Joined-Up Management

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with research by
Lisa Larsen
and a foreword by
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Public Management
FOUNDATION

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Foreword

New Labour has set itself the task of tackling connected problems by adopting a more holistic approach to service delivery which recognises the links between education, employment, housing and health – to name but a few. Yet, we cannot do this alone. Achieving practical results for communities and individuals depends on joined efforts from government, local communities and citizens alike. As we put it in the Green Paper, *Our Healthier Nation*: 'Connected problems require joined-up solutions'.

Some progress has already been made. But we need to do a lot more to create the right environment for partnership working. This report sets out a line of proposals for what needs to be done to encourage and support joined-up management between public agencies, private businesses, voluntary bodies and citizens. It describes the outcome of a series of brainstorming seminars arranged by the Public Management Foundation. Together with colleagues from central and local government, as well as representatives from the voluntary sector, I had the pleasure of taking part in these fruitful discussions.

I welcome this report and trust that it will provide a valuable contribution to the thinking about what to do in order to make the system of public service delivery fit for the 21st century.

Tessa Jowell MP
Minister of State for Public Health
October 1998

Introduction
New Government – New Framework

New Labour was elected with a mandate to modernise Britain. As we move through the second year of this government's first term, a picture of what that modernisation process entails is developing.

Among other things, the government has put public agencies back in the arena of social improvement, as the vehicles of change, not just vehicles *to* change. Public agencies are now encouraged to play a key role in modernising the welfare state. Yet, New Labour promotes the view that government cannot – and should not – do everything.

Most government green and white papers stress that citizens themselves need to be involved more actively in public service provision and in helping to meet the needs of their communities. As a result, those managing public agencies are being expected to engage more proactively in partnerships with communities, as well as with private businesses, voluntary organisations and other public agencies, in order to improve social wellbeing. All of this heralds the development of a new relationship between people and the state, based on the recognition of both rights and mutual responsibilities.

At the same time, the government is introducing a vast array of large-scale policy changes that are intended to improve the wellbeing of all citizens, and these have a direct influence on service provision. At issue for policy-makers and for those managing policy implementation is how to make these many changes work in a manner which actually delivers the intended benefits. This is not merely about implementing policies while encouraging more active community participation. It is about ensuring that the interplay of the many new policies and initiatives introduced by the government has a reinforcing, beneficial effect on the ground, in terms of both improved social

results and more active citizenship. Too often, policy changes can be pursued as though they were independent of each other. Citizens can suffer dire consequences, however, if the interplay of policy change is not thought through, or managed well.

The government recognises the difficulty. The public health green paper, *Our Healthier Nation*, observes: 'Connected problems require joined-up solutions'. But how are those solutions to be found? How is the connectivity to be forged? How are resources to be pooled and accountabilities to be made clear?

To explore these issues, Trustees of the Public Management Foundation began a series of brainstorming seminars about the links between large-scale policy change and delivering results. After a few meetings on their own, the Trustees extended their brainstorming seminars to include others who are actively engaged in these issues on a day-to-day basis. The hope was that the contribution that could be made through these collective sessions might help build a greater understanding of the work that needs to be done to orchestrate the combined impact of large policy change so that they make a real difference for citizens and their communities.

In October 1997, the first expanded meeting was held with invited guests, including ministers, policy advisors and public service leaders. This was followed by a second meeting in January 1998, this time including representatives of community agencies and interest groups, as well as public service managers. Finally, a session which attempted to synthesise the views emerging from the previous two was held in March, with participants from both earlier meetings. In all, about fifty people participated in these sessions; their names are listed in the appendix to this report. Nicholas Timmins, Public Policy Editor of the *Financial Times,* attended and prepared summary papers on each of the brainstorming seminars.

The outcomes from these deliberations point to what we have called 'joined-up management', and are presented in this report. In the first chapter, which emerged from the Trustees' initial

discussions, some of the reasons behind the current dynamics of change are identified as the context within which public managers operate. This includes a framework of the current 'rules' and accountabilities that constrain management action. Trustees Sue Goss, Julia Unwin and Anne Bennett were especially helpful in developing this section.

The second chapter describes the debate and observations which emerged from three extended brainstorming seminars. These focused on new relationships, organisational arrangements and actions which may be needed to ensure effective management partnerships at local level. The boxes in this chapter present examples of aspects of joined-up management in practice. Lisa Larsen, Researcher at the Office for Public Management, developed these case studies for use in this report.

The final chapter contains conclusions and recommendations for managers who are trying to join up their management with the efforts and resources of other agencies and of citizens in their local communities.

Chapter 1
A World of Change

New government policies and initiatives in public services
are often responses to changes in the wider environment in
which public agencies operate.

The picture of change is not a simple one. The public sector
is composed of a diversity of agencies dealing with people and
communities in a vast number of ways. This is all set within the
context of larger reforms in policy, organisation and regulation,
including dramatic changes in the political and economic
environments over the past decades. What we see is not one
simple relationship between people and their public services, but
thousands; not one set of reforms, but hundreds.

Sketched out below are six key environmental trends which
were identified in discussions amongst the Trustees of the
Foundation as having the most significant effect on public
service provision. Taken together, they also contribute to a better
understanding of the changes occurring within public services
themselves.

- **Ideology**
  The post-war settlement which proposed a welfare safety net
  from cradle to grave is giving way to a new political consensus
  about the limits of state intervention. This involves a need to
  constrain public spending and to force individuals to make
  more provision for themselves. While still recognising rights,
  the consensus puts more emphasis on mutual responsibilities.
  The link between public provision and equity, and the implicit
  redistributional nature of public service, are being questioned.
  Great value is now placed on independence and choice. There
  also seems to be greater recognition – though not necessarily
  greater tolerance – of individual risk and uncertainty. Yet,
  the shift towards a less paternalistic, less protective state is at
  variance with the growing concerns about the decline in civil

society. The implications of a more targeted and less universal approach to social welfare are not yet clear.

- **Localism versus globalism**

  We are witnessing a greater awareness of the global economy. Geographic boundaries are becoming increasingly less important for more and more people. At the same time, however, there are more claims for local control over social provision. This paradox raises questions: Can there be autonomous local political discourse or control in an increasingly interconnected world? Can we maintain equity in an increasingly interconnected yet localised world? As personal and social identity cuts across geography, social groups, leisure and employment, how can the balance be struck between individual, community, national, European and transnational interests?

- **Social configuration/lifestyles**

  People are living longer, staying healthy longer and being frail for longer. Leisure is becoming an increasingly dominant element of life. Families are continuing to fragment with a resulting rise in one person households. Young under-skilled men are finding it harder and harder to compete socially and economically. Industry in many areas continues to give way to services, making it easier for women and harder for men to find work. Social values are changing, with a simultaneous rise in cynicism about, and demand for, 'authenticity' and 'truth'. All of these affect the value and priority people place on local services, but also challenge the capacity of local services to respond.

- **The rise of citizenship**

  Citizenship is a contested concept, but one which may have significant influence on political activity and policy. Charter 88 can demonstrate strong public support for constitutional change; there is popular unhappiness about sleaze and the corruption of public values; and the Foundation's own survey, *The Glue that Binds* (1996), showed that people overwhelmingly

want more say in decisions about public service. It is not
only New Labour which speaks of a reinvigorated citizenship
with both rights and responsibilities. But how easy is that to
achieve? What is the popular conception of active citizenship?
Our sense of ourselves as citizens is uneasy and confused
and, yet, much of the debate about community engagement
presupposes a sense of citizenship in us all.

- **Technology**
  The impact of increased technological abilities and changed
  attitudes to the use of IT mean that service provision of all
  types is being redesigned. We are seeing trends towards, for
  example, direct customer interface with computerised systems
  rather than with human providers, telephone and internet
  services which reduce the need for travel and face-to-face
  contact, as well as 'virtual' organisations linking delivery
  systems between organisations.

- **The challenge to expert knowledge**
  The proliferation of information and information technologies,
  together with an increasingly educated population, is resulting
  in less deference to experts. Paradoxically, these same
  developments are also resulting in information overload – no
  one expert is able to know everything – and, with no one being
  expert, a challenge to professional knowledge. Individuals
  are taking more control, no longer accepting unquestioned
  authority. Planners no longer rule community development;
  lawyers no longer dominate the constitutional debate; doctors
  and social workers are no longer believed necessarily to know
  what is best.

   All of these social trends are compounding the changes
which are occurring in public services themselves. The Trustees
summarised these as:

- **Political and managerial reforms**
  A number of radical changes are taking place in the
  organisational and political arrangements which provide the

frameworks for service delivery. For years, public sector reforms fragmented responsibility for service delivery and fostered competition. Now, the common denominator of reform seems to be co-ordination, partnership and joint responsibility in many areas of service provision. Health and Education Action Zones and the idea of pooled budgets for health and social services, for example, explicitly challenge the existing separations in service provision which have made it hard for outsiders to negotiate their way around the system and made co-ordinated intervention very difficult.

- **Regulation and provision**
  The focus of recent reforms has been on those organisations that provide services, but many government agencies at all levels can have policing and regulatory functions as well. The importance of regulation, inspection and audit of public services is a matter attracting great attention and debate, with some public service failures – for example, in utilities – being blamed on inadequate regulation. Moreover, the promotion of partnership working has also raised questions about the role of regulators in developing improved service performance, although some argue that this type of direct intervention on the part of regulators is inappropriate. The emergence of more complex and more widespread regulatory activity is creating a different set of relationships between the government and the public, especially with regard to issues of accountability.

- **The changing role of professionals**
  Professional thinking and practice is affected by social and ideological change. Ethics and values are now beginning to conflict and to compete. Consumer views often challenge professional assumptions. As a result, confidence in professional expertise is weakening, and professionals are less confident about their own legitimacy and expertise. All of this affects the relationship between professionals, managers and clients, calling into question the traditional forms of professional accountability. As professional interests are being

challenged, many wonder whether it is still possible to have a public service ethos strong enough to sustain public trust.

- **New ideas about organisations and management**
  New thinking about organisational design, development and management is challenging service delivery systems and management styles. Organisations are becoming more flexible, flatter and – in some cases – virtual. Management is becoming more facilitative and educative than directive. These developments can be disturbing to conventional public service bureaucracies where stability and uniformity have long been regarded as guarantors of equity and fairness.
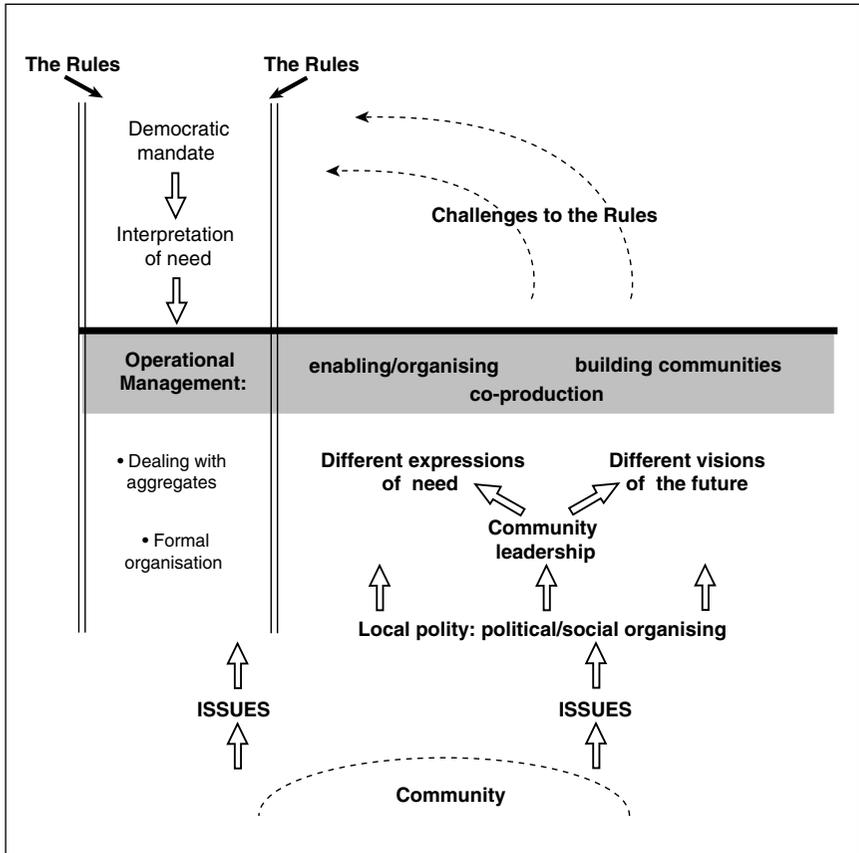
- **Blurred boundaries**
  Compounding structural change is the fact that public sector organisations are now expected to exhibit many of the features of businesses, including some scope for entrepreneurial behaviour. The boundaries between the public and private sector have blurred and this extends to consumer perceptions as well. Few people are concerned whether it is the public or private sector that delivers a publicly-funded service so long as the service is satisfactory. Yet, in a world of consumer satisfaction it is unclear whether financial flows and existing policies genuinely reflect desired social outcomes or whether they are creating unintended perverse incentives in the drive to keep customers happy.

Painting the picture

Within the context of these changes, the Trustees developed a framework to help consider more critically the role of public services and the work of public management. The figure overleaf illustrates this framework.

The formal process of public service delivery consists of a *democratic mandate* which empowers political leaders (whether elected or appointed) to *interpret need* and to direct *operational management* to deliver the services required to meet that need,

The Rules   The Rules

Democratic
mandate

Challenges to the Rules

Interpretation
of need

Operational   enabling/organising   building communities
Management: co-production

• Dealing with   Different expressions   Different visions
  aggregates   of need   of the future

  • Formal   Community
organisation   leadership

                    Local polity: political/social organising

ISSUES   ISSUES

                    Community

within politically determined limits of policy and resources.
Service provision often is based on *dealing with aggregates* (such as
'education' and 'crime') and, as often, through *formal organisations*
(such as schools or police forces). This process, from democratic
mandate to formal organisation, comprises what might be
called *the Rules of the Game* – that is, the electorally legitimated
mechanisms by which people transact with their governments
through public services.

Of course, *issues* arise within those mechanisms – issues
like failures in service, dissatisfaction with management or the
masking of individual needs – and often there are ways in which

these issues can be handled within the rules. Sometimes, however, people who are experiencing the consequences of these issues take their concerns outside the rules, sometimes in protest, and at other times through other means of *political or social organising* which fall outside the traditional, formal mechanisms. These can be the basis of what is meant by *local polity*, and can be the source of both *different expressions of need* and *different visions of the future* – different, that is, from what those who have the formal electoral mandate might perceive them to be. Frequently, this local organising will require and give birth to new *community leadership*.

At the same time, much more of what happens in public service provision is taking place outside the government. Private businesses, voluntary organisations and citizens are now and will increasingly be involved in the provision of publicly-financed services. Private companies, for example, are asked to invest in social infrastructure, to maintain and run schools. The voluntary sector is taking on the growing weight of social and community care, and groups of people across the country have joined together to apply for lottery or charitable funds for their sports hall, their dance clubs or their community centre. This is creating new kinds of delivery, new sorts of services and new ways of commissioning collective provision. Although they may involve the government and public agencies, they are not always dependent on abiding by the formal processes of public service provision.

All of this means that the government is no longer able to sustain the illusion that it provides the social or collective dimension of national life: as much goes on *outside* the rules of traditional public service as inside them. It also means that while the efficient and effective management of public agencies remains vital, it will not in itself guarantee the achievement of social goals. Increasingly, that depends on the relationships between those inside the rules – within the public sector – and those outside the rules – private businesses, voluntary organisations, communities and citizens.

For public management, this poses new challenges. Assisting the development of local polity and delivering in partnership often entails going beyond the mechanisms of operational management and thus outside the formal rules. This may involve *enabling and organising* communities as they attempt to make known their own perceptions of need. It may also mean helping to *build communities* that are more in control of their own futures. This will often engage managers in areas of *co-production* – that is working with citizens, local businesses, voluntary organisations and other public agencies whose resources they do not control in order to achieve effective outcomes.

As more emphasis is placed on new ways of producing public value, this can implicitly – if not explicitly and sometimes dangerously – *challenge the rules* under which public management derives its legitimacy.

This raises questions about accountability. Public managers are held to account within the formal rules, but how are the relationships between public agencies, businesses, voluntary organisations and citizens to be held to account? How can we hold managers responsible for achieving collective results when they have little or no control over the partner agencies and citizens involved in co-productive delivery? At present, there are few ways of examining the success or failure of – or of expressing expectations to – those agencies that are not publicly accountable through the formal rules. Yet, our society increasingly depends on their activity.

There are serious implications for effective public management. Considerable expertise has been built up about effective management within specific public service organisations, attested to by the array of performance management regimes now in place within departments and agencies. Less is known, however, about good ways to manage initiatives which cross boundaries between public, voluntary and private sectors, about initiatives which are based in communities and involve networks of different agencies, or about management outside the rules.

The skills required to balance stakeholders' interests, understand complex accountabilities and manage for social outcomes are as necessary outside the formal public sector organisation as within it.

While recognising the need for the joined-up solutions that arise from working outside the formal rules, the government has not yet given the clarity or built up the expertise necessary for public managers to operate in this new environment. Nonetheless, managers are still being held accountable for delivery on the ground.

In view of these considerations, there was a strong sense amongst the Trustees that, as one put it, 'old structures are attempting to deliver new processes'.

Chapter 2
From Policy to Practice

It was with the above concerns in mind that the Trustees invited a number of people who are actively involved with these issues on a day-to-day basis to join their 'brainstorming'. Three seminars were organised to allow for different perspectives to be heard.

The first seminar was held at the end of 1997, and brought together ministers, policy advisors and top managers to explore the issues for public management. In the second seminar, held three months later, the same sets of issues were discussed, but from the vantage of advocates and professionals (in both the public and charitable sectors) who are directly engaged in service provision and use, such as in health, housing, education, child care and other local authority services. A group of participants from the first two seminars came back together for the third meeting and were asked to try to put together the thinking so far and to focus on specific actions and strategies for public managers to take.

The combined outcome of the three sessions is reported here as nine sets of issues – various aspects of what we ultimately termed 'joined-up management'. Amongst the participants, there were different views held on some of the issues, but there was also a large degree of agreement, especially on the kinds of arrangements and relationships that are needed at local level to ensure effective joined-up management and to produce joined-up solutions that are meaningful to local communities.

1. Involvement in policy design

A clear message to emerge from all the sessions was that those who have to implement policy should be involved in its design. Although 'crossing boundaries' is a key theme of the New Labour

Government, most policies are still being designed from within what participants called the 'chimney stacks' of government: the separate functional departments – at both national and local level – that comprise the organisational boundaries of 'the rules' that the Trustees had considered earlier.

Within these 'chimney stacks', the participants felt, it is important to involve service managers and professionals in drafting policies; but where policies cut across those traditional organisational boundaries, their involvement is absolutely critical.

Participants felt that ministers and the civil service simply do not have the expertise required to spot all potential pitfalls, perverse incentives and difficulties that may be created when pursuing integrated policy change across boundaries. Working out solutions on high in Whitehall, and then handing them down, is the least likely route to success.

Neighbourhood Governance

In Walsall, a neighbourhood governance scheme engages committees of local citizens in the planning and management of local services. The members of the committees are unpaid lay people who are accountable to constituencies of between 150 and 300 residents living in their neighbourhood. They work closely with local public agencies as well as local businesses. Their main task is to identify local needs and set priorities for service providers. They also have a key role in Best Value, where the departments of Environment and Youth have been targeted as the first areas in which they wish to negotiate control. Since autumn 1997, elected committees have existed for seven neighbourhoods, and more areas are signing on for the scheme in the future.

How far down the line such involvement should go will vary by policy area. For example, in the case of improving conditions

on housing estates, it makes sense to include communities and individual citizens, building solutions up from the bottom as much as creating them from the top. As one participant pointed out: '*doers and deliverers are the change agents locally, not politicians*'.

Advocating this approach is easy; adopting it is more difficult. Apart from anything else, it is counter-intuitive to the way politicians and the civil service traditionally work, certainly in recent years. Traditionally, policies are devised at the centre and then consulted upon, rather than built from a process of engagement with those who will have to deliver or use them. This change is crucial, however, because of the next set of issues.

2. Policies focused on outcomes

One of the strongest themes emerging from the seminars was the view that policies must focus on *outcomes* not inputs, activities and outputs. Market-style reforms in the past decades seemed to neglect the fact that increasing productivity does not in itself bring about increased results for individuals and communities. For example, increased output in the form of more arrests per police officer does not in itself lead to an increased outcome in the form of reduced crime; nor do more consultations per general practitioner necessarily bring about a healthier society.

Yet, defining outcomes beyond the level of the platitudes of 'reducing crime' and 'creating a healthier society' may not be as easy or as obvious as at first appears. As one minister participating in the first session put it, to achieve effective, large-scale change, we first need to agree on 'what is the mischief?' to be addressed and 'what are the desired outcomes?'

Defining these in a way which encourages the people involved to 'own' them is again likely to require agreement between those who will have to deliver the outcomes, not only on what the outcomes should be but also on what each agency needs to do to achieve them. If clear agreement cannot be reached on what

'the mischief' is and what the desired outcomes are, then success in design and delivery is unlikely to be achieved. When they are defined, outcomes also should be measurable: defined in such a way that progress towards or away from them can be assessed.

Tackling Youth Crime

Even the best efforts from individual agencies cannot single-handedly achieve improved outcomes of reduced youth crime. The Audit Commission's report on the youth justice system, *Misspent Youth*, highlighted the need to improve co-ordination between the various agencies involved with problematic young people. This is the case in most areas of the public sector where the task is to tackle messy problems, which often link up poverty, inequality, education, employment, health and safety.

Once outcomes are identified and agreed upon, all those involved then need to agree on the outputs that will be required to produce a desired outcome. It was recognised that most problems are highly complex and will require multiple outcomes.

3. Feedback

Genuine feedback is required up and down the process of service delivery, both of the results of policy analysis at government level and of joint analysis locally. Communication across the chimney stacks of government is also essential.

At the first two brainstorming seminars it became apparent that communication between the 'centre' and local agencies is far from perfect. The ministers, policy advisors and top managers in the first session felt that Whitehall had forgotten, to some extent, how to talk to local agencies. At the second seminar, those directly involved in service delivery noted that their local organisations – councils, health authorities, voluntary

organisations and others – had also largely forgotten how to co-operate with the centre.

Central/Local Partnership

In order to improve communication between central and local government, the government and the Local Government Association set up a Central/Local Partnership last year. The Partnership is chaired by the Deputy Prime Minister, John Prescott, and aims at improving the relationship and co-ordination between central and local government. The partners are looking at how local authorities and the government can combine efforts to deliver the best possible services for local communities.

The high level of public sector resistance, at least initially, to many of the market-style reforms of the past decades, has meant, as one contributor put it, that *a 'protective and defensive' reaction to change had become 'deeply embedded' in the way local agencies work*. It was not clear that a change of government alone could change that culture of resistance.

4. Clarifying roles and expectations

In improving the relationship between the government and local agencies, greater clarity is needed over roles and expectations. To date, the government has not defined clearly enough what it will do and what it will not do, nor has it yet clearly defined what it believes other agencies and citizens should do. This presents difficulties, because joined-up management and the existing chimney stack departmental responsibilities do not go hand in hand. Solutions being sought do not coincide with defined organisational responsibilities.

One key declaration of New Labour is that there are limits

to what government can deliver. However, while participants agreed this to be true, some argued that given the resources that government commands, it cannot be reduced merely to being an 'enabler'. There are areas where it must act and be responsible for its actions.

Government at all levels also needs to re-examine the roles, responsibilities and accountabilities of local agencies – local government, health services, police, voluntary bodies and the private sector, as well as communities – in order to help align them with the requirements of joined-up solutions.

5. A consensus to operate

There was a great deal of discussion about how old accountability mechanisms can hamper the innovation and flexibility necessary when seeking cross-boundary solutions. A general recognition emerged that local managers and public service organisations need to negotiate explicitly a 'consensus to operate' – dispensation from existing rules and boundaries on the condition they deliver the required outcomes. This would amount to the 'freedom to break the rules' in order to engage more freely in partnerships and community engagement.

There are precedents of a sort here, for example, urban development corporations, even though these may have been designed as much as a way of circumventing local governments as of breaking down barriers. But a local consensus to operate is not merely a top-down dispensation; it has to be negotiated amongst local stakeholders as well, both those in the line of public service delivery and those outside of it.

A consensus to operate is only desirable, of course, provided there are mechanisms in place to spot failure early on, to learn the lessons and to apply them. It must be realised, however, how deeply this idea cuts across the traditional regimes of parliamentary, local government and health service audit. The evidence can be seen everywhere – for example, in the planned

employment zones. It was predicted that these would initially be very limited in scope because parliamentary legislation lays down precisely what can and cannot be done within the present rules. Fresh legislation is needed to allow local managers a more permissive, flexible approach. Yet, issues of fair treatment and fair dealing between individuals will necessarily arise, particularly in a system which has tended to favour equity and rights over the granting to officials of widespread discretion.

The STEP Programme

In Kent, the police, schools, local businesses and social services have come together to tackle truancy and crime amongst students in their last year of school. In order to achieve this common goal, human and financial resources from all the partner agencies have been channelled into the School Time Enterprise Programme, STEP. The success of the scheme depends on co-operation and the open, regular exchange of information between the partner agencies. Potential offenders are offered suitable work placements for one day a week provided that they attend school the remaining four days of the week. This programme has proven highly effective. The level of truancy amongst participants has fallen dramatically and the re-offending rate is now significantly lower than the national average.

Some participants doubted whether, under the present political leadership, a consensus to operate – outside the constraints of centrally constructed pilots – could be introduced. Accountability too often degenerated into an attitude of 'gotcha' when things go wrong. One contributor pointed out: *under Labour, ministers determined to deliver, particularly on manifesto pledges, still utter phrases such as 'we will not tolerate failure'*.

6. One-point responsibility for delivery

There was great concern, particularly in the first session, about delivery. It was suggested that cross-boundary solutions would need to have an individual project leader, with sufficient clout, responsible for delivering them. This came particularly strongly from local government representatives with their experience of attempting to achieve changes across boundaries within councils. It is not enough for everyone to sign up to the idea and promise to deliver. A structure is needed to ensure delivery, with someone charged with ensuring that promises are kept.

There was little direct discussion of what that meant in practice for the current government. However, issues such as who would be responsible for ensuring that the Social Exclusion Unit packs the necessary punch with ministers to achieve change within Whitehall, and whether a public health agenda can be delivered across departments by a minister without Cabinet rank (despite there being a Cabinet committee charged with the issues), were cited as obvious examples.

Compounding the necessity for explicit responsibility for delivery was an acknowledgement that working in partnerships requires shared authority and shared credit. This presents dangers: a possible dilution of the value of jobs and – more worrying – a blurring of accountability. Throughout the seminars, participants agreed that, because specific individuals need to be held responsible for delivery, it is essential that there are clear definitions of outcomes and explicit decisions about who delivers which parts of those outcomes.

7. Incentives, rewards and a tolerance of failure

Public managers who are attempting to join up their management with others are likely to be taking greater risks. They are asked to share authority for outcomes whilst at the same time being held accountable for their own, relatively narrow, field of delivery. This requires visionary and daring approaches. These are relatively easy to talk about at the policy level. Once policy

is designed and scheduled for implementation, however, senior managers know that the inherent organisational and human tendency, especially in times of trouble, is to focus down on narrow operational issues.

Participants suggested that if greater risks are to be taken a number of conditions need to be fulfilled. Government and local organisations must provide incentives, rewards and the freedom to achieve desired outcomes. But freedom includes freedom to fail, and so there must also be an ability to identify and correct failure, tolerantly, and before too much damage is done. Learning from failure, as well as success, will be important. And with that, there need to be more robust mechanisms for spreading lessons so that others can replicate success and avoid failure.

Working across boundaries is bound to pose threats to existing organisations and stakeholders. While the ideal may be that people should not care if their organisation is under threat, providing the desired outcomes are achieved, such selflessness will not be easy to achieve. It would require both greater job flexibility and more imaginative human resource programmes in the public sector.

Learning Lessons of Neighbourhood Renewal

The recent report by the Social Exclusion Unit, *Bringing Britain Together: a national strategy for neighbourhood renewal*, recognises the urgent need for a central source of advice on good practice. They have therefore set up an action team, which is specifically charged with spreading messages of success and lessons learned from agencies seeking joined-up solutions in neighbourhood renewal programmes. The task of the team will be to prevent the repetition of known mistakes and speed up the replication process of promising approaches.

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8. Consulting communities

In principle, consultation sounds like a given good, but behind it are some complicated issues. This worry was strong amongst managers delivering on the ground, especially when they found themselves torn between the demands of individual users and the needs of the community. As one participant at the second seminar put it: 'The public's perception of what it wants might not always be to the common good of society.'

Consulting the Community in Coventry

In 1997, senior managers at Coventry Health Authority were developing their strategic plan for the organisation for the next five years. They used 'community consultation workshops' as a new approach to involving their community in the planning process. Six workshops were set up, each representing a different section of the community. Each group was presented with the same question on which to make recommendations: 'What should the Health Authority's spending priorities be for the next five years?' To make this complex question more manageable, it was broken down into smaller pieces based around treatment/service areas such as learning disabilities services, acute care and mental health services. Participants were given simple fact sheets about the health services. Over the course of the day, the group rehearsed arguments about prioritising each of these different areas. In order to clarify their priorities, each group's discussion was brought together at the end of the day by using a 'shopping basket' exercise which entailed making choices within a fixed budget. It was found that participants had clearly moved away from their initial 'knee-jerk' reaction of surface opinion to a more considered and solid judgement.

Participants discussed the fact that a majority of the public

would be likely to favour the construction of more hospitals, for example, when every driver in modern medicine is pushing us towards fewer, as a result of changing technologies and of the comparatively high costs of traditional hospital services. People want more 'bobbies on the beat', but increasing the number of patrol officers does not necessarily produce safer societies. Furthermore, tensions may exist between competing desires; for example, a wish to get disruptive youths off the street needs to be married to a willingness to provide alternative ways of filling their time.

As a result, consultation with communities cannot simply be about trying to design policies and services that the public believes it wants. Dialogue with the public must be an educative process which involves listening to people's needs and wants, but also helps service users to realise that there may be other ways than the apparently obvious to achieve what they want. It must confront those being consulted with the tensions around setting priorities. It must teach the realities of change as well as taking on board initial ideas. In the process, it must win commitment to the changes that are eventually agreed.

One participant warned: 'Consultation, at least in theory, has been in fashion for years. But when the outcome of consultation has not fitted the reality, the result of consultation has often been ignored, helping to discredit the idea altogether.'

Although consultation methods such as citizens' juries and focus groups do exist, these new ways of talking with the public need to be much better understood and much more highly developed. One-off, ad hoc community consultation events are not the answer to engaging local people in the dialogue necessary to implement joined-up solutions, especially ones involving commitments of their time, effort and spirit. An important part of this process is to help develop community leadership and a local capacity to deliver. All of this, in turn, involves allocating more resources within public service organisations to developing programmes of ongoing community engagement.

Making the Connections

In June 1998, the Public Management Foundation worked with the London Borough of Lewisham in order to engage citizens in new dialogues. Sixty-five local residents participated in an innovative consulting session, called 'community mapping', in which they were asked to create their own integrated 'big pictures' of social outcomes. Over one and a half days, local people worked together using flip charts, post-it notes, drawings, stories and a great deal of discussion to construct and share their view of what health, learning and community safety are all about. By generating data and understanding of connected problems at the level on which they are experienced, local people opened up the narrow definitions of service delivery.

Achieving Results

In the London Borough of Lambeth real results have been achieved by joining up management. Managers from the police, local government, health, social services and education have got together in a more focused way to reach a better understanding of all aspects of youth crime. By comparing the names of the problematic youths known to separate agencies, they were able to identify 120 known to all the agencies. Through careful examination, it was found that these young people had been bounced back and forth between the various agencies. By creating a common pool of knowledge and resources and by adopting a 'whole action' solution around each individual, the first steps towards improved outcomes were taken. This achievement heralds greater local effort at joined-up management.

9. Messages of success

There is much talk of pilots and local experimentation in the public sector, but there was a strong feeling that it is still very difficult for others to learn from what works successfully. Public managers need to spread the word about good practice much wider in order to increase learning from what works. They also need to share lessons of failure.

This almost certainly implies better quality studies of projects as they are designed and implemented, improved analysis of the reasons for success and failure, and superior mechanisms for transmitting lessons. Over the past 15 years there have been distinct improvements in this last area through the work of the Audit Commission and, to a lesser extent, that of the National Audit Office. More, however, needs to be done. It was suggested that the Social Exclusion Unit could play a part in spreading messages of success and lessons learned.

However, when applying good practice elsewhere, it is important not merely to attempt to replicate the processes that seem to have produced desired outcomes elsewhere. Innovative approaches of cross-boundary working need to be designed for the specific characteristics of the communities and agencies involved, and the complex nature of the local problems being addressed.

Joined-Up Management

The nine sets of issues which emerged from the brainstorming seminars as essential components of joined-up management – management which can work inside and outside the rules of formal organisations and processes – are these:

1. Those who have responsibility for the implementation of policy should be involved in its design.

2. There should be a clear focus on outcomes and they should be measurable.

3. Genuine feedback both from government to agencies and from agencies to government is needed, as is communication across agencies involved in similar outcome goals.

4. Greater clarity from government at all levels is essential about what its role is, about what it can be expected to do and not to do, and about what it expects from delivery agencies.

5. Local public service organisations should negotiate with government and with local stakeholders a 'consensus to operate' – freedom to experiment and innovate – in order to achieve agreed outcomes.

6. In seeking joined-up solutions, responsibility and accountability for delivery need to be explicit, probably vested in a named individual with sufficient clout to deliver.

7. New incentive and reward structures would be desirable, as well as a tolerance for failure, but systems should be put in place to learn from and avoid its more damaging consequences.

8. Community consultation around outcomes should be engaging, educative, ongoing and capacity-building.

9. There need to be better mechanisms to highlight success, to share good practice and to learn from mistakes, while recognising that local conditions will demand their own solutions.

Conclusion
Managing Today

The current changes in public management reflect a need to join up management in order to tackle problems that do not fit into narrow functional chimney stacks of government such as health services, schools, housing departments and police forces.

Whilst this is a necessary and welcomed approach, it does create significant problems, not least in the areas of managerial and organisational accountabilities. Some changes in the structure of government departments need to happen in order to ensure delivery of joined-up solutions on the ground. But today's managers can take action to promote these solutions, even before these larger structural and process changes can come into effect.

The brainstorming seminars provided some recommendations as to what needs to be done – by managers as well as by politicians and citizens – to make a real difference today. There was a strong feeling that managers should try to negotiate more freedom to 'break the rules' – or put differently, to construct a 'consensus to operate' in a manner that will achieve their desired outcomes. Participants argued that this should not be seen as a call for 'philosopher-managers': the managerial role should be one of enhancing democratic processes, not substituting for them. But there are things that managers can do to create joined-up management now. Participants identified three:

- **Have a good story**
  It is important to develop a good case and a concrete explanation about new ways of working. This is especially important when the goals achieved are not naturally associated with one's own organisational goals. One example that was cited was that of a local librarian who, with the volunteer help of elderly users and financial support from local businesses, created a special after-school programme to accommodate otherwise noisy 'latchkey' children, not only to encourage their reading

but also as a way of reducing loitering and petty thefts from
neighbourhood shops.

- **Build a constituency and legitimacy**
  It is vital for public managers to build support for
  their activities, especially when these involve breaking
  down conventional accepted ways of working. This was
  the experience amongst many of the managers at the
  brainstorming seminars. Gaining trust from citizens, politicians
  and other stakeholders provides the backing essential for
  change. Public service organisations must begin to align their
  missions more closely to the requirements of individuals
  and communities they serve. This can be done by engaging
  people in more regular and proactive dialogue, in order to
  gain greater understanding of common goals and of potential
  for citizen involvement in service provision. Citizens often
  possess capacities beyond those assumed by managers and
  organisations. These can be identified more clearly and
  developed further when more interactive and educative forms
  for public engagements are designed and used.
- **Produce and applaud local results**
  An ongoing theme at the sessions was that managers need
  to make sure that their efforts produce the required local
  results. Furthermore, managers must put a clear spotlight
  on the outcomes to be achieved, showing that joined-up
  management is effective in bringing about improved conditions
  for communities. Although it can be difficult, great advantage
  can be gained by attaching measurable goals to outcomes. And
  when goals are met, managers and local communities should
  trumpet them – make them known to those inside and outside
  the rules.

It is not easy to be a public manager in the current political
environment. Joined-up management requires bold, risk-
taking leadership. Existing chimney stack accountabilities do
not encourage risk-taking, and it can be hard to get people to

run against the grain of traditional accountability systems. But successful public managers need to be visionary and daring. They need to be persistent and push for change beyond the traditional defensiveness of individuals and organisations. As one participant formulated it: Managers must look beyond the interests of their own agency. Public managers should not be hung up on organisational boundaries. They have to focus on making a difference to societies.

Appendix: Participants in the brainstorming seminars

Victor Adebowale	Chief Executive, Centrepoint, and PMF Trustee
Keith Barnes	Chief Executive, Thurrock District Council
Anne Bennett	Fellow, Office for Public Management, and PMF Trustee
Baroness Blackstone	Minister of State, Department for Education and Employment
Margaret Blankson	Area Officer, Community Learning and Leisure Services, London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham
Stephen Boys-Smith	Director of Police Policy Directorate, Home Office
Libby Brayshaw	Project Director, 2000 x 2000
Jeremy Cowper	Head of the Better Government Team, Cabinet Offices
Robin Douglas	Director, Office for Public Management, and PMF Trustee
Naomi Eisenstadt	Chief Executive, Family Service Units
Andrew Foster	Controller, Audit Commission, and PMF Trustee
Shaks Ghosh	Chief Executive, Crisis
Sue Goss	Director, Office for Public Management, and PMF Trustee
Terry Hanafin	Chief Executive, Croydon Health Authority, and PMF Trustee
Judy Hargadon	Chief Executive, Barnet Health Authority
Paul Henderson	Director, Community Development Foundation North
Baroness Hollis of Heigham	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department of Social Security
Chris Holmes	Director, Shelter

Robert Hughes	Chief Executive, Kirklees Metropolitan Council
Lars Jeding	Director General, Ministry of Finance, Sweden, and PMF Trustee
Tessa Jowell MP	Minister of State for Public Health, Department of Health
Lionel Joyce	Chief Executive, Newcastle City Health NHS Trust
Alasdair Liddell	Director of Planning and Performance Management, NHS Executive
Michael Lyons	Chief Executive, Birmingham City Council
Peter Mathison	Chief Executive, Benefits Agency
Laurie McMahon	Director, Office for Public Management, and PMF Trustee
John McTernan	Special Advisor, Department of Social Security
Alun Michael MP	Minister of State, Home Office
Clive Miller	Senior Fellow, Office for Public Management, and PMF Trustee
Mark Moore	Professor, J F Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University, and PMF Trustee
Geoff Mulgan	Director, DEMOS
Greg Parston	Chief Executive, Office for Public Management and Chairman, PMF
Caroline Pickering	Grants and Policy Advisor, London Housing Federation
Sylvie Pierce	Chief Executive, London Borough of Lambeth
William Plowden	Programme Director, Atlantic Fellowships, and PMF Trustee
Chris Price	Editor, *the Stakeholder* Magazine
Andrew Puddephatt	Director, Charter 88
Barry Quirk	Chief Executive, London Borough of Lewisham

Heather Rabbatts	Chief Executive, London Borough of Lambeth, and PMF Trustee
Norma Redfearn	Headteacher, West Walker Primary School
Roger Smith	Social Policy Manager, Social Policy Unit, The Children's Society
Jean Spray	Director, Health Education Authority
Jane Steele	Principal Research Fellow, Public Management Foundation
Julia Unwin	Independent consultant and PMF Trustee
Dorothy Wedderburn	Emeritus Professor, Imperial College London, and PMF Trustee
Caroline White	Chief Executive, English Churches Housing Group, and Member of Inter-departmental Government Advisory Group
Jude Williams	Director, Health Promotion, East London and the City Health Authority