processes are seen to be complex and slow.
- ✓ Introduce a more professional HR approach.
- ✓ Introduce an effective performance management regime.

***Most people are not corrupt; if the system makes them behave corruptly, change the system.***

Spending public resources on non-priority activities, wasting money through inefficiency and ineffectiveness, allowing poor management and bureaucratic systems to hamper performance – these also diminish ethical local government and the integrity of the local authority.

**RECOMMENDATIONS ON GOOD GOVERNANCE, ETHICS AND TRANSPARENCY TO EACH MUNICIPALITY (Montenegro 2010)**

**10 Publicly adopt a policy of zero-tolerance on corruption as an acknowledgement that the ethics of local government has a direct impact on the provision of good governance and that this is what citizens are entitled to and legitimately expect.**

**11 Introduce a Code of Ethics and an Ethics Committee in order to give direction to ethical local government and to respond vigorously to failures in ethical behaviour.**

**12 Supplement the anti-corruption policy by performance management systems that would engage all staff and stakeholders in contributing to achieving the municipality's priorities and plans and give direction and sense of purpose to staff in their everyday work.**

**13 Establish an Internal Audit system to advise on the soundness of systems, processes and procedures, to carry out spot checks to determine their proper operation, particularly where functions are vulnerable to corruption, and to issue an Annual Internal Audit Report highlighting improvements made as well as risks that will need further management.**

**14 Develop a training policy and training programmes aimed at reinforcing in local staff and elected representatives the knowledge of, and compliance with the rules governing the rights and duties of public officials and local elected representatives.**

Good local governance brings together ethical behaviour and performance. It meets stakeholder expectations and makes best use of their commitment and capacities. It reflects the needs of local people

**and organisations. Good local governance creates communities where people want to live and work.**

***Staff must be good enough for local people and organisations to believe in them.***

***Working for local government is a privilege; live up to the expectations of local people and organisations.***

How ethical is your local authority? Make an assessment against the standards set out in the exercise overleaf. Better still, ask a representative sample of staff and elected representatives to make the assessment; then organise a workshop to decide what improvements can be made.

## SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

### STANDARDS OF ETHICAL LOCAL GOVERNMENT<sup>8</sup>

*You are invited to assess the ethical standards of your local authority on a scale of 1 (low) to 10 (high); you should identify the evidence behind your score; this exercise will give you an indication of what more can be done.*

| TRANSPARENCY                                                                                                                                                           |  | SCORE |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|-------|
| <b>1. <u>Service user information</u></b>                                                                                                                              |  |       |
| ➤ <i>Develops information for service users on the content of services, costs, application process, timescales, decision-making criteria and complaints procedure.</i> |  |       |
| ➤ <i>Publicises service user information and ensures all potential service users have information points and easy access.</i>                                          |  |       |
| ➤ <i>Ensures service user satisfaction through reviews of experiences and listening to feedback.</i>                                                                   |  |       |
| <b>2. <u>Procedures for strengthening transparency</u></b>                                                                                                             |  |       |
| ➤ <i>Establishes clear guidelines and training for all local officials involved in decision-making.</i>                                                                |  |       |
| ➤ <i>Establishes clear mechanisms for auditing and scrutinising the application of procedures.</i>                                                                     |  |       |
| ➤ <i>Ensures conflicts of interest are declared and steps taken to ensure these do not influence decision-making.</i>                                                  |  |       |
| ➤ <i>Ensures complaint handling is independent and does not disadvantage those making the complaint.</i>                                                               |  |       |

<sup>8</sup> These standards are set out in detail in the Council of Europe's Public Ethics Benchmark; this tool can be used, through self-assessment, training programmes or peer review, to improve the ethical environment - and therefore performance - of your local authority.

| ZERO TOLERANCE FOR CORRUPTION                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |  | SCORE |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|-------|
| <b>3. <u>Communication</u></b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |  |       |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ Ensures effective internal communications so that all local officials are up to date on service developments and procedures.</li><li>➤ Keeps local officials and local people well-informed about its policies and performance, and consults them on its plans.</li><li>➤ Ensures all local officials are contactable and have the interests of local people at heart.</li></ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |  |       |
| <b>4. <u>Public procurement</u></b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |  |       |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ Manages public procurement efficiently and effectively, in a way that delivers value for money for the local authority and its citizens.</li><li>➤ Uses pre-set selection criteria and ensures decisions to award contracts are based on merit.</li><li>➤ Has procedures to declare conflicts of interest, gifts and hospitality and ensures these do not influence decision-making.</li><li>➤ Reviews procedures and outcomes to minimise fraud and comply with best practice.</li></ul>                                                                                                                                    |  |       |
| <b>5. <u>Cash handling</u></b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |  |       |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ Establishing robust procedures which separate authorisation from making payments.</li><li>➤ Trains and rotates staff to minimise opportunities for theft and fraud.</li><li>➤ Keeps appropriate records to ensure authorisation and payments can be tracked.</li></ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |  |       |
| CITIZEN PARTICIPATION                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |  | SCORE |
| <b>6. <u>Consultation and decision-making</u></b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |  |       |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ Strong local democratic representation.</li><li>➤ Keeps citizens informed; requests, listens and responds to local views, and welcomes feedback on users' experience of services.</li><li>➤ Creates opportunities for local participation in planning and the design of services.</li><li>➤ Develops neighbourhood bodies to ensure citizen participation in local decision-making.</li><li>➤ Builds strong partnerships (egg for service delivery) with local organisations, with other tiers of Government.</li><li>➤ Creates opportunities for local organisations to contribute to effective local governance.</li></ul> |  |       |

| <b>PROFESSIONALISM</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |  | <b>SCORE</b> |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|--------------|
| <b>7. <u>Recruitment, training and promotion</u></b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <i>Develops recruitment and selection procedures to ensure appointments and promotions are based on merit.</i></li> <li>➤ <i>Drafts job description and employee specifications for all posts.</i></li> <li>➤ <i>Provides effective induction training for all local officials which includes ethics and anti-corruption.</i></li> <li>➤ <i>Provides on-going training for local officials to ensure they are competent and knowledgeable about their roles and responsibilities.</i></li> <li>➤ <i>Reviews the implementation and outcomes of recruitment, training and promotion procedures and makes improvements based on that.</i></li> </ul> |  |              |

| <b>ACCOUNTABILITY</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |  | <b>SCORE</b> |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|--------------|
| <b>8. <u>Financial decision-making</u></b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <i>Provides, citizens, NGO and businesses with information on local authority finances and expenditure.</i></li> <li>➤ <i>Ensures all decisions can be justified in terms of merit, value for money and / or the interests of the local authority and its citizens and stakeholders.</i></li> <li>➤ <i>Ensures complaints and appeals procedures are well publicised and easy to access.</i></li> <li>➤ <i>Ensure decisions are subject to robust audit procedures.</i></li> </ul> |  |              |

| <b>LEADERSHIP</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |  | <b>SCORE</b> |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|--------------|
| <b>9. <u>Promoting ethical behaviour</u></b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <i>Develops a plan to promote ethics and anti-corruption in the local authority.</i></li> <li>➤ <i>Sets improvement targets for ethics and anti-corruption and reviews how well they are being achieved.</i></li> <li>➤ <i>Defines responsibility for ethics advice, training and monitoring.</i></li> <li>➤ <i>Benchmarks ethics and anti-corruption procedures and actions with other organisations.</i></li> <li>➤ <i>Embeds ethics and anti-corruption in the activities, plans and decision-making of the municipality.</i></li> </ul> |  |              |

## 8. Citizen participation

Extending and deepening citizen participation in the work of local government and the development of their community is perhaps one of the more difficult challenges faced by the local authority's leadership. At the same time, this challenge is the one that holds perhaps the greatest potential for impact.

The last chapter looked at the importance of transparency and accountability in a local authority, in particular if it wanted to engage the community. But there is a deeper question: Apart from ensuring an effective electoral process, **why should a local authority pay attention to citizen participation?**

*Citizens have a right to have their say in decisions that affect them, particularly those that have a broad and long term impact and are difficult to reverse.*

It is possible to argue that participation is a good thing in itself, that:

- This is the **meaning of citizenship** and the foundation of local democracy.
- This is what **local accountability** implies.
- This is what underpins the **legitimacy** of the local authority's decisions and actions.
- This is what creates **confidence in local government** among the community.

*Dialogue between citizens and locally elected representatives strengthens the legitimacy and effectiveness of local democratic institutions.*

But there are other, more pragmatic reasons:

- Listening to the views of service users - both actual and potential – helps a local authority design more effective services as they will be more responsive to local needs and priorities.
- Consultation with local people will enable a local authority to formulate more realistic policies and strategies.
- When goals are shared between the local authority and the community and their relationship is underpinned by trust, other stakeholders are more likely to contribute in their own ways; this creates synergy.

- *Exploration of possible partnership-working with local businesses and NGOs to meet specific challenges will be more likely to harness the support of the local community towards shared goals.*
- *Knowing that plans and reports will be presented in the public domain - and be open to challenge and discussion - creates a powerful incentive among staff and elected members to deliver good performance in priority areas.*

However, there are conditions for effective participation; it will not happen by itself. Citizens have to be aware of the role of the local authority, how it functions, what it can achieve and the parameters within which it works. **This obliges the local authority to invest in citizen awareness.**

***Better to listen and say 'No!' than not to have listened at all.***

At the same time, citizens must want to participate. In countries with a centralised tradition, this may be a particular challenge. "Local government is not their job", they would often say of themselves. "Let the officials do what they are paid to do."

| <b>PRINCIPLES OF CITIZENS' PARTICIPATION</b> |                                                                                                                                                            |
|----------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| ✓                                            | <b><i>Approach citizen participation on a comprehensive and constructive basis.</i></b>                                                                    |
| ✓                                            | <b><i>Ensure that the policy is embedded throughout the local authority and reaches out to all categories of citizens and community organisations.</i></b> |
| ✓                                            | <b><i>Give citizens the right to have access to clear and comprehensive information and to have a say in major decisions affecting their future.</i></b>   |
| ✓                                            | <b><i>Seek new ways of enhancing the idea of citizenship and promoting a culture of democratic participation.</i></b>                                      |
| ✓                                            | <b><i>Develop the community's awareness and sense of democratic responsibility.</i></b>                                                                    |
| ✓                                            | <b><i>Give importance to a professional approach to communications between the local authority and its stakeholders.</i></b>                               |
| ✓                                            | <b><i>Give opportunities to citizens to express their views and expectations and to respond appropriately.</i></b>                                         |
| ✓                                            | <b><i>Delegate authority where possible, giving priority to empowerment over rules.</i></b>                                                                |
| ✓                                            | <b><i>Search out and introduce best practice in citizen participation.</i></b>                                                                             |

**Participation requires time and effort.** This obliges the leadership of the local authority to go that extra step in explaining why participation is important and would be welcome. This is a particularly important for the role of elected representatives.

**Citizens must trust their local authority if they are to participate in its work.** Disappointments, conflicts of interests and other inevitable difficulties must be managed. The local authority must be transparent in its procedures and decision-making and strong enough to provide honest feedback.

Citizens must believe that the local authority listens to their views; they must feel that their contribution is valued.

**To demonstrate its importance, the leadership should draw up a citizen participation policy, setting out the principles (see box above) and techniques to which the local authority is committed and in which it is willing to invest.**

Where a local authority applies such a policy, it is building up the '**social capital**' of the community; it is this social capital that provides the foundation for economic, social, cultural and environmental 'well-being'. This is the very purpose of local government.

The **CLEAR model** offers an approach to citizen participation. It identifies 5 factors that underpin the response of citizens to participation (see below).

| <b>THE C.L.E.A.R MODEL OF CITIZEN PARTICIPATION<sup>9</sup></b>                              |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b><i>C - Can do (citizens have the resources and knowledge to participate)</i></b>          |
| <b><i>L - Like to (citizens have a sense of belonging that reinforces participation)</i></b> |
| <b><i>E - Enabled to (citizens are provided with the opportunity for participation)</i></b>  |
| <b><i>A - Asked to (citizens are mobilised through local authorities and NGOs)</i></b>       |
| <b><i>R - Responded to (citizens see evidence that their views were considered)</i></b>      |

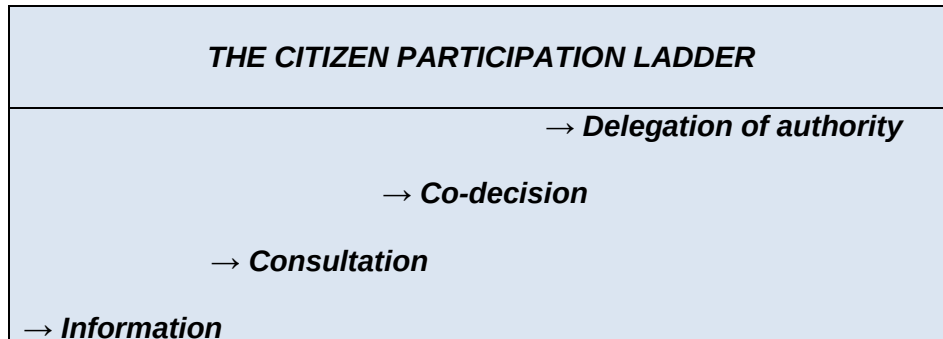
The CLEAR model provides a standard against which the leadership can test their citizen participation policy and practice through, for example, surveys and discussion groups.

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<sup>9</sup> Prepared by Gerry Stoker for the Council of Europe

### **Techniques for citizen participation**

Apart from voting in elections, the **public meeting** has been the main method of public participation. These are often poorly attended; they can generate unconstructive criticism and party-political prejudices, or they become one-way flows of information.



The public meeting does not have to be like that. If it is properly prepared and managed - if its purpose is clear, procedures agreed and opportunities for inter-action created - the public meeting can be constructive.

But there are many other ways of engaging local people and organisations; the choice partly depends on the depth of engagement being sought, the deepest being the delegation of authority to neighbourhood groups (see box above).

An effective local authority will use **many different techniques** at all these levels in the course of the year. The leadership will also ensure that:

- *Staff and elected representatives will be **trained** to use the techniques appropriate to the situation.*
- *The local authority will have the necessary expertise to design and manage a survey, for example, to produce **reliable data**.*
- ***Information will be managed** so that the impact of citizen participation on the work of the local authority can be clearly seen.*
- ***Feedback will be given**, so that citizens can see that they were listened to.*

It is important to distinguish between **two types of dialogue** between the local authority and citizens:

- a) *When there is a specific **issue to solve**, the local authority might want to discuss particular options and seek local views in coming to a decision; this process can be managed on an ad hoc basis within a tight framework and will help to generate agreement and support.*
- b) *On the other hand, an effective local authority will also want to **institutionalise its communications** with citizens. This kind of public*

## **TECHNIQUES FOR CITIZEN PARTICIPATION**

- *Include citizenship in the school curricula - as a subject and an activity.*
- *Make an assessment of the current efficiency and effectiveness of citizen participation and identify further action to be taken.*
- *Delegate responsibilities within the community (eg through neighbourhood committees, local offices, local budgets) with regard to schools, nurseries, crime, care facilities, health centres, sport, recreation, parks, housing management, cultural activities.*
- *Establish mechanisms for volunteers to contribute to the community.*
- *Establish codes of conduct for staff and elected representatives and ensure compliance with high standards of public ethics.*
- *Publish agendas of key meetings; make key meetings open to the public; introduce question and answer sessions; publish minutes of key meetings, including decisions taken; publish progress reports.*
- *Set up information offices, documentation centres, public databases.*
- *Simplify administrative procedures, making clear who is in charge of particular matters of relevance, and reduce their costs to the citizen.*
- *Design and implement a more professional communications policy.*
- *Run seminars, roundtables, citizens' juries, user surveys, opinion polls to make citizens aware of particular issues and listen to their views.*
- *Make full use of information and communication technologies (eg interactive websites) along with traditional methods (eg leaflets, bulletins, newspapers).*
- *Create the opportunity for citizens' initiatives and ensure a constructive approach to citizens' complaints.*
- *Provide grants to, and establish partnerships with, NGOs where they can extend the provision of public services.*
- *Establish regular forums with businesses, NGOs, village associations.*
- *Establish a 'youth council' to ensure the views of young people are heard; encourage youth associations to develop initiatives of community value.*
- *Undertake an annual 'Citizen Satisfaction Survey' to see how well the local authority is seen to be performing by local people and to identify further action to be taken.*

*dialogue is not so much about discussing policy options and making compromises between positions. Rather, it is a **creative dialogue** through which valued outcomes can be achieved as all stakeholders adjust their views and together consider new options in the light of their growing understanding.*

**Such a creative dialogue can transform the relationship between the local authority and local people. The leadership needs to create a safe space in which such a creative dialogue can be held.**

In order to ensure consistency across all local authorities, the leadership of local authorities might ask their Local Government Association to design and manage an annual **Citizen Satisfaction Survey**. This will allow local authorities to:

- ✓ *Compare their own results over the years so that they can track progress and identify problems that need to be tackled.*
- ✓ *Compare their results with those of other local authorities so that best practices can be identified.*

***Is your local authority seen as a good place to live and work?***

Every few years, the leadership of a local authority should be ready to assess the scope and quality of its citizen participation. This can be done by using the '**Municipal Compass Benchmark**', adapted and adopted by the Council of Europe. A Peer Review using this tool can be a powerful way of bringing about improvements in order to reach a standard of excellence.

| <b>MUNICIPAL COMPASS BENCHMARK: HEADINGS</b>                     |                                     |
|------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| <b>1. Democratic control, transparency and accountability</b>    | <b>5. Controlling and reporting</b> |
| <b>2. Citizen access and user orientation</b>                    | <b>6. HR development</b>            |
| <b>3. Cooperation between politicians and the administration</b> | <b>7. Innovation policy</b>         |
| <b>4. Decentralisation of management</b>                         | <b>8. Community partnerships</b>    |

## **9. Continuous improvement**

There are perhaps eight core areas – the foundations of organisation quality - where the leadership will want to ensure that modern skills and attitudes are applied so that improvement is continuous in the search for excellence, that

the organisation is integrated, and that one or two aspects of the organisation do not drag down the rest.

These core areas are:

- *The sense of direction*
- *Focus on results*
- *Engagement and development of staff and elected representatives*
- *Engagement of local people*
- *Management by process*
- *Continuous learning, innovation and improvement*
- *Partnership development*
- *Transparency and accountability*

These areas are elaborated further in the **Route Map** below. Each box reflects one of the foundations for excellence within the local authority. How well does your local authority perform against the criteria in each box?

However, you will notice that the criteria in each box affect, and are affected by, criteria in other boxes. This reflects the integrated nature of any organisation. Any change initiative that focuses only on one box is likely to fail because it does not take into account the integrated nature of the organisation. To succeed, a change initiative must identify those linked factors in the other boxes and take action across the board.

Continuous improvement starts with **continuous learning** by staff and elected representatives. This is essential if the local authority is to manage effectively within a changing environment, strengthen its organisation and deliver ever higher levels of performance.

Learning comes from experience, from each other, and from seeking out best practice. Staff and elected representatives must be encouraged to reflect critically on their own experience.

**Good leadership facilitates self-assessment and learning;** it unlocks potential that has not been achieved by command and control. This is a strategy of delivering better performance through learning rather than, for example, through imposed targets.

***An effective local authority values learning for all its staff and elected representatives and understands that real change comes from within.***

To learn, people have to **feel good** about themselves, **feel confident** in their capabilities and be willing to **take a risk** to deliver change.

**This means challenging the status quo.** Challenging questions allow the leadership to reflect, learn, and perhaps change course.

The key lies in how a learning strategy is introduced. Some methods – eg 360 degree feedback – are simple but powerful. Even if some initiatives to create a learning organisation are introduced, how can the momentum be sustained?

| <b>ELEMENTS OF A LEARNING APPROACH</b>                                                |                  |                                                                                                                 |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1                                                                                     | Space            | <i>Giving space to people for learning and responsible experiment.</i>                                          |
| 2                                                                                     | Big picture      | <i>Explaining the strategic context of work and plans.</i>                                                      |
| 3                                                                                     | Feedback         | <i>Seeking and sharing comments on strategies in the light of their implementation.</i>                         |
| 4                                                                                     | Participation    | <i>Facilitating participation while ensuring decisiveness.</i>                                                  |
| 5                                                                                     | Framework        | <i>Creating a climate where existing working methods can be challenged and changed in a coordinated manner.</i> |
| 6                                                                                     | Experiment       | <i>Enabling responsible experiment and the sharing of learning and good practice.</i>                           |
| 7                                                                                     | Reflection       | <i>Encouraging a 'solve and learn' rather than a 'blame and punish' approach to problem-solving.</i>            |
| 8                                                                                     | Personal example | <i>Personally and visibly setting an example of a learning attitude and approach.</i>                           |
| <b>Ask yourself: How well do you encourage a learning approach in your community?</b> |                  |                                                                                                                 |

### **The challenges**

We are faced with 2 challenges:

- The **personal challenge** of leading and behaving differently to stimulate learning leading to improvement – within ourselves and among those around us.
- The **organisational challenge** of using learning to introduce change in the local authority on a systematic and continuous basis.

### **On a personal basis, can we...**

- ❖ Introduce the concept of mentoring and coaching?
- ❖ Put time aside for our own learning?
- ❖ Build learning reviews into projects and meetings?
- ❖ Encourage and seek feedback on our own actions?
- ❖ Acknowledge our own learning in public – especially where we have been wrong?

All of these will **signal** the importance of learning as a value and as a foundation for improving performance.

But personal example is not enough to transform the whole local authority. **Processes and practices** need to be established that enshrine learning leading to improved performance throughout the organisation.

**On an organisational basis, can we ...**

- ❖ *Create development opportunities for everyone, whatever their level in the organisation?*
- ❖ *Make learning and personal development a key aspect of performance appraisals?*
- ❖ *Create feedback loops based on performance reviews as a matter of daily practice in order to see what can be improved?*
- ❖ *Use performance management in a way that teaches people how to use resources (eg time, expertise and connections) more effectively?*
- ❖ *Ensure that good practice in one part of the local authority reaches all other parts as and when it is needed?*
- ❖ *Encourage personal responsibility to search out best practice from other local authorities and from other organisations?*

## ROUTE MAP FOR A MODERN MUNICIPALITY<sup>10</sup>

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b><u>SENSE OF DIRECTION</u></b><br><ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Identifies challenges for future</li> <li>- Defines vision and values</li> <li>- Facilitates clarity of purpose</li> <li>- Creates collective purpose</li> </ul>                                                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | <b><u>FOCUS ON RESULTS</u></b><br><ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Strong belief in producing results for all stakeholders</li> <li>- Achieves good outcomes for local people and organisations</li> <li>- Creates good working environment for staff and elected representatives</li> </ul>     |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | <b><u>INVOLVING AND DEVELOPING STAFF</u></b><br><ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Creates training opportunities for all staff</li> <li>- Seeks to realize potential of all staff, teams and organisation</li> <li>- Involves staff in generating improvements</li> <li>- Creates culture of shared values and trust</li> </ul> |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| <b><u>ENGAGING LOCAL PEOPLE</u></b><br><ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Asks service users to define service quality</li> <li>- Regularly surveys citizen needs and expectations</li> <li>- Satisfies existing users through good performance</li> <li>- Attracts new service users</li> </ul> |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | <b><u>MANAGING BY PROCESSES</u></b><br><ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Thinks about services as horizontal processes</li> <li>- Specifies value chains from demand to provision</li> <li>- Identifies processes to be improved</li> <li>- Improves processes to generate added value</li> </ul> |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | <b><u>LEARNING, INNOVATION AND IMPROVEMENT</u></b><br><ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Adopts policies of systematic improvement across organisation</li> <li>- Reflects on, and evaluates, performance for learning purposes</li> <li>- Disseminates information, good practice and learning</li> </ul>                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| <b><u>PARTNERSHIP DEVELOPMENT</u></b><br><ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Understands need for network of partners</li> <li>- Builds strong partnerships to deliver services</li> <li>- Shares knowledge with partners</li> <li>- Makes good use of IMC to strengthen capacity</li> </ul>      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | <b><u>TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY</u></b><br><ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Adopts ethical policies and approaches</li> <li>- Makes information available</li> <li>- Emphasises local accountability</li> <li>- Ensures transparent decision-making</li> </ul>                             |

<sup>10</sup> Drawn from A Manager's Guide to Leadership by Pedler, Burgoyne, Boydell

## SECTION 3     DEVELOPING LEADERSHIP SKILLS, ATTITUDES AND PRACTICES

New leadership attitudes, skills and practices (see box below) are needed to enable a local authority to strengthen and extend its provision of public services and good governance.

They are needed to transform a local authority into a modern organisation that knows where it is going and what it needs to get there.

They are needed to harness the support, expertise and resources of staff, elected representatives and the wider community in a common purpose.

| MODERN LEADERSHIP SKILLS                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>Exercising power</i></li><li>• <i>Giving purpose</i></li><li>• <i>Managing risk</i></li><li>• <i>Networking</i></li><li>• <i>Working in partnership</i></li><li>• <i>Delegating</i></li><li>• <i>Communicating</i></li><li>• <i>Promoting learning</i></li><li>• <i>Sharing success</i></li><li>• <i>Building effective teams</i></li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>Facilitating</i></li><li>• <i>Challenging the status quo</i></li><li>• <i>Innovating</i></li><li>• <i>Harnessing energy</i></li><li>• <i>Managing change</i></li><li>• <i>Managing criticism</i></li><li>• <i>Wanting to improve</i></li><li>• <i>Recognising need</i></li><li>• <i>Seeking excellence</i></li><li>• <i>Listening</i></li></ul> |

**Skills in themselves are not enough.** They need to be underpinned by the **right attitudes**. For example, communicating needs to be supported by the readiness to listen; delegating authority to staff needs to be backed by trust.

**Skills and attitudes also need to be put into practice:**

- *Good communications skills and a positive attitude to listening need to be realised through mechanisms such as a Communications Strategy that will harness them in the interests of the community.*
- *The will to work in partnership with local organisations will be demonstrated by both by informal dialogue and regular forums between senior managers and the business and voluntary sectors where shared challenges can be identified and joint action planned.*

### 1.     Moving to a modern mindset

The starting point is to develop the right leadership mindset. This will need a change from the old model that was current in earlier industrial and communist times, where the focus was more on hierarchy and control.

### MOVING TO A MODERN MINDSET

| ASPECT                  | OLD MODEL                                                                   | ASSESSMENT<br>1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9-10 | NEW MODEL                                                                   |
|-------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Management              | Control things and people; input measures                                   |                                    | Control things; empower people; outcome measures                            |
| Structure               | Hierarchical; bureaucratic                                                  |                                    | Flatter; boundary-less; flexible                                            |
| Motivation              | External; carrot and stick                                                  |                                    | Internal; whole person                                                      |
| Performance appraisal   | External; finding faults                                                    |                                    | Self-evaluation; 360%; win-win; supportive                                  |
| Information             | Short term; limited                                                         |                                    | Long and short term; accessible; performance results clear                  |
| Communications          | Top down                                                                    |                                    | Open: up / down / horizontal                                                |
| Culture                 | Rules; protecting position; risk avoidance; lack of trust                   |                                    | Based on principles and values; trust; seeking excellence                   |
| Budgeting               | Top down; based on last year                                                |                                    | Open; flexible; harnesses external resources; based on need and opportunity |
| Training, development   | Lectures; skill-oriented; explanatory; teaching-focused                     |                                    | Action-oriented; whole person; learning-focused                             |
| Staff                   | Expense; focus on efficiency; full capacity not utilised                    |                                    | Investment; empowered                                                       |
| Staff voice             | Generally unimportant; personal initiative difficult                        |                                    | Strategic contribution; complementary teams; personal responsibility        |
| Customer / citizen care | Little concern; views not sought; seen only as recipient of public services |                                    | Real test for effectiveness; contributes to service planning and review     |
| Accountability          | Upwards to the boss; blame the workers                                      |                                    | Upwards and also downwards to the community; take personal responsibility   |

Ask yourself: Where do you and your local authority stand on each spectrum between the old and the new model; what might you do to move towards a modern mindset? (Note that a score of 10 on a specific spectrum may not necessarily reflect the best balance for specific circumstances.)

The model sets out a set of spectrums between the old and new mindsets. It gives an opportunity to identify a '**direction of travel**'. If we can recognise where we are on the spectrum, we can see whether, and how, we might move closer to the new model.

However, it would be wrong to think that good leadership is always at the new mindset end where the assessment is 10. For example:

- *Some rules are necessary, especially if poor discipline is not to be met with impunity.*
- *An authoritarian approach may be more effective in a situation of urgency, such as those that the fire service faces regularly or when a poorly-performing local authority has to be transformed.*
- *New staff must have time to develop their knowledge, skills and attitudes before they are made fully accountable.*

While movement towards to the new model is important, the leadership challenge is to find the right **balance**.

Another way of looking at the issue of mindset is to find the balance between the manager's need to control and the staff's capacity to take the initiative.

|                                          |             |                   |                      |
|------------------------------------------|-------------|-------------------|----------------------|
| <b>Staff capacity to take initiative</b> | <b>High</b> | <b>Leadership</b> | <b>High turnover</b> |
|                                          | <b>Low</b>  | <b>Lethargy</b>   | <b>Autocracy</b>     |
|                                          |             | <b>Low</b>        | <b>High</b>          |
| <b>Manager's need to control</b>         |             |                   |                      |

The old mindset was typically represented in the bottom right quadrant (autocracy). Here, the manager's attitude is more about disempowering staff, using his/her position to give directions, not listening to staff, ignoring their need for information and communications, and showing little concern about the real needs of local people and organisations.

This was facilitated by the willingness of staff to accept this situation and not challenge the status quo. After all, compliance may be the only pathway to promotion. But competent staff do not like autocracy and will tend to leave; the consequence may be high turnover.

To find ourselves in the top left quadrant (leadership), the manager needs to reduce his/her need to control and to create an environment where staff can take the initiative and make full use of their competence. This takes **courage and trust** – courage to share authority, trust in the staff to do a good job.

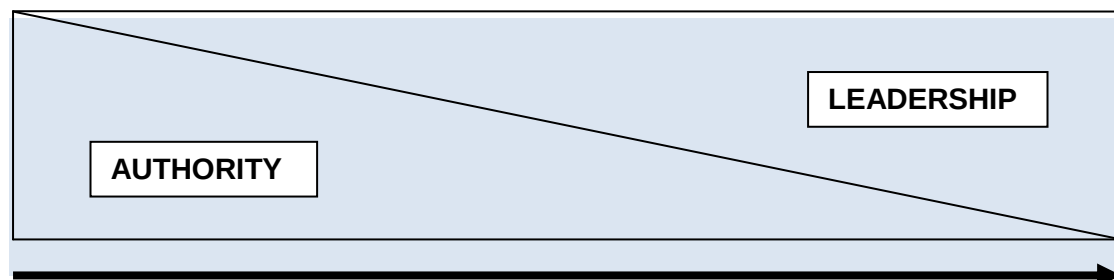
Staff will want to know that their manager will in principle support them when they need it.

**Leadership starts with recruiting competent staff and providing good opportunities for learning and responsibility.**

*What have I, as Mayor, done to make my staff more trustworthy?*

A Mayor with a modern mindset will look at the local authority in a different way. He/she will:

- ✓ *Define it more by a set of values and purposes than services and boundaries.*
- ✓ *Be ready to cross traditional boundaries to find the best solution to the challenges faced.*
- ✓ *Seek to build connections with other organisations based on choice and mutual advantage rather than control.*
- ✓ *Seek commitment rather than coercion as the base for driving forward.*



*This is the paradox: the more the Mayor uses leadership, the less he/she will need to use the authority of position.*

## **2. Innovative thinking and driving change**

A major challenge for local authorities is to become more innovative about how they deliver good local government:

- *If local economic development is a priority, they need to find new ways of attracting the private sector to the area.*

- *If small local authorities are struggling to deliver good local government, they need to find new ways of working with each other to create better economies of scale and to share expertise.*
- *Where performance is poor, they need to find ways of changing the performance culture.*

**Becoming innovative does not just happen; the ground must be prepared.**

- *If staff are afraid of criticism from their managers every time they make a mistake, they will not want to experiment with new approaches; better to stay with what you know, even if it may not be very effective.*
- *Staff will need to be encouraged to actively search out best practice from other local authorities; learning from each other encourages improvement and innovation.*

#### **ENCOURAGING INNOVATION**

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>Learning to manage risks well</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Support from managers for taking risks</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Support from colleagues for trying new things</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Talking about the job and your practice</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Challenges from colleagues about your practice</i></li> <li>▪ <i>More experimenting, trying things out</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Being less critical and more appreciative of others' efforts</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Encouraging people with ideas</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Combining ideas, building on suggestions</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Benchmarking what others are doing</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Learning from mistakes</i></li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>Sharing knowledge of what works</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Setting up processes for gathering new ideas</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Inviting outsiders in; sending insiders out</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Putting idea generation on the meeting agenda</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Setting up little experiments</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Encouraging people to move around and change teams</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Encouraging job shadowing</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Making sure teams are made up of different sorts of people</i></li> <li>▪ <i>High diversity of staff</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Building networks and networking opportunities</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Trying out things that work elsewhere</i></li> </ul> |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

**Ask yourself: What can I do, in my leadership role, to increase my local authority's capacity to innovate?**

- *Achievement should be celebrated; this will make staff feel more confident and encourage them to try out new ways of doing things.*
- *Good communications will ensure that people are well informed about anything innovative and that good practice in one part of the organisation seeps through to the other parts.*

***Hierarchy and bureaucracy do not release the energies of staff.***

Action to encourage innovation is not so much technical as **cultural**. Staff must **want** to drive up their own standards of performance; they must want to improve the effectiveness of the local authority.

**These personal objectives also have to be seen to be important for the leadership if they are to have meaning for the staff.**

***Let us think more about what we can do for the community and less about what the local authority can do for us.***

Innovative thinking is key to driving change in a local authority. There are 8 key drivers of change in a typical local authority:

| <b>DRIVERS OF CHANGE</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b><i>Positive purpose</i></b></li> <li>• <b><i>Open to ideas</i></b></li> <li>• <b><i>Delegation to staff</i></b></li> <li>• <b><i>Opportunities for partnership</i></b></li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b><i>Engagement of community</i></b></li> <li>• <b><i>Focus on performance</i></b></li> <li>• <b><i>Seeking out best practice</i></b></li> <li>• <b><i>Recognition of achievement</i></b></li> </ul> |

It is useful to examine each of these. How well do you use these drivers in your local authority? What are the factors that support / hinder each driver?

**In any change strategy, it makes sense to seek to (a) strengthen the supporting factors and (b) reduce the hindering factors.**

### **3. The art of facilitation**

Facilitation is an important leadership strength:

- ✓ *It helps groups get their work done more effectively, especially in complex organisations like a local authority and in times of change.*
- ✓ *It helps to create a supportive environment, putting the position power of managers at the service of those delivering services.*

- ✓ *It helps individuals link up with others in professional situations.*

***Facilitation enables staff to work collaboratively rather than in isolation.***

Leadership as facilitation means encouraging people to share their perceptions of what needs to be done, to cooperate on tasks and to release the energies of each other. Its effect is seen in staff and elected representatives learning and acting more effectively both as individuals and as teams.

Leadership is frequently surrounded by different views and conflicts about what should or should not be done. These differences can be technical or political; they may be rational or irrational. They may derive from spending priorities with limited resources or they may be caused by personality conflicts. There are often two sides to an argument.

**Facilitation means facing up to these differences; it means providing a structure to encourage progress; it focuses on process.**

Consider the difference that leadership with facilitation can make:

| <b><i>LEADERSHIP IS:</i></b>                              | <b><i>LEADERSHIP WITH FACILITATION IS:</i></b>                              |
|-----------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| ▪ <i>Taking a long term view.</i>                         | ▪ <i>Helping people see their own future.</i>                               |
| ▪ <i>Concerned with values and moral purpose.</i>         | ▪ <i>Clarifying different values and creating common purpose.</i>           |
| ▪ <i>Articulating vision.</i>                             | ▪ <i>Relating the challenge to individuals in their work and attitudes.</i> |
| ▪ <i>Pointing out the challenge to be faced.</i>          | ▪ <i>Helping people clarify own hopes.</i>                                  |
| ▪ <i>Focused on the future, on innovation and change.</i> | ▪ <i>Helping people make sense of the new and consider alternatives.</i>    |
| ▪ <i>Seeking collaboration and commitment.</i>            | ▪ <i>Exploring opinions and commitment; seeking common ground.</i>          |
| ▪ <i>Giving work back.</i>                                | ▪ <i>Helping staff get work done together.</i>                              |
| ▪ <i>Listening to the hard questions.</i>                 | ▪ <i>Challenging assumptions.</i>                                           |
| ▪ <i>Moving towards conflict and difference.</i>          | ▪ <i>Showing people conflict is normal and resolution can be achieved.</i>  |
| ▪ <i>Seeking to serve and improve service to others</i>   | ▪ <i>Focusing staff on practical ways to deliver better services.</i>       |

***Ask yourself: How well do I, in my leadership role, use facilitation as a tool to improve performance. What more could I do?***

## 4. The art of delegation

When Mayors argue for decentralisation, they usually have in mind the transfer of powers and resources to their local authority under their control. But modern leadership puts high value on **even further decentralisation** - to managers, front-line staff and the community.

### **To managers and front-line staff**

Staff on the front line are in direct touch with service users and partner organisations. They have a good idea of what works and what does not. They know what is happening, where the obstacles are and how services could be improved. They are the real ambassadors of the local authority.

Administrative staff know where bureaucracy reduces their efficiency and effectiveness; they have ideas on how processes can be streamlined.

### **Giving more authority to managers and staff will have a big impact:**

- ✓ *It gives staff a sense of purpose.*
- ✓ *It gives staff a sense of responsibility.*
- ✓ *It creates space for creativity.*
- ✓ *It makes staff accountable.*
- ✓ *It harnesses the energy of staff.*

***The art of leadership is to bring out the leadership capacity of others.***

### **To the community**

**Many challenges require a solution that goes beyond the administrative boundaries of the local authority.** Some, like better public housing and use of land, may have their main impact at neighbourhood level; others, like job creation and environmental protection, require a regional perspective.

**The boundaries of the solution should, where it makes sense, be the same as the boundaries of the challenge:**

- ✓ A **Neighbourhood Committee**, with delegated responsibilities and resources and with proper mechanisms for accountability, might well do a better job at overseeing the tackling of local housing problems and the developing of local facilities than the local authority as a whole.
- ✓ An **Employment Forum** that brings neighbouring local authorities together with business representatives may be better linked to the wider business environment and more able to generate jobs and attract investment.

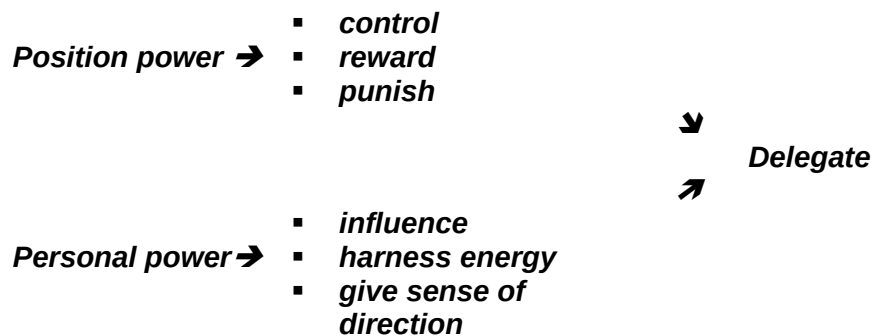
### Using power

Delegation is about how the leadership uses its power. Power comes from different sources. The Mayor and other managers have power that comes with their position and they can use it to control, direct, reward or punish staff.

On the other hand, everyone has power that comes from **within themselves**. This is the main power behind achievement and influence. It is this personal power that gives a strong sense of direction and creates moral authority; it is this power that is able to reach below the surface to have an impact on the attitudes and practices of staff.

**This is the power of leadership.**

**Delegating power within the local authority brings out the leadership in everyone.** It can help staff achieve more or do things differently; it allows them to use their full range of competences more effectively. In this way, the local authority is strengthened as a whole.



At the same time, such delegation must be accompanied by clear parameters, so that staff know the limits of their discretion and the responsibilities that go with delegation. For example, they need to:

- *Be clear about the outcomes that the local authority is seeking to achieve, about what they are accountable for.*
- *Be able to integrate their work with that of their colleagues and with other activities of the local authority.*
- *Make good use of the resources available to the local authority.*

***Position creates a more powerful individual;  
delegation creates a more powerful organisation.***

There are several important implications of delegating power, whether to the managers, staff or the community. There needs to be:

- Sufficient experience and expertise for using the power effectively - staff must be trustworthy; training may be necessary.

- Mechanisms of accountability - staff will need to know how they will be expected to account for their actions.
- Effective facilitation and support mechanisms - managers will need to maintain a supportive environment.

**The leadership needs to ensure that the organisation is conducive to the delegation of power.**

### **Managing upwards**

A key dimension of delegating power is 'managing upwards'. This is the way in which a staff member influences his/her manager to create an environment to maximise performance. At the same time, the manager has to be willing to be 'managed upwards'.

| <b>QUALITIES NEEDED FOR MANAGING UPWARDS</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>BY MANAGER</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | <b>BY STAFF</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Respect for staff / expertise</i></li> <li>• <i>Empathy</i></li> <li>• <i>Willingness to learn</i></li> <li>• <i>Readiness to harness energies of staff</i></li> <li>• <i>Readiness to delegate</i></li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Capacity for initiative</i></li> <li>• <i>Awareness of broad picture</i></li> <li>• <i>Loyalty to organisation</i></li> <li>• <i>Able to take responsibility</i></li> <li>• <i>Awareness of pressures on manager</i></li> </ul> |

### **Political management**

The use of leadership by the Mayor is particularly critical for political management. **The relationship between the Mayor and the Assembly is crucial to the effectiveness and legitimacy of the local authority.** Yet it is not difficult for a powerful Mayor to ignore the Assembly, especially if he/she is directly elected.

**How often does the Assembly do little more than debate and rubber-stamp decisions already made behind closed doors?**

**The Assembly best represents the interests of the community.** But this depends on how well individual Assembly members respond to the interests of local people and how much responsibility they are given (eg through Committee work). Competent members will have significant motivation and experience that can be harnessed for the good of the community.

***Leadership creates direction: from commanding to sharing, from self-interest to a sense of public service.***

The Mayor's leadership style will help to determine the effectiveness of the Assembly as a whole and of individual members as community representatives.

In an effective local authority, elected representatives will run regular ‘**surgeries**’ for the people in their communities; they will take an active interest in their neighbourhoods; they will support local initiatives. They will participate in Committees that initiate or scrutinise local bye-laws, monitor performance and hold senior management to account.

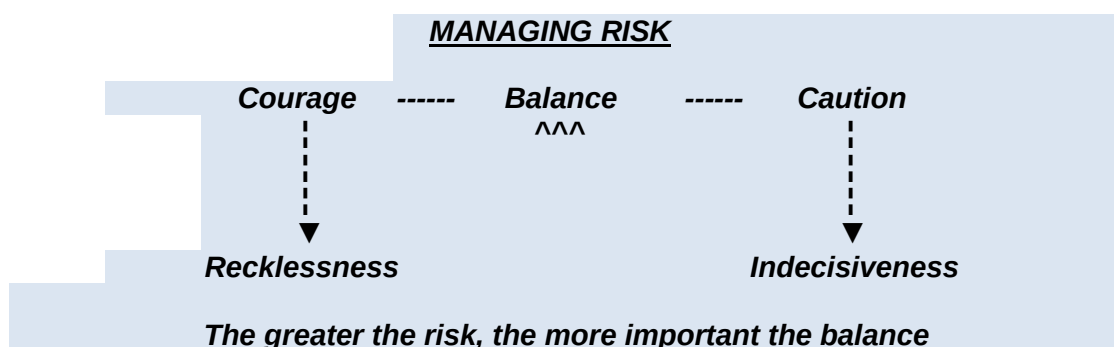
They will do this if they feel their participation has meaning, if they have the power to make a difference.

| <b>AREAS FOR POLITICAL SCRUTINY BY ASSEMBLY COMMITTEES</b>                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Strategies and priorities</b></li> <li>▪ <b>Financial and resource management</b></li> <li>▪ <b>Performance management</b></li> <li>▪ <b>Community leadership</b></li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Partnership working</b></li> <li>▪ <b>Organisation development</b></li> <li>▪ <b>Capacity building</b></li> <li>▪ <b>Communications</b></li> <li>▪ <b>Administration</b></li> </ul> |

Good leadership will ensure the **right balance of power** between the Assembly and the Mayor. An essential element of good local government is delegating power to the Assembly and ensuring proper training and support so that Assembly members can operate effectively.

## 5. Managing risk

Introducing change, delegating power and allowing innovation carries risk. **Good leadership will learn to manage risk** and make use of techniques such as risk assessment. Managing risk is about finding the right balance between courage and caution.



Leadership implies **courage**; but too much courage can lead to recklessness and potential disaster.

Courage has to be balanced with **caution** and with putting in place mechanisms and fall-back positions that will mitigate the risk; but too much caution may reflect a degree of indecisiveness and can encourage bureaucracy.

**The greater the courage required, the more necessary is the wise use of caution.**

### **Going public**

Of course, going public with information on performance and plans also creates risk. Consultation gives local people and organisations expectations about the outcome. Going public is the **bedrock of accountability**, but the leadership must have the courage to:

- *Live with the risk of criticism and being called to account.*
- *Expose decision-making processes to external scrutiny.*
- *Give potential ammunition to the political opposition.*

However, going public, except of course where confidentiality is required, is an essential characteristic of good leadership. For the public, accountability lies with the leadership. This means that, where the leadership has delegated power, staff must clearly understand their own accountability - that what they do and how they perform has an impact on the reputation and credibility of the leadership.

| <b>INFORMATION OF PUBLIC INTEREST</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ <b><i>Priorities and targets to be achieved</i></b></li><li>▪ <b><i>Performance against agreed targets</i></b></li><li>▪ <b><i>Reasons for non-achievement or over-achievement</i></b></li><li>▪ <b><i>Fundamental performance reviews where change is needed</i></b></li></ul> |

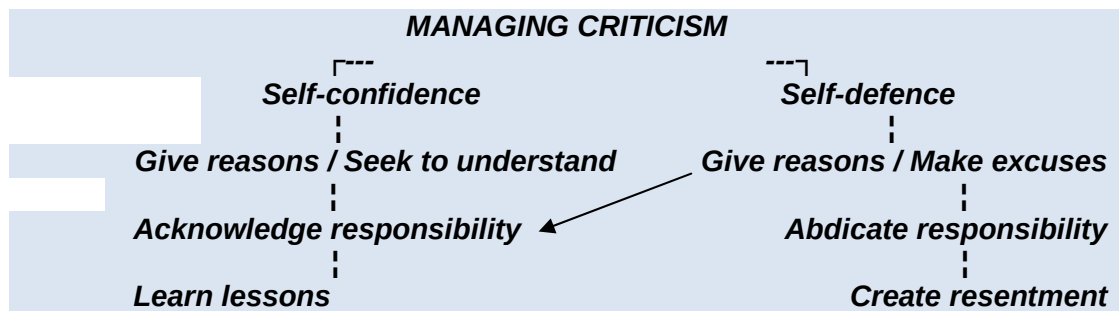
***Why not consult on, and publish, an annual Performance Report with both last year's results as well as plans for the next year and beyond?***

**Hence the importance of the competence and integrity of staff.**

### **Managing criticism**

Going public means that the leadership must be good at managing criticism. This is not easy; no one likes to be criticised. We can react to it with degrees of self-confidence or self-defence.

A leadership that lacks integrity and self-confidence will tend to defend itself by giving reasons that deflect, make excuses, abdicate responsibility and create resentment.



A leadership that is self-confident will seek to understand the criticism, give reasons that inform, acknowledge responsibility and learn lessons from the experience.

## 6. Seeking shared interests

To deliver good local governance, the leadership of a municipality has to give emphasis to managing relationships with all stakeholders. These stakeholders include local businesses, NGOs, village associations and neighbouring local authorities.

This requires the use of **influence and persuasion**, because these stakeholders lie beyond the limits of the Mayor's formal authority. Different approaches – indeed, different thinking – is required. Their support cannot be assumed; their perception of the challenges to be faced may well be different.

### Understanding interests and pressures

The first task is to understand the interests of the other stakeholders. This can be done through a **Stakeholder Analysis**. List the different stakeholders and identify their **different interests** by asking yourself questions like:

- *Why would they be interested in a relationship?*
- *What are their strengths? What could they contribute?*
- *What are their weaknesses? What would they fear?*
- *What would be the risks? How could they be managed?*

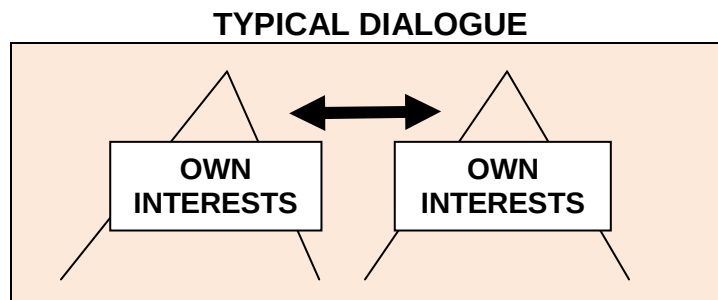
There will be forces in the environment that will **support** a relationship (eg political positions, financial pressures) and others that will be an **obstacle**. Use a **Force Field Analysis** to (a) identify these forces and (b) develop strategies to strengthen supporting forces and minimise hindering forces.

### Negotiations

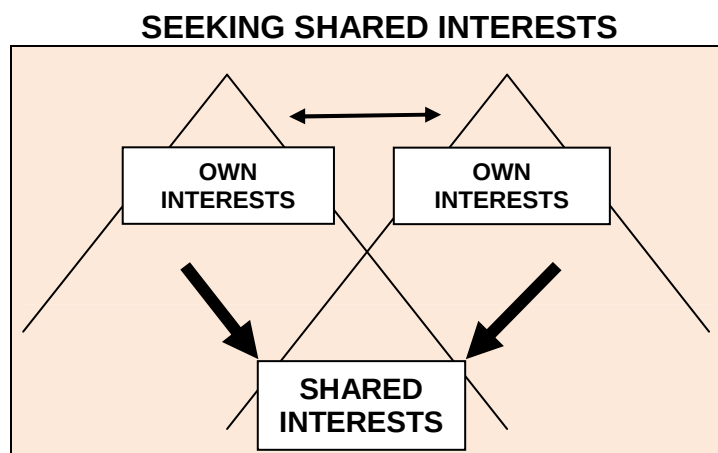
Normally, when we begin to negotiate with someone about doing something together, we start with our own agenda. Our own interests lie at the top of that agenda. 'What do I want out of this negotiation?' I ask myself. This is what dictates my planning for the meeting.

Likewise, the Mayor will be thinking of the interests of the local authority as an institution. But the person with whom the Mayor is negotiating also has

his/her own agenda and mindset. 'What is the hidden agenda of the Mayor?' he/she would ask.



So many negotiations both start like this and end like this, with little achieved. Modern leadership requires a new approach. Once the parties have made clear their specific interests, they need to seek out the interests that they share. This means that each has to understand the perspective of the other.



**Once the parties reach a level of communications focused on exploring shared interests, they will tend to move quickly into finding and agreeing solutions to challenges they share.**

## **7. Getting the perspective right**

People are faced with challenges every day. If they are to tackle them, they must first understand them. To properly understand them, they must make sure that they can see the challenge from different perspectives. Often, the solution is difficult because the problem is only seen from one perspective.

For example, the table below shows how a budget reduction can be seen from different perspectives, depending on where you are standing.

Each of us has a preference for operating at one or two of these levels. For example, different people in leadership positions may prefer to:

- *Spend time focusing on the macro perspective, because of a particular interest in, for example, how a new political appointments at national level might affect local government, perhaps to the detriment of actually giving leadership to the senior management team.*

#### **SEEING ALL THE PERSPECTIVES**

|                         |                                                                                           |
|-------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Macro</b>            | <b><i>Local government funding is affected by the downturn in the economy</i></b>         |
| <b>Local government</b> | <b><i>The Ministry of Finance reduces the budget settlement for local authorities</i></b> |
| <b>Organisation</b>     | <b><i>The budget impact on the local authority affects service provision</i></b>          |
| <b>Staff</b>            | <b><i>Staff need to be reduced due to smaller budget</i></b>                              |
| <b>Self</b>             | <b><i>Work priorities need to be reassessed in light of the new budget</i></b>            |

- *Operate at staff level, perhaps micro-managing without realising it.*
- *Focus on personal interests, perhaps at the expense of the public interest.*

In negotiating or solving problems, good leadership is about seeing a problem from all perspectives. It is no good complaining if your budget is reduced, without understanding the perspective of the Ministry of Finance and the macro-environment.

Many problems are considered only from a staff or an organisation perspective, but the solution may be found at a different level. For example, if the challenge is to engage local businesses more effectively, by drilling down through the different perspectives it may be easier to understand:

- ✓ *Why businesses might hesitate to work more closely with their local authority.*
- ✓ *What the local authority might need to do to attract local business to open their minds to the opportunities of partnership.*
- ✓ *How the managers working for the local authority and local businesses will react to closer engagement.*

By understanding the macro environment for business, you will better understand the financial pressures they face. By understanding the organisation perspective, you will better understand their fears (eg of paying more local taxes). By understanding the staff perspective, you will better understand the cultural changes necessary to ensure a sustainable working arrangement.

## 8. Dealing with conflict<sup>11</sup>

Local government is full of conflicts. A local authority has responsibilities in a territory in which people and groups live beside each other; they have different opinions and interests.

### **DIFFERENCES BETWEEN COMMUNITIES**

- *Histories and cultures*
- *Ideas of good and bad*
- *Perspectives on the local environment*
- *Expectations for local public services*

When they fail to communicate or interact in a way that recognises and resolves these daily differences, conflict is born. Conflicts damage the quality of life of the community by:

- *Reducing business opportunities.*
- *Taking the focus of the local authority away from other priorities.*
- *Hindering the effective running of local services.*

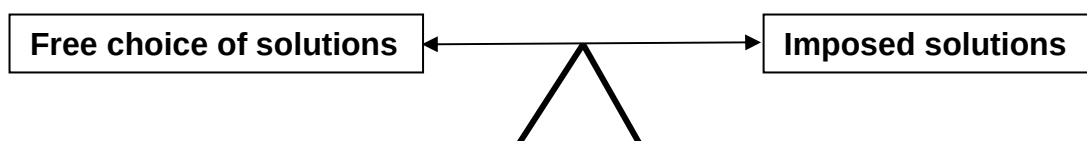
A community dispute often implies an understandable conflict among individuals or groups of stakeholders - for example, between:

- *A restaurant owner's satisfaction with clients and the neighbours' frustration with the noise.*
- *Developers of a run-down settlement and current residents.*
- *Stakeholders in NIMBY<sup>12</sup> cases.*

These are all rational conflicts among positions and interests. Conflicting parties are able to choose from among many different ways to resolve their dispute. They can:

- ✓ *Have discussions and come to some form of agreement.*
- ✓ *Ask a third party to assist them in their negotiations.*
- ✓ *Ask a third party to make a decision on their behalf.*
- ✓ *Use force to defend their claimed position or interest.*

**There is a continuum:**



<sup>11</sup> Drawn from papers by Dr Katalin Pallai

<sup>12</sup> NIMBY is the acronym for “Not In My Backyard” types of urban problem. These are conflicts when most stakeholders accept the need for intervention or implementation of a project (eg a road or incinerator), but none of them wants such a thing to be built close to his/her property.

**When the process moves away from the position of choice and direct communications among the parties, the power of the parties over the outcome weakens; at the same time, their level of satisfaction with the process and its result often declines.**

The process may also last a long time, engendering frustration; in the end, at least one party is likely to remain dissatisfied with the imposed solution.

The leadership of a local authority has a key role in resolving community conflict. They also need to deal with conflict on an everyday basis within the local authority – between political parties, departments, individuals. They must therefore understand key principles of conflict management.

**The leadership can choose whether their approach to conflict management should be soft, hard or principled.**

**CONFLICT MANAGEMENT STRATEGY**

|                          | <b>SOFT</b>                     | <b>HARD</b>                          | <b>PRINCIPLED</b>                           |
|--------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|
| <b>PARTICIPANTS</b>      | <i>Friends</i>                  | <i>Adversaries</i>                   | <i>Partners in solving the problem</i>      |
| <b>GOAL</b>              | <i>Agreement</i>                | <i>Victory</i>                       | <i>A fair, efficient, durable agreement</i> |
| <b>MAKES CONCESSIONS</b> | <i>Cultivates relationships</i> | <i>As condition for relationship</i> | <i>Separates people from problem</i>        |
| <b>POSITIONS</b>         | <i>Easy to change</i>           | <i>Stuck</i>                         | <i>Concentrates on interests</i>            |

A soft approach assumes that maintaining a warm relationship afterwards is important. A hard approach sacrifices the warmth of the relationship for the outcome. A principled approach seeks to identify common interests and a win-win solution for all parties.

Decisions on which approach to follow depend on the importance given to the level of trust between parties, and the readiness to confront or compromise. It is for the leadership to communicate closely with the parties, understand the nature of the conflict, identify the boundaries which may not be crossed and choose an appropriate strategy.

In managing the conflict, many leadership techniques will be valuable, such as ensuring all parties can see the different perspectives, strategic thinking, active listening and open communications.

## **9. Being emotionally intelligent<sup>13</sup>**

Leadership creates climate. If you go into the local authority in the morning in a bad mood, have you noticed how that affects the way the staff perform? Do

<sup>13</sup> This section is inspired by The New Leaders by Daniel Goleman

they keep their heads down to avoid eye contact? Does open communications suffer?

In this way, leadership can create a climate of harmony or disharmony. If the leadership is out-of-touch, the climate is also affected (see chart below).

| <b>EFFECTS OF CLIMATE</b>                                                                                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                    |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>HARMONY</b>                                                                                                                                                  | <b>DISHARMONY</b>                                                                                                                                                     | <b>OUT OF TOUCH</b>                                                                                                                                |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <b>Drives performance</b></li> <li>➤ <b>Facilitates team-working</b></li> <li>➤ <b>Promotes initiatives</b></li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <b>Low morale</b></li> <li>➤ <b>Conflict</b></li> <li>➤ <b>Short-termism</b></li> <li>➤ <b>Work not joined-up</b></li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <b>Offers no vision</b></li> <li>➤ <b>Risks anarchy</b></li> <li>➤ <b>Sense of irrelevance</b></li> </ul> |

You may not be aware of how you manage your emotions and the effect they can have in the work-place. There are many potential blockages to self-awareness, including natural defence mechanisms, delusions, rationalisation and lack of feedback. But good management of emotions has many benefits:

- ✓ *Keeps anger under control.*
- ✓ *Inspires people to give results.*
- ✓ *Gives meaning to work.*
- ✓ *Generates a feel-good factor.*
- ✓ *Welcomes humour.*
- ✓ *Facilitates empathy.*

The way you manage your emotions can have a various effects on climate. As with leadership styles, a key leadership skill is to find the right balance of emotions for a particular circumstance:

- *A sober mood helps manage difficult situations.*
- *Anxiety suggests that more attention should be paid.*
- *Anger can focus on urgent problems.*
- *Distress reduces the ability to respond.*
- *Laughter enhances the ability to respond..*

Research shows that high levels of emotional intelligence can make a significant difference to performance – as much as 70%. Yet many organisations continue to recruit, for example, mainly on the basis of mental ability and tend to ignore the emotional make-up of candidates.

EI lies at the core of good leadership. But it is not just a question of good leaders scoring high in specific EI factors; rather, they are able to find the right balance between the factors when approaching a specific situation. For

### SOME EFFECTS OF EI COMPETENCES

| <b>EI COMPETENCE</b>                                                                                                                                                                                       | <b>POSITIVE EFFECTS</b>                                                                                                                                                                      | <b>IMPACT OF WEAKNESS</b>                                                                                                                             |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>1. <u>Self-awareness</u></b><br>a) Reading own emotions<br>b) Knowing strengths and limitations<br>c) Self-confidence                                                                                   | <i>Facilitates intuition</i><br><i>Ability to see patterns and connections</i><br><i>Implicit learning</i><br><i>Sense of what works / doesn't work and what's important / not important</i> | <i>Sees things in black and white</i><br><i>Takes risks unnecessarily</i><br><i>Lacks sense of authority</i>                                          |
| <b>2. <u>Self-management</u></b><br>a) Self-control<br>b) Transparency (integrity, honesty, trustworthiness)<br>c) Adaptability<br>d) Search for achievement<br>e) Ready to take initiative<br>f) Optimism | <i>Able to justify action through reason</i><br><i>Encourages trust</i><br><i>Controls impulses</i>                                                                                          | <i>Controlled by emotions</i><br><i>Reduced capacity to think and focus</i>                                                                           |
| <b>3. <u>Social awareness</u></b><br>a) Empathy<br>b) Organisational awareness<br>c) Sense of service                                                                                                      | <i>Share wavelength</i><br><i>Express messages appropriately</i><br><i>Supports diversity</i>                                                                                                | <i>Unrealistic plans</i><br><i>Wrong assumptions</i><br><i>Failed expectations</i>                                                                    |
| <b>4. <u>Social management (ie relationships)</u></b><br>a) Inspiring<br>b) Influence<br>c) Developing others<br>d) Change catalyst<br>e) Conflict management                                              | <i>Generates authenticity</i><br><i>Gives purpose to friendliness</i><br><i>Facilitates focus on what is important</i>                                                                       | <i>Generates conflicts</i><br><i>Fails to get best out of staff</i><br><i>Generates distrust and low esteem</i><br><i>Encourages personal agendas</i> |

example, turning round a poorly performing organisation will require a different balance of EI factors than ensuring project targets are reached.

EI is a specific way of looking at ourselves and at other people. It is about being aware of, and managing, our own EI; it is also about being aware of, and managing, the impact we have on other people. Personal EI can be strengthened through learning. But if the leadership can begin to take account of EI in its every-day work, it should soon be able to raise the levels of performance in the local authority.

## SECTION 4 PERSONAL LEADERSHIP APPROACH<sup>14</sup>

### 1. Staff as persons

Good leadership seeks to draw out the **full potential** of staff, not just as individuals but as members of teams and of the local authority as a whole.

If the leadership wants to get staff to give their best, they must understand what **motivates** staff. What do staff seek through their work? What drives them?

#### **Job satisfaction**

One job satisfaction model for staff sets out five drivers:

- *Sustaining a sense of security*
- *Life – work balance*
- *Loving the work*
- *Opportunity for learning and further development*
- *Making a difference*

Competent staff who work in local authorities usually demonstrate a degree of balance between each of these drivers. **However, where salaries are low, authoritarian behaviour high, hierarchy dominant or corruption rife, sustaining a sense of security will become more important than performing well.**

***What are the forces in a local authority that prevent staff and elected representatives from reaching their full potential?***

However, it must be recognised that some staff, whatever the working conditions, may not even be interested in making a difference; some may have no interest in the very nature of the work; they may not even care about performance. We should ask ourselves why they are employed by the local authority in the first place.

**Incompetent, unmotivated staff have no place in local government.** Think of how the resources used to employ them might otherwise be used!

#### **Staff needs**

Another way to understand staff is to consider how they would like to be treated. If we were to put this question, a member of staff might reply:

- ✓ ***Use me creatively*** so that I can use my mind and my imagination; give me authority so that I can seek out best practice and really raise the standards of service for which I am responsible. I want to do the best job that I can.

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<sup>14</sup> This section has been inspired by Stephen R Covey's 'The 8<sup>th</sup> Habit'

- ✓ **Treat me with respect**; share information about the local authority and listen to my views on plans and priorities; use team-working effectively so that, by working together, my colleagues and I can achieve better results than by working apart. I want to feel part of the wider organisation.
- ✓ **Give me proper working conditions**, a stimulating environment and a fair level of pay that reflects my responsibilities. I can work more efficiently if proper use is made of information and communications technology, if I enjoy a degree of flexibility. I want the local authority to take pride in the conditions in which their staff work; this will reflect how much they value us.
- ✓ **Let me work on activities that I believe in**; I want work that makes a difference, that uses my talents, that reflects the values of the local authority; I want work that has meaning for me.

What are the obstacles in the way of staff meeting their deepest needs? Why are those obstacles there? Can they be reduced or removed completely? These are core questions for good leadership.

| <b>STAFF RESPONSE SPECTRUM</b> |                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|--------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b><u>Level 1</u></b>          | <b><i>At the worst level they will not accept the situation; they will rebel or quit.</i></b>                                                                                                                    |
| <b><u>Level 2</u></b>          | <b><i>If they decide not to rebel or quit, they may choose to obey but maliciously, taking every opportunity to undermine authority and performing at minimum level.</i></b>                                     |
| <b><u>Level 3</u></b>          | <b><i>Or they may be happy to obey, but that is as far as they will go; no extra effort in this case.</i></b>                                                                                                    |
| <b><u>Level 4</u></b>          | <b><i>Or they may obey cheerfully, because they see value in what they are doing and they might enjoy working with their colleagues.</i></b>                                                                     |
| <b><u>Level 5</u></b>          | <b><i>They might even develop a commitment to the work, putting in the extra effort and doing the work well.</i></b>                                                                                             |
| <b><u>Level 6</u></b>          | <b><i>At their best, they will be excited and creative about their work, speaking about it outside the office. They will seek to deliver the highest standards, seeking out better ways of doing things.</i></b> |

**Ask yourself: Could I design a survey to determine the average level of response at which most staff in my local authority operate?**

### **Staff responses**

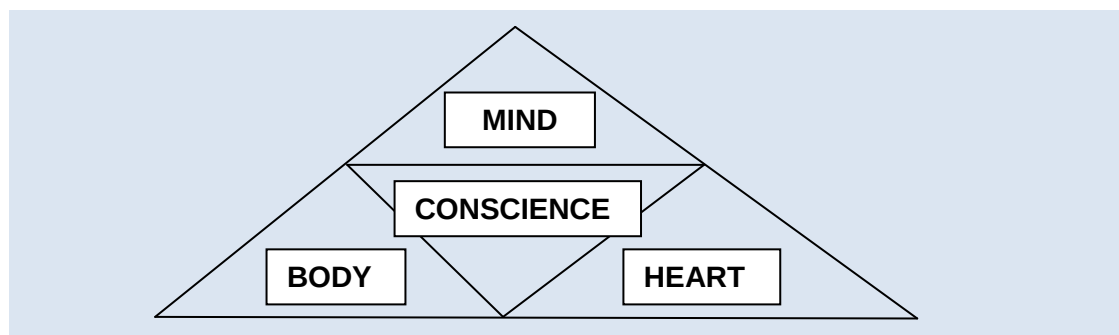
One way to assess how well the leadership is meeting the real needs of staff is to look at how they respond to particular situations. The '6-levels' model (see box above) provides a picture of the spectrum of response.

How do staff respond to situations in your own local authority? Good leadership will seek to recruit the right staff, create the right environment, offer the right training opportunities and provide the right leadership to enable them to work at Level 6.

### The whole person

Good leadership will think of staff as whole persons and will seek to provide work and create a work environment in which their range of personal needs is met. Competent staff seek work that is:

- **Intellectually challenging** (mind) and allows staff to be creative.
- **Emotionally rewarding** (heart), to which staff can commit themselves.
- **Meaningful and principled** (conscience), so that staff can believe in it.
- **Paid adequately** (body) in the light of the competence and integrity required and the respect which working in local government should be given.



Good leadership will seek to satisfy the wide range of needs that staff have if their potential is to be maximised. It will create a **work environment** that enables high standards to be achieved.

The key relationship that affects performance is that between managers and their staff. It is the manager who creates the local environment, who should provide the right support as necessary. It is difficult for staff to do their best when the relationship with their manager is poor.

Each member of staff will have expectations of his/her manager; likewise each manager will have expectations of each member of staff for which he/she is responsible (see chart below).

| <b>MUTUAL EXPECTATIONS</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>MANAGER GIVES</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | <b>STAFF GIVE</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <i>Work as agreed in JD, aligned to annual plan</i></li> <li>➤ <i>Clear guidance; parameters for personal initiative</i></li> <li>➤ <i>Means to achieve objectives</i></li> <li>➤ <i>Clear information; good communications</i></li> <li>➤ <i>Access to colleagues</i></li> <li>➤ <i>Attractive working environment</i></li> <li>➤ <i>Fair representation</i></li> <li>➤ <i>Appreciation for work done</i></li> <li>➤ <i>Opportunities to learn and increase expertise</i></li> <li>➤ <i>Problem-solving abilities</i></li> <li>➤ <i>Confidence in senior management</i></li> <li>➤ <i>Leadership</i></li> <li>➤ <i>Integrity</i></li> <li>➤ <i>Constructive performance appraisal</i></li> <li>➤ <i>Career advice</i></li> <li>➤ <i>Personal development support</i></li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <i>Execution of job to best of ability</i></li> <li>➤ <i>Focus on outcomes as well as outputs</i></li> <li>➤ <i>Honest self-assessment of achievement</i></li> <li>➤ <i>Good quality of work</i></li> <li>➤ <i>Sensible and honest use of local authority's reputation, time and resources</i></li> <li>➤ <i>Respect for rules</i></li> <li>➤ <i>Respect of colleagues</i></li> <li>➤ <i>Cooperation in developing policies and plans</i></li> <li>➤ <i>Team-working</i></li> <li>➤ <i>Confidence in management</i></li> <li>➤ <i>Transparency and integrity</i></li> <li>➤ <i>Creative thinking</i></li> <li>➤ <i>Motivation</i></li> </ul> |

## 2. Leadership as a choice

Some people fall more easily into a leadership position in a particular situation than others. It starts as a matter of choice, of feeling whether our own particular interests and capacities match what the situation requires, of having confidence in our own abilities.

***If we want to lead, we have to choose.***

**There are four dimensions that come together to give us our own leadership capacity:**

- *Passion* (What do I love doing?)
- *Ability* (What am I really good at?)
- *Demand* ((What do people want? What are they willing to pay for?)
- *Conscience* (Do I think it is right?)

Each time we are faced with a situation in which we might play a leadership role, we have to choose between:

- (a) *Taking on that leadership role.*
- (b) *Letting others take it on.*
- (c) *Walking away.*

**If we think others can do a better job of it, we should be happy with their leadership.**

But it often happens that, if we do not make that leadership choice, we have put ourselves at the mercy of others; we get a sense of being a victim; we feel we are controlled by systems. How easy it is for this to happen in a bureaucracy! **If we want to lead, we have to choose.**

But what happens if we do choose?

- *On the one hand, it **opens up possibilities** and strengthens us through the very experience of leading.*
- *On the other hand, it **frightens us** because we have to face and manage risk; because we become responsible for the outcome and accountable to the people who accepted us in the leadership role.*

If we already hold a responsible position, we have the power to get things done. **If we choose a leadership role, we enhance our power to change the situation, strengthen the organisation and make a real difference.** If we both have the position and choose leadership, we can turn a local authority into a really modern organisation that plays an important part in the life of the community.

| <b>THE RIGHT ENVIRONMENT FOR LEADERSHIP</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Responsibility for outcomes</b></li><li>• <b>Clear parameters for action</b></li><li>• <b>Trust in management support</b></li><li>• <b>Clear communications framework</b></li><li>• <b>Clear accountability framework</b></li></ul> |

Managers play a key role in facilitating the leadership abilities of their staff; they have to create the right environment to encourage staff to make that choice.

**For each of us, a key leadership skill is managing upwards - helping managers to create the right environment for us to work at our best. Choosing leadership is much easier when the environment is right.**

### **3. The power of moral authority**

A local authority is often known for its **values**. They may be written or unwritten; but even where they are written, they may not be followed.

A good local authority will be known, for example, to pay its bills on time, to listen to service users, to be fair in dealing with contractors, to treat its staff

well, to support its elected representatives, to stamp on corruption. This is the evidence of a local authority that operates according to its values.

***Moral authority gives strength to leadership.***

**The values of the local authority should be reflected in the personal values of its leadership.**

For example:

- *It is not possible to maximise the capacity and performance of the local authority without respecting staff and elected representatives and trusting them to do their best.*
- *It is unreasonable to expect honesty of staff and elected representatives if the leadership itself lacks integrity.*
- *It is not possible to get staff to give their best if appointments are unfair.*

| <b>THE VALUES OF GOOD LEADERSHIP IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT</b>                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                |                                                                                                                                                |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ <b>Fairness</b></li><li>▪ <b>Kindness</b></li><li>▪ <b>Respect</b></li><li>▪ <b>Trust</b></li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ <b>Honesty</b></li><li>▪ <b>Integrity</b></li><li>▪ <b>Service to others</b></li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ <b>The importance of a promise</b></li><li>▪ <b>Belief in people's ability to contribute</b></li></ul> |

By integrating these values into the way we exercise leadership, we develop **moral authority**. People learn to trust us; we become trustworthy. They realise that:

- *We are serious in what we are seeking to achieve.*
- *We have the interests of the community and the local authority at heart.*
- *We are not driven by self-interest.*
- *We keep our word.*

**Staff are more willing to share our purposes and do their best when they see our integrity. This is the power of moral authority.**

#### **4. Sources of personal power**

Personal power is derived from the combination of our four personal dimensions:

- ❖ **Vision** (What are we seeking to achieve?)
- ❖ **Discipline** (How are we seeking to achieve it?)
- ❖ **Passion** (Where do we find the strength to achieve it?)
- ❖ **Conscience** (Why are we seeking to achieve it?)

What are the characteristics of people with vision, discipline, passion and conscience (see box below)? What lies beneath these dimensions? What do they bring to leadership?

| <b>CHARACTERISTICS OF PERSONAL POWER</b> |                                                                                                                                                                           |                                                                                                                                                               |
|------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Vision</b>                            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>Crosses boundaries</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Sets expectations</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Gives hope</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Pioneers</i></li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>Thinks strategically</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Seeks the ideal</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Has long term perspective</i></li> </ul> |
| <b>Discipline</b>                        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>Is focused</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Takes initiatives</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Is tenacious</i></li> </ul>                                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>Is decisive</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Is competent</i></li> </ul>                                                         |
| <b>Passion</b>                           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>Shows courage</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Is optimistic</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Challenges the status quo</i></li> </ul>                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>Motivates others</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Is influential</i></li> </ul>                                                  |
| <b>Conscience</b>                        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>Takes responsibility</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Shows wisdom</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Is respectful</i></li> </ul>                            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>Is fair</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Has integrity</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Is ethical</i></li> </ul>                               |

**Ask yourself: Do I acknowledge my leadership strengths and weaknesses?**

Close working relationships between managers and their staff, along with the Performance Appraisal process, should facilitate the identification of these qualities in staff members. This should help managers to (a) fit staff to the roles and (b) fit roles to staff to make best use of their strengths.

## 5. Choosing the right leadership style

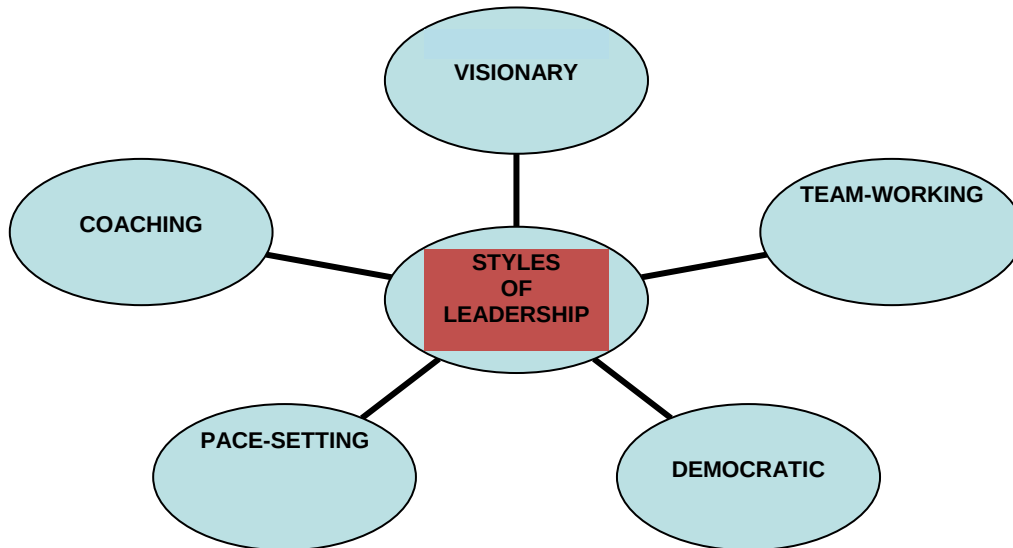
**Using the right leadership style on the right occasion can make the difference between average and outstanding performance.** Finding the right balance is a leadership skill.

**Each style has its own strengths and risks** (see chart below); these need to be understood so that a judgement can be made as to what particular style should be employed in what circumstance.

There are 5 core styles of leadership: visionary, democratic, team-working, pace-setting and coaching. In addition, there is a '**commanding style**' for specific circumstances (eg dealing with a crisis) where it will be most effective.

Using a specific style for a specific occasion is a function not just of the mind but also of the emotions. For example, to use a team-working style requires the delegation of responsibility. If you do not like to delegate responsibility, you may find this style difficult:

- *You may want to micro-manage to ensure you get the results you want. But micro-management will not strengthen the capacity of the team to take responsibility for delivering high standards of performance.*



- *To delegate, you have to let go of power; this can be psychologically difficult.*

But each style carries risks if it is used in an inappropriate circumstance. A coaching style can lead to micro-management; a pace-setting style can take a sense of initiative away from staff; a visionary style may lead to unrealistic expectations.

**Managers with a wide portfolio of styles and who are able to act with flexibility are likely to provide better leadership in specific situations.**

### LEADERSHIP STYLES

| STYLE               | STRENGTHS                                                                                                                  | RISKS                                                                                                                                                                                         | CIRCUMSTANCE                                                                                                                               |
|---------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>Visionary</i>    | <i>Builds resonance, sense of purpose</i>                                                                                  | <i>Does not work if leader is less experienced or appears pompous</i>                                                                                                                         | <i>When a clear sense of direction is required</i>                                                                                         |
| <i>Coaching</i>     | <i>Can help staff achieve short-term goals</i>                                                                             | <i>Micro-management if focused too much on task rather than person</i>                                                                                                                        | <i>When delegation requires support to ensure its effectiveness</i>                                                                        |
| <i>Team-working</i> | <i>Connects people with each other in shared endeavour; maximises use of individual talents; can manage conflict</i>       | <i>Difficult to take personal initiative. Harmony and direction can be upset by personal ambition unless managed well; team leader must manage team emotions</i>                              | <i>When the challenge is cross-cutting and it is important to cross boundaries, bring in ideas and bring coherence to the organisation</i> |
| <i>Democratic</i>   | <i>Creates trust and engagement; gives confidence in uncertain situations; generates ideas; makes it safe to speak up.</i> | <i>Potential for dithering and being indecisive; can undermine sense of direction; platform for the incompetent.</i>                                                                          | <i>When staff need to get involved and own the challenge and response</i>                                                                  |
| <i>Pace-setting</i> | <i>Generates high standards; weeds out poor performance; gets short-term results</i>                                       | <i>Might push too hard, ignore context, cause second-guessing, create anxiety; pressure can be debilitating. Staff may just wait to be told, before taking action.</i>                        | <i>When there is a need for decisive action after poor results</i>                                                                         |
| <i>Commanding</i>   | <i>Best in crisis or when hard decisions have to be driven through.</i>                                                    | <i>Can lead to impatience, resentment, micro-management; may focus on what is wrong rather than what needs to be developed; may fail to give sense of direction or harness all expertise.</i> | <i>When urgency is paramount and when serious obstacles to change have to be overcome.</i>                                                 |

*Ask yourself: What is your preferred style(s)? How easily can you change it in the light of circumstances? What is the evidence?*

## 6. What makes leadership effective?

Modern leadership means a move away from control, order, limited communications and opaque transparency. Modern leadership will:

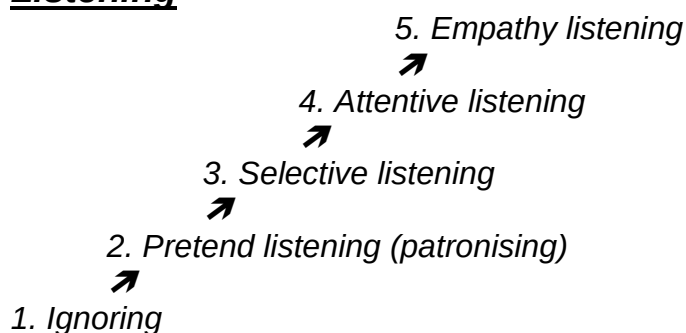
- *Create the environment which maximises the potential of staff and elected representatives and enables them to work to high standards.*
- *Deliver good governance by establishing constructive relationships between the local authority and a wide array of partners.*

How do we develop our abilities in leadership? Four key leadership skills are: (a) listening, (b) communicating, (c) problem-solving, (d) taking initiatives.

***Good governance can only be delivered by good leadership.***

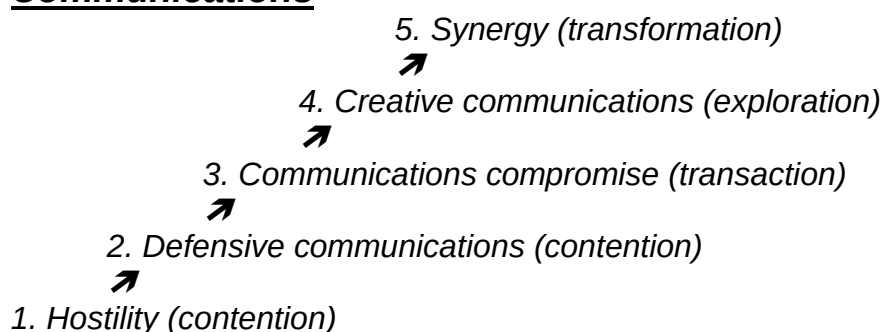
There is a **spectrum of effectiveness** in using each of these skills. By being aware of the spectrum, we can assess where we ourselves are on the spectrum and train ourselves to reach 'level 5'.

### A. Listening



***Be sincerely open to seeing and understanding what the other sees; 'Level 5' listening is to about entering into the other person's frame of reference.***

### B. Communications



*Do we understand where we are going and why? 'Level 5' communications releases the power of creativity.*

**C. Problem- solving**

- 
5. Synergy on issue and relationship
  4. Compromise on issue; synergy on relationship
  3. Mutual understanding without agreeing
  2. Compromise
  1. I win – you lose

*Does our position give us the right to be right? 'Level 5' problem-solving means we seek a solution where everyone gains.*

**D. Taking initiative**

- 
5. Do it
  4. Do it and report
  3. Intend to do it
  2. Make a recommendation
  1. Wait till told

*'Level 5' initiative really requires a foundation of trust and competence.*

In all these aspects, the move is away from a coercive and competitive approach towards action to an open and collaborative approach towards relationships.

To exercise these leadership skills effectively, we need to start with a set of **leadership beliefs**:

- *People can manage high levels of responsibility.*
- *Win-win attitudes allow all parties to gain.*
- *Differences should be valued.*
- *Everyone has something to contribute; this makes it possible to harness mutual strengths.*

- *There needs to be a focus on the whole person.*
- *The standard to seek is excellence.*
- *Artificial boundaries should not be allowed to act as a constraint.*

**Our leadership can so easily be undermined by negative behaviour, such as criticising, complaining, comparing, contending and competing.** Of course, behaviour such as competing and contending can be constructive. But when it is a personal attack or is done to the detriment of finding a solution, it becomes negative.

**It is important to be clear about the reason for negative behaviour. Is it driven by personal, party or public interest? Good leadership will focus on public interest.**

## 7. Focus on mission or organisation?

Local authority leadership has always to bear in mind that there are two distinct but related objectives that have to be pursued at the same time:

1. *Delivering good local governance (**mission**).*
2. *Strengthening the capacity of the local authority to deliver good local governance (**organisation**).*

Focusing mainly on the mission might help to create a strong sense of **teamwork and direction**; it might produce early successes. But if the focus does not strengthen the organisation, what will keep it going?

Focusing mainly on the organisation might develop **strong strategy and clear structures**; but it can also produce low engagement and short term thinking.

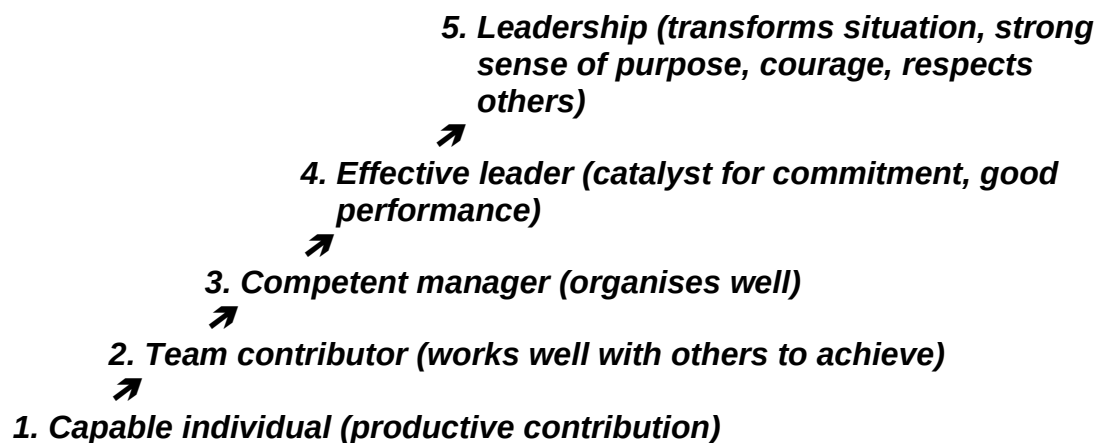
| <b>LEADERSHIP FOCUS</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <u><b>MISSION / NO ORGANISATION</b></u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>High empowerment</i></li> <li>• <i>Trust, loyalty, passion</i></li> <li>• <i>Low turnover</i></li> <li>• <i>Service orientation</i></li> <li>• <i>No profitability</i></li> <li>• <i>Unsystematic approach</i></li> <li>• <i>Weak structures / processes</i></li> <li>• <i>Good goals / weak execution</i></li> </ul> | <u><b>ORGANISATION / NO MISSION</b></u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Good financial management</i></li> <li>• <i>Strong strategy</i></li> <li>• <i>Clear structures / processes</i></li> <li>• <i>Burnout</i></li> <li>• <i>Low engagement</i></li> <li>• <i>Task-orientation</i></li> <li>• <i>Short term focus</i></li> <li>• <i>Parochialism</i></li> </ul> |

Finding the right balance of focus between the two objectives develops **sustainability and effectiveness**. There are significant consequences if the focus leans too much towards one side or the other. **The leadership should therefore ensure that both objectives are pursued at the same time.**

## 8. Learning leadership

**Leadership can be learnt.** Different levels of leadership can be exercised, regardless of the position we hold in the organisation. Leadership can contribute to any situation. We learn leadership by making a choice, by starting small and building up with experience and opportunity.

### Learning leadership



*'Level 5' leadership can be anyone's ambition.*

### SIMPLE LEADERSHIP RULES

- See things through the eyes of local people and organisations.
- Find better ways of doing things.
- Look at the whole picture.
- Give staff the time and tools to tackle the challenges.
- Take small steps as well as big leaps.
- Manage oneself all the time.

## **LEARNING LEADERSHIP - REINFORCEMENT**

*How many of us are parents? What about good parents? How did we learn to become a good parent? Did we learn the skills from our own parents? Did we read about them in books on parenting? Did we discuss it with friends?*

*Perhaps all of these. But our greatest teacher was the child itself. We learn from the child's reaction to what we do? We may need to be gentle or forceful; we may need to ignore or pay attention. We adapt our approach to the circumstances. Gradually we develop an approach to bringing up our child in the way we think best.*

*Learning leadership skills is similar. Through experience and through learning from that experience. Through exercising leadership in different situations in our own way and gradually building expertise out of that experience. Through finding courage to say 'yes' to challenges that confront us.*