

Retaining Public Trust in Partnering Arrangements

APSE Annual Seminar 2008

Nick Sharman

Managing Director, Amey Local Government

September 2008



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Themes

- Partnership is central to delivery of responsive community based services especially for outcome based commissioning
- Public trust depends on developing a culture of openness and transparency
- Three key partnership relationships in the delivery of local government services:
 - *Commissioner / provider*
 - *Provider supply chain*
 - *Commissioner and provider / community*

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Key Propositions

- **Commissioning** is the most effective way of delivering outcomes for communities and individuals
- **Three way partnership** between client, provider and community is key to agreeing and delivering outcomes
- **Community** engagement must be central to service planning and delivery
- No one partner or provider can do everything: effective **supply chain integration** is essential
- Councils and their providers need to **change established practices** and traditional, highly contractual relationships
- Range of **challenges** for all providers, public, private or voluntary

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Challenges for Providers

- **Outcome** driven performance: moving from outputs / input specs to measuring outcomes
- **Risk sharing** with supply chain partners: preserving intellectual property and involving third sector
- **Flexibility** of service delivery – over time, between places: commitment to continual change
- **Community engagement** and accountability: empowering front line staff
- Working in **dialogue** with commissioners and earning the 'right to bid'

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Examples from Environmental Services

- **Bedfordshire** integrated transport contract: engagement with community over investment programme and service delivery
- **Cumbria** transport project: linking customers and fragmented transport service
- **Herefordshire**: building a comprehensive delivery vehicle covering environmental and leisure services
- **Buckinghamshire**: joining community and key local public services (highways, planning, property) with regeneration

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Conclusions

- **Centred on people**: people and communities at the heart of the process
- **Three-way** relationship between client, supplier and user based on trust
- Clearer **outcomes**: showing how they fit into the overall strategy
- Better **dialogue** to ensure operational programmes fit with strategy
- **Contractual challenge** to ensure value for money
- Public trust depends Councils and providers developing a **practical** and **cultural commitment** to partnership working which actively involves communities

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