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360° Degree Leadership in the Public Sector: Developing an Approach to Collective Leadership

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ABSTRACT

Leadership theories have focused on the innate qualities of an individual, the behaviours adopted, the situations in which leadership takes place and leadership that is specific to particular functions. These theories have their place but arguably they tend to ignore leadership increasingly important dynamics within partnership contexts. The paper examines the concept of public leadership and asks whether there is a better way of leading. It introduces the notion of a collective leadership style where leaders at all levels both share and distribute leadership responsibilities. In so doing the paper seeks to discover where the tipping point lies in turning shared leadership into distributed leadership. It asks how leaders at all levels of all public sector organisations can lead up, down and across in shaping the agenda and how all leaders can play a part in turning visionary strategies into meaningful action ‘on the ground’.

The Challenge for Public Leaders

The term leadership is so nebulous that no-one has ever been able to measure it and yet everyone has tried to define it. As Stogdill (1974:259) argues “there are almost as many definitions of leadership as there are persons who have attempted to define the subject”. A recent publication by the Department for Further Education and Skills (DFES 2007) observed that:

On 9 August 2003 there were 12,963 books on leadership. If we were able to read at the rate of one per day this would equate to 35 years of reading, including weekends. By 28th February 2005 this had already increased to 47 years and 17,138 books

Literature is evidently characterised by a plethora of definitions and correspondingly the actual practice of leadership is characterised by complexity. This applies to the public and the private sector but it is the public sector that has to contend more with competing needs and expectations of diverse stakeholders.

The central theme of this paper is to suggest that there is an opportunity to negotiate through this complexity and that this can be undertaken by a process of collective leadership which operates across and at all levels of public sector activity through collegiate (distributed) leadership and collaborate (shared) leadership. It is what this paper will call 360° Compass Leadership™. The idea behind this is quite simple. The seven key features of collective leadership, which are further elucidated below, are illustrated in the centre of figure 1. The notion of shared and distributed leadership are shown by indicating that leaders lead in all directions (thus emphasizing 360° leadership).

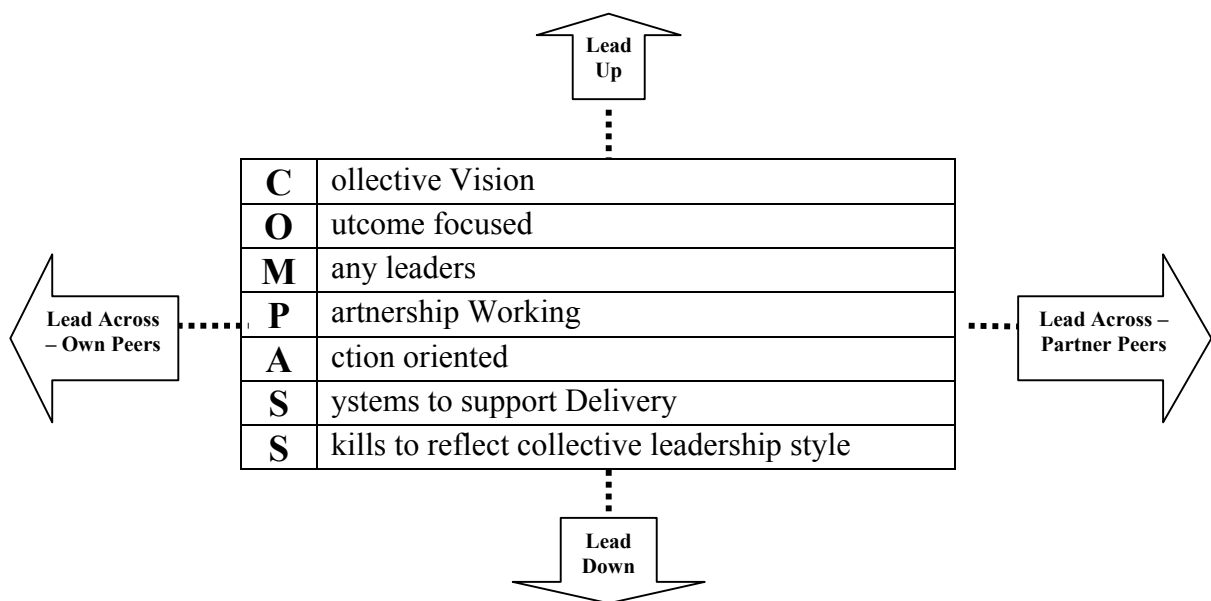


Figure 1: 360° Compass Leadership

The origin of the words “leading” and “leadership” derive from the old German word ‘lidan’ (to go) and an old English word ‘lithan’ (to travel). In this sense, leadership means ‘leading the way’ through one’s own actions. Setting collective direction is critical to the challenge of public leadership. This applies as much to the policy makers as it does to the most junior public servant at the front-end of public services.

The intention of this paper is to ask a number of questions. First, given the increasingly complex world of public services, why do we need to think differently about leadership in the public sector? Second, what is public leadership and, third how can we identify and measure good public leadership within a framework that seeks to create and demonstrate public value? It concludes with a practical example that illuminates how such measures can be linked to means of implementing the vision. The main challenge begins with a greater understanding of the complexity of public services. This means there is a need to think differently about public leadership. If this is achieved, this would doubtless help in understanding what public leadership means and how it can be assessed and measured.

The UK government wants a public sector that is fit for purpose. It has outlined what the government views as its clear vision, in which everyone should have access to public services that are efficient, effective, excellent, equitable, empowering and constantly improving. It has also described an overall outcome expressed through the government’s wider objectives of greater social justice and a higher quality of life for all. (Cabinet Office 2006:6). Although one of the key aims of the public sector reform programme is to encourage an ethos of ‘one-public-service’ the strategy document also acknowledges that the reform “needs to be carefully tailored to the characteristics of different services” (2006:5). There will thus be a number of different leaders who will need to apply different weight to the reform depending on the service that it is being applied to – but within the overall vision for improved public services. This requires partnership working at the highest levels of public service. The approach also demands action to implement the reform programme. This includes the development and improvement of both existing and new systems and an encouragement to improve the capacity and capability of public sector organisations through the development of skills. The point is acknowledged that “strengthening leadership, particularly inspirational leadership” and “investment in workforce development” is closely linked to performance. (2006:11). In keeping with the aim to make central government more strategic with Departments focusing on defining the outcomes they want from the public services they are responsible for requires the “systems needed to achieve them”. The approach also puts “customers at the heart of service provision”.

In answering the key questions described previously and taking account of the overall context of public sector reform briefly outlined, the paper argues that these principles of reform should be demonstrably reflected by central government and incorporated within all other elements of public service delivery. It suggests that to improve public sector leadership there must be a clear vision which articulates shared aims and public values. It should be outcome focused in order to improve a sense of community well being which is aligned to the broader overall outcome desired by government. There is a need to acknowledge that there are many different leaders who work in an increasingly partnership-oriented setting. The way in which leaders lead also needs to be tailored to different circumstances (thus applying different leadership styles). The

efforts of the leaders should also be directed towards encouraging their own team and partners to undertake action oriented activity and to develop effective systems and skills.

In an attempt to resolve the problems of measurement, an illustration of public leadership standards will be offered for discussion. These standards draw together what are considered to be four broad contexts of leadership that support the UK government's approach to public sector reform. These are community leadership (ODPM 2004), political leadership (Hartley, & Branicki 2006) and organisational leadership - supported by the need to develop individuals' leadership styles. These have not previously been discussed by either practitioners or the research community in this way. It will be argued that such standards have the potential to offer a benchmark by which public leadership can be measured and how leaders at all levels of the organization can play a part in both delivering and shaping the leadership agenda.

In the UK, a series of seminars has been funded by the Economic and Social Research Council. This seminar series has set a public leadership challenge which seeks to address the broad questions outlined in this introduction. A summary of these seminars is available at: <http://www.esrcsocietytoday.ac.uk/ESRCInfoCentre/minisite/publicleadership/>

The aim of the first seminar was to set the scene in relation to the context of reform. Emerging views included the following:

- Capability reviews undertaken with four central departments highlighted that civil servants and ministers were good at setting strategy, but were less successful in displaying passionate and inspiring leadership. This has an impact on the distribution of leadership from Whitehall to local areas and in sharing leadership across an implied cross cutting UK government agenda.
- It was identified that there is a need to move towards a public leadership approach which combines different forms of leadership in relation to policy, community and organisational leadership supported by effective co production leadership. This has an affinity with the contexts of leadership described above.
- Significant gaps were evident between the rhetoric and reality of reform in health, education, crime and criminal justice and local government, often linked to a short-term focus. This has a detrimental impact on longer-term sustainable action and is likely to lead to tension between the needs of the political context and that of the community and organisational contexts.
- Good opportunities exist in the future through the role of local government as 'first among equals' and Local Strategic Partnerships as the 'partnership of partnerships' (DCLG 2006 and Woolas 2006) in providing strong collective leadership.
- At present there is a tendency for most partnerships to 'consume' rather than 'create' and that improvement is needed in relation to governance arrangements and effective action planning.

During the subsequent discussion some key points were identified. This included the need to develop a collaborative public leadership framework, identifying the differing leadership styles which are needed and focusing more on the creation and demonstration of public value rather than ‘hard’ targets.

The second seminar explored the impact of reform on leadership and what responses were needed. Common themes included:

- **Public leaders need to tackle uncertainty.** There is a tendency for leaders to focus on ‘known’ problems and ‘known’ solutions. The reality of public service is that problems are often more complex and intractable and thus require a leadership approach that is both creative and adaptive to the circumstances and which deals comprehensively with the intractable nature of these types of problems. It is an approach that would encourage leaders to ‘ask questions’ rather than implement “off-the-shelf” solutions and acknowledge that the answers may lie with many people and not just the favoured few.
- **Public leaders need to develop a different set of skills.** Research suggests that leaders do not often evidence the current skill sets that are required of them – and this is more acute in the public sector. This has implications if a new cross sector skill set is considered important through the reform process. The development of public leaders often places too much emphasis on types of leadership – and a tendency to undertake this within organisational silos - with insufficient attention given to what leaders actually do and how leaders combined actions achieve success.
- **Public leaders often fail to put leadership into practice ‘on the ground’.** The seminar identified some principles to assist in meeting this challenge. There is a need to keep in touch with the ‘big picture’ without getting into minute technical detail, to ‘give space’ for effective leadership to develop rather than employ “knee-jerk” reactions and to ensure that leaders actions are monitored in the same way as actual performance.

It was concluded that ‘models of leadership’ tended to confuse rather than conflate the elements of effective public leadership and that the focus should be more on the purpose of leadership and its outcomes. Context is therefore critical in linking the responses to the desired outcomes. There was a strong consensus – in support of the first seminar – that public leadership outcomes should reflect the creation and demonstration of public value. It was also acknowledged that it remains difficult to identify what ‘public value’ actually means, but that efforts should be made to put this at the heart of public performance.

Why do we need to think differently about leadership?

The challenge for public leaders is set against a background of increasing public sector reform as part of the wider modernising government agenda. This seeks to reinforce more open,

transparent and customer-focused government (HMSO 1999) with a view to increasing the trust of the public in the provision of public services.

The paper is written against the background of challenges and inconsistencies from the various reform programmes. They potentially put meaning behind the government's modernisation agenda with its emphasis on locally delivered services and greater accessibility and responsiveness; greater accountability to and stronger engagement with local communities; the need to work in partnership across agencies (with statutory support such as the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 and the Health Act 1999 in which Section 31 provides for flexibilities of pooled budgets, lead commissioning and integrated provision) and greater flexibility and freedoms but within a national framework which provides standards and accountability mechanisms through Local Area Agreements.

A number of key challenges are presented by this plethora of reform programmes for both the public sector organisations and the academic community. First and foremost is that the various reform programmes are being implemented 'in silos'. Second, where research explores collaborative working, there is a similarly narrow focus on single disciplines rather than wider arrangements and third is the need for public sector leaders to accept that leadership needs to improve, something that leaders are often reluctant to accept (Handy 1985).

Much has been written about the leadership qualities needed in collaborative working (Ansari et al. 2001). Equally, much has been written about the qualities needed to lead organisations and the links with success (Burns 1978, Collins 2001, Grint 2000). This paper takes a different approach in thinking about leadership. It does not look at leadership as the innate characteristic of an individual (Stogdill 1974); nor does it look at leadership as a set of behaviours (Adair 1983). Whilst acknowledging the importance of situation and the "no one-best-way" school of thought (Fiedler 1967, 1972, Vroom and Yetton 1973), it does not represent the prominent thinking. In this regard it has some affinity with the notion of situational leadership ("it all depends"). Having said this, the paper also acknowledges Grint's view that the 'context' is not always what it seems and can be socially constructed by leaders and decision makers (Grint 2005b:1470). In this regard leaders will need to adopt different leadership styles dependent upon whether the 'problem' is tame, wicked or of a critical nature and be prepared to undertake a reality check to provide confidence that the problem to be solved 'is what it seems'.

Grint (2005b) argues that leaders will need to respond with either 'soft' or 'hard' leadership styles. Partnership and collective working will often be focused on what he describes as the 'wicked problems' which lends itself primarily to the softer leadership style. This has implications for both the leader and the follower for the very reasons that Grint (ibid) illuminates (for example, a fear of being seen to be 'indecisive' rather than 'collaborative'). Adopting particular leadership styles will thus require some element of the 'best of the past' including the trait theories from earlier literature (see, for example, Stogdill 1974) as well as some of the more novel approaches that this paper puts forward. Most particularly the collective approach embraces the rationale of transformative leadership (Bass 1998) with its focus on expressed confidence in and drive towards a vision, as developed by Kotter (1995, 1999 and 2003) in relation to the transformation process. It also encompasses the characteristics of adaptive

leadership which includes a focus on dialogue rather than hierarchical power, developing confidence in working across organisational boundaries and respect for interesting questions (Heifetz 1994). This is complementary to the focus given to wicked problems described earlier (Grint 2005b).

What the paper does argue uniquely, is the need to combine all of these elements within a leadership style that is described as collective with the aim of achieving shared outcomes through collaborative working between different organisations on the one hand and distributing responsibility and encouraging teamwork through the collegiate efforts of those within each of the distinct organisations on the other hand.

We can look back to the origins of these two words as this will assist us in understanding the dynamics of leadership within a collective context. Collaborate originates from the two latin terms *com* - ("with") and *labore* ("to work") and thus to define the word as to "work with". It is thus applicable as a means of describing shared leadership *between* different organisations but with some shared aims. The term collegiate is of, relating to, or comprising a college which itself originates from the latin 'con' (together) and 'leg' (law). It may be described as originally referring to people who are equally empowered members of the same organisation or society who work to a common set of rules. It is thus an appropriate means of describing individuals or teams within one organisation but with a degree of responsibility and autonomy. An example can be offered in relation to the structure of some universities in England which are known as collegiate universities. In such universities functions are divided between the central departments of the university and a number of colleges. It differs from a centralised university in that colleges have substantial responsibility and autonomy in the running of the university but with a focus on the more localised college. Consider here the structure of a police force and a local authority. Both would have a role in setting some parameters from the centralised headquarters but the emphasis today is on devolving authority to the local unit such as a police basic command unit or an area team. Devolution involves the shaping of policy as well as the implementation of programmes as opposed to de-centralisation which is where policy is determined centrally but delivered locally.

Shared and distributed leadership can apply at all levels of all organisations. To illustrate: a chief executive of a local authority will share the leadership of the local strategic partnership (LSP) with senior executives of other organisations. Each executive officer should then distribute that leadership throughout each of the constituent organisations - including partners within the third sector - with a view to achieving the shared aims and objectives. In turn, middle leaders (having received the devolved leadership from senior management) will also need to share their leadership with peers from other organisations in turning the strategy into action and to distribute the leadership within their own teams and influencing the activity of others. This is the essence of collective leadership and, it is suggested, the potential tipping point in turning strategy into action. Not only is it a different way of thinking about leadership but it also poses challenges to the traditional notion of leadership development.

There are three main reasons for looking at leadership in a different way:

First, an understanding of collective leadership is needed in making collaborative and collegiate working a reality; yet leadership means different things to different people at different times and there is no real understanding as to what leadership is or (importantly) what elements of leadership lead to successful implementation of a vision. An integrated framework would thus assist.

Second, collective leadership applies at all levels. Having defined the vision and set the priorities, leaders then need to have confidence that the intended outcomes will be achieved. There is a tendency to rely upon the traditional hierarchical structures to achieve the outcomes which itself reinforces the notion of ‘top-down’ leadership. An acknowledgement that better results can be achieved through improved and distributed leadership would be helpful.

Third, it is argued that leadership is often the most lacking ingredient in making partnership working a reality and, more worryingly, that there is a reluctance to accept this amongst leaders. This effects leadership development at all levels and within all organizations (Chesterton 2002). Without the tacit acknowledgement from leaders that improvement is probably needed in both organisational and individual leadership as well as in the performance of the organisation, improvements in leadership are unlikely to occur.

Senior leaders in public sector organisations lead and focus on those elements of core business considered important and attempt to achieve an appropriate balance between the national priorities set by government and those determined locally or within the service. Additionally public leaders have to pay due regard to the expectations and needs of partner organisations or agencies. The world of the public sector leader is thus a more complex one and one in which he or she has to take account of what the public values in the same way as private sector leaders need to take account of what the shareholders value; invariably, for the private sector, it is profit, but for the public leader, it is about achieving the social goals desired by communities. This needs to be delivered in a way that achieves legitimacy with the community, is politically sustainable with Whitehall and is operationally feasible within the organisations. Public sector reform can be linked to four main leadership contexts:

- Community Leadership
- Political Leadership
- Organisational Leadership
- Individual Leadership

This suggested new way of thinking draws together the collective nature of shared and distributed leadership within a framework that can illustrate how public leadership can satisfy the intractable nature of the four public sector reform leadership contexts and provide some support for dealing with the increasing complexity that is evident. The paper draws upon the earlier described emerging findings of the ESRC seminar series that seeks to identify and respond to this public leadership challenge and to offer some pointers for future development.

What begins to emerge in considering the importance of collective leadership is a focus on two things; first the requirement to make things happen because they are ‘important’. This is what

this paper refers to as distributed leadership. Second, leadership is also about securing ‘buy-in’ from across the range of stakeholders. This is based on a sound vision which articulates the path through which public services will need to negotiate to achieve the given end, thus giving direction. This is what the paper describes as shared leadership. As Kotter (2003:26) argues in relation to change:

“.... you have to remember change for change's sake is not the point. For change to be good, you've got to make it happen, yes, but more important it's got to be in a good direction.”

This latter point emphasises once again the importance of ‘direction’ – a “way of seeing things” and thus the importance of developing ‘intelligent’ (“all-seeing”) leaders – those who collect and analyse the right information but also ensure that organisations learn through this information and its own people and the shared learning that can result from effective collective action.

The vision and strategy may be good, but if this is to be turned into action on the ground, more is needed. The traditional approaches suggest that leaders need followers. This is true, but for every leader at one level there will be a need for leaders at other levels. This is the notion of distributed leadership. Kotter (2003:32) suggests that today's organizations need heroes at every level.

“To truly succeed in a turbulent world, more than half the workforce needs to step up to the plate in some arena and provide change leadership. Most of this leadership will be modest. It might be a young sales rep (sic) who makes the company see a critical new opportunity, or a summer intern who helps put together a vivid demonstration of a problem. It is the sum of all these heroic actions - large and small - that enables organizations to change in significant ways”.

A Collective Public Leadership Framework

For the purposes of collective leadership and the background discussion, two definitions are offered:

Collaborative: Where leadership is shared between different organisations which share a common aim and vision;

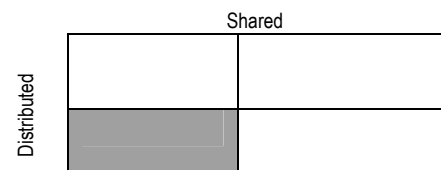
Collegiate: Where leadership is distributed throughout the single (but collaborating) organisation.

These can be assessed on a two-dimensional scale as follows:

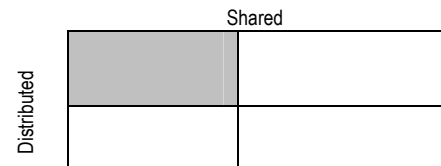
		Low <----- Shared Leadership -----> High	
Low <--Distributed Leadership --> High	Collegiate but not Collaborate	Collaborate and Collegiate	
	Not Collegiate nor Collaborative	Collaborate but not Collegiate	

In assessing the different dimensions the following scenarios can be suggested.

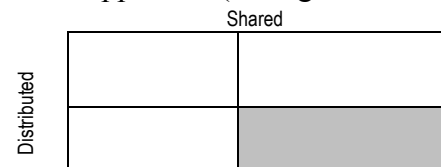
If an organisation takes an individual approach in relation to its own aims and objectives and similarly relies upon individuals to determine their own actions without effective distributive leadership then one could assume that the organisation would continue to operate in a vacuum (or silo) and have little regard to the aims and objectives of other organisations (collaborative) nor those of teams or communities (collegiate). The organisation is likely to be highly centralised and its aims narrowly defined. This is called bureaucratically focused leadership and is likely to be underpinned by individual trait approaches.



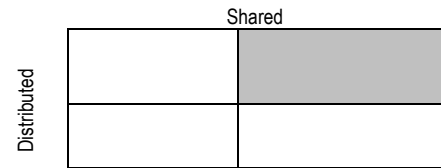
If the organisation continues to operate in its own silo with narrowly defined aims and objectives but does provide some authority to its teams or units then it could be described as collegiate (through effective distributive leadership) but not collaborative. The organisation is likely to be more locally structured but lacking joined-up working. This is called locally focused leadership and is likely to be underpinned by behavioural and transactional approaches.



The third scenario is where the organisation takes a collaborative approach (through shared leadership) in taking forward a shared vision, aims and objectives with partner organisations, but does not match this with distributed leadership within the organisation. The organisation is likely to be more joined up at the executive levels but less so at the non-executive levels and is likely to be more centrally determined and hierarchic in nature. In this case the organisations may take a multi-agency approach at the executive level but could not be described as integrated at non-executive levels with a focus on high level aims and objectives but less emphasis on local integrated delivery. This is called visionary focused leadership and will display some evidence of transformational leadership but at the higher level only.



The final scenario is where the organisation displays both collaborative (shared leadership) and collegiate (distributed leadership) approaches. In this case there will be a multi-agency and integrated approach to collective leadership both across and within the constituent organisations. The organisation is likely to be strategically focused at the executive level with an emphasis on multi-agency collaboration but with an increasingly integrated approach at the non-executive levels with fully devolved authority and responsibility and decentralised structures. This is called ‘vision-to-delivery’ focused leadership and is likely to display all aspects of leadership styles but with a key focus on transformational and adaptive leadership styles.



The overall approaches can be illustrated as follows:

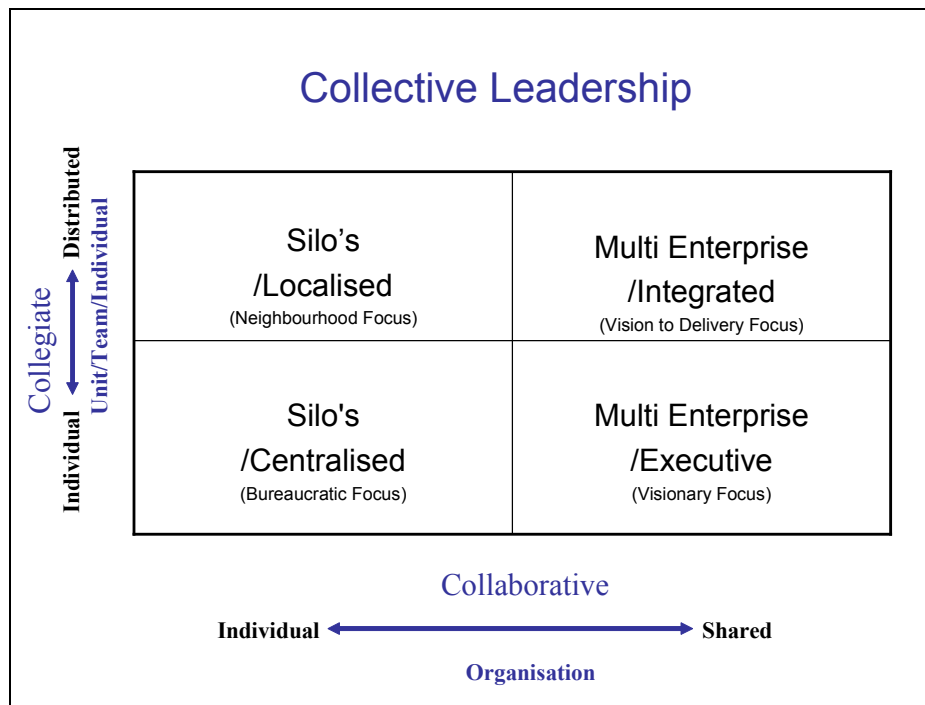


Figure 2: A Collective Leadership Framework

A Public Leadership Challenge: Can Public Leadership be Measured?

An important point to reiterate is that it is very difficult to establish whether leadership is effective. The evidence base is not substantial and where evidence is available it often relies upon the views of leaders themselves which can be self fulfilling through their own justifications and their own social construction. There is a need to get beyond this and to establish how leadership can be assessed and how its effectiveness can be measured thus providing a realistic evidence base that thus far has been elusive. The paper thus suggests that any future public

leadership standards should reflect the emerging points made from the first two seminars in relation to the impact of the current reform programme on public leaders. The final two seminars of the series (in September and November 2007) will address this final challenge - namely how can public leadership be measured?

This paper argues that the two dimensions of collaborative (shared) and collegiate (distributed) leadership provide a useful starting point for any future framework and that the goal and purpose of public leadership is to create and demonstrate public value. In examining how public leadership can be measured it is important to look back at the overall purpose of public leadership described earlier (why we need to think differently about leadership). The overall purpose was described as securing the social, environmental and economic well being of the community. This is in alignment with the Local Government Act 2000 which introduces this new responsibility for local government. For the first time, a statutory authority to work in partnership and expend public finances to achieve shared aims has been provided. This provides the first element for the development of standards and public leadership measures by drawing together community and political leadership together with organisational and individual leadership.

The ESRC seminars described earlier highlighted the importance of public value. This can be expressed as the manifestation of social, environmental and economic well being in the UK context and can provide the second element of a standards framework. For the purposes of public value, the overall outcome (or what Mark Moore would refer to as a substantive statement) is then broken down into progressively more specific goals and objectives. The paper makes a link between the public leadership contexts of community, political and organisational/individual leadership and the three key elements of public value described by Moore (1994) as the strategic triangle of social goals, legitimacy and organisational capability.

Public value was first described by the Harvard scholar Mark Moore back in 1994. After a slow start, it is now receiving specific attention in the UK (for example, The Cabinet Office Strategy Unit (Kelly, Mulgan & Meurs 2003), The Work Foundation (Horner & Hazel 2005), Accenture (2006), and the BBC (2004)). Quite simply, public value may be described as the public sector equivalent of the private sector focus on profits for shareholders. Creating and demonstrating public value is much more difficult to define, particularly when one considers the intractable nature of the 'wicked problems'. Stoker argues that the arrival of networked governance implies a different way of working for politicians as well as public sector managers or administrators. They need a vision of an alternative paradigm, an overarching framework in which to put their new practices. This alternative paradigm, Stoker argues, is public value management. (Stoker 2006). Interestingly, another point inferred by Stoker is that the focus on New Public Management (NPM) which has dominated public administration for the last two decades is now out-of-date. Dunleavy et. al. (2006) go one stage further in arguing that NPM is dead. This paper argues that NPM could be replaced by New Public Leadership (NPL) which comprises public value principles as well as the four contexts of public leadership.

A first pre-requisite of public value is to identify what it is the public actually do value. This is what Moore calls the social goals. The introduction of the community leadership role for local

government is a key step in this direction and requires local authorities to identify and respond to the needs and expectations of the public and to work collaboratively with others. This is suggested as the first context of public leadership within the reform programme (community leadership) and is one example in which the effectiveness of leadership can be demonstrated. Alongside this is the need for other public sector organisations to undertake similar identifications of public value. There is clearly potential to share the responsibility between public organisations in identifying these goals through collaborative leadership and to balance public needs with those of the authorising environment (Whitehall). This provides a link between public value and the suggested second context of public leadership – which is the need to lead the political environment (political leadership).

The second stage is to deliver services in a way that secures legitimacy with the public and the authorizers (political leadership). Governance arrangements themselves can increase the legitimacy of governments, its decision making and outcomes (Demery et.al 1993). This paper also argues that the delivery style (the way in which services are delivered) will have an impact on legitimacy and support. At the public organisation level the way in which the local services are delivered and perceived will also impact the legitimate delivery of public services and thus, accessible to evaluation. The third element of Moore's model is the capacity of the public services to deliver the social goals. Capacity will include the extent to which leaders proactively position the public service and its people to improve delivery. This is the role of effective organisational leadership, supported by individual leadership development which this paper uses as the third context for public leadership.

Public value begins to map out a high level means of evaluating public leadership within the context of the UK reform programme. Breaking down the substantive statement (to secure social, environmental and economic well being) and based on the extensive literature review of leadership issues, previous research (Brookes 2006) and experience a tentative definition of excellent public leadership can offered as a means of developing standards and measures.

At a broad substantive level excellent public leadership within the context of collective public service delivery is likely to be reflected by partners who:

Display Community Leadership in all aspects of the role through active engagement with key stakeholders and, in particular, to both reflect and engage with community-led priorities and deliver public value. Excellent leaders will be open to the sharing of expertise and bring positive benefits to their own and other partnerships.

Develop political leadership skills in order to secure accountability to and with key stakeholders in relation to clearly defined publicly-valued outcomes and readily engages in dialogue to further secure continued improvement within the context of the authorising environment.

Engage in effective Organisational Leadership to shape the Future through a shared vision which inspires and motivates and to lead delivery through distributed responsibility supported by regular monitoring and evaluation of the effectiveness of community outcomes.

Build Capacity of the Organisation, it's teams and Individual Leaders through effective relationships between and within partners and enables others to achieve. Excellent leaders should be committed to the development of others as well as self development to enable leaders to deal with the complexity of the role, and give due regard to the need for effective systems and mix of resources.

Having defined the standards, it would then be useful to develop measures by which the standard of public leadership can be assessed and evaluated. Some examples (subject to continuing development) are provided below.

The examples provided are used to illustrate how each of the standards can be broken down into more specific and measurable elements and how each of these measures can then be linked to the public value model. To support this, a brief explanation is offered:

In relation to social goals, the aim of community leadership is to ensure that community needs are identified and translated into action. The aim of political leadership is to balance both local priorities and those determined nationally with a view to achieving a degree of alignment between competing expectations. The aim of organisational leadership is to define an overall vision and cascade this through the organisation. This approach also links to the earlier discussion in relation to shared leadership (between the organisation, its authorizing environment and other agencies) and distributed leadership (in driving the vision relentlessly through each of the constituent organisations).

Public Value UK Landscape	Social Goals	Legitimacy	Capability	Moore's Strategic Triangle Collective Leadership
Community Leadership	<i>Community Needs translated into action</i>	<i>Community Results & Delivery</i>	<i>Co-production Activity</i>	Shared Leadership
Organisational & Individual Leadership	<i>Overall Vision & Cascaded Goals</i>	<i>Shared Vision (& Buy-in from staff)</i>	<i>Improvement of Systems & Skills</i>	Individual Leadership
Political Leadership	<i>National Priorities & Agency Alignment</i>	<i>"Buy-in" at all levels</i>	<i>Political Awareness</i>	Distributed Leadership

Figure 3: Potential Framework for the Evaluation of Public Leadership

Putting it into Practice: The Tipping Point between Strategy and Delivery

This final section of the paper describes how the framework could be applied in practice and how 360 degree leadership can be achieved. Although the main focus is on shared and distributed leadership the importance of individual leadership is not forgotten and indeed plays an important role in bridging the gap between shared and distributed leadership (and can thus be viewed as the potential tipping point).

The concepts of shared and distributed leadership are not new. What is novel is to bring the two together as distinct dimensions of leadership within a collective framework.

For example, *shared leadership* has been described as a social process (Doyle and Smith 2001) - something that happens between people or between partners. In this sense it does not depend on one person or one partner, but on how people or a number of partners act together to make sense of their particular agenda and shared outcomes. Different partners may take the lead but at different times.

Distributed leadership is a very similar term but in this paper is linked more to the related concept of being collegiate. For example in the world of education, the National College for School Leadership argue that the concept of distributed leadership has a variety of meanings, and that some of these meanings (explicitly and/or implicitly) resemble earlier notions and cite collegiality as one of those.

The paper now illustrates how this framework can be applied in practice. First, let us consider the 'typical' community safety partnership (and the paper will assume that effective collaborative links exist with the Local Strategic Partnership):

The police commander, chief executives and other senior leaders from constituent partner agencies will normally form the leadership group (or responsible authority or other pseudonym for the statutory partnership). The group will have shared aims (the strategy) and will clearly wish to achieve the objectives of these aims. Most partnerships will deliver this through a 'shared' action plan.

Leadership of a Traditional Partnership

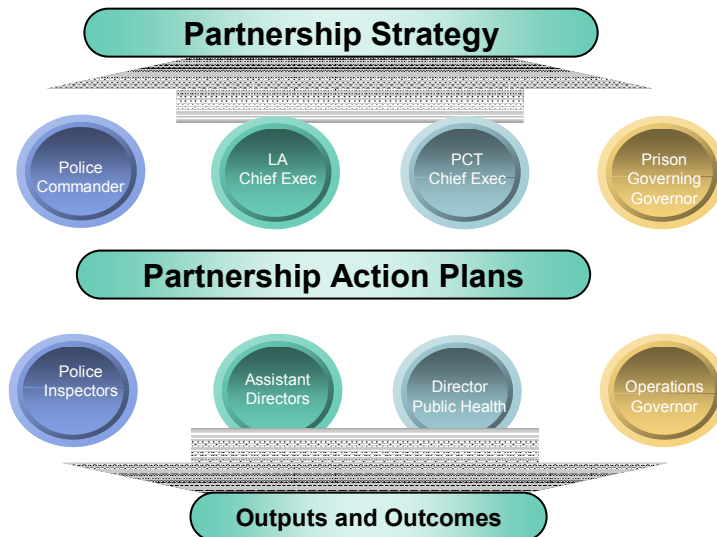


Figure 4: Leadership in a traditional partnership

Where partnership working often falls down is in turning the strategy into action. This is what this paper refers to as ‘strategic drift’ or the ‘implementation gap’.

The role of individual chief executives and police commanders is clearly important in setting the initial vision and we see this within existing partnerships. With collective leadership, individuals influence one another during the vision setting and development of the partnership's vision. As a result, the partnership moves toward its goals with unity. This is the first key step in a public leadership challenge – that is to share the leadership across the relevant partnership players. The second step is to assess its effectiveness and to drive it through the constituent organisations. There is potential to evaluate shared and distributed leadership.

This second stage starts with efforts to ensure that the leadership is appropriately applied within each of the constituent organisations that make up the partnership. At the local level we know that police inspectors, assistant directors and similar people within organisations will receive instructions from their more senior colleagues in taking forward the strategy. We would equally expect these people also to share the leadership at a more tactical level – and so it will continue – until it reaches the beat officer, the housing officer and so forth. By distributing as opposed to instructing the commander retains leadership responsibility. It is also the case within the other organisations.

Leaders exist at all levels of the organisation. There is as much importance for middle leaders to lead ‘up’ the organisation as it is to lead ‘down’. Given the increasingly complex environment

the need to lead ‘across’ (both with peers in other parts of the organisation and peers in partner organisations) is of equal importance. The notion of 360° degree leadership begins to emerge. One could thus view this as leading ‘north’ (leading up), leading ‘south’ (leading down) and leading either ‘west’ (with ones own colleagues) or ‘east’ (with peer colleague in other organisations). On some occasions it may be necessary for a middle leader in one organisation to try and influence the behaviour of a more senior member of a partner organisation – in this case one would be leading ‘north-east’. Each of these directions of leadership will require different (but complementary) skills.

Work is currently being undertaken to build on the classic work of Blanchard and Hersey (1999) with a focus on the development of different styles of individual leadership depending upon both the competency and the commitment of team members. A similar approach is being considered in relation to similar skills with partner peers in which traditional notions of hierarchy and command do not apply. As Grint argued earlier, this requires a more softer skill-based approach in tackling wicked problems. Similar approaches will also be needed at the strategic level and a commitment given to inter-public sector leadership development, such as that suggested by Chesterton (2002).

Effective distributed leadership is suggested as the key to ensuring that the shared visions and strategies developed by executives are delivered ‘on the ground’. This will avoid the ‘implementation gap’. It becomes more complex as one moves through the organisation. First and foremost is the need for ‘middle leaders’ to both understand and “buy-in” to the overall vision. Middle leaders then need to drive the distributed leadership. How can this distributed leadership close the implementation gap? This is an important question if we are to look at how distributed leadership (as distinct from shared leadership) can be evaluated. It is a similar approach to that outlined at the beginning of the paper in relation to government leadership. Some suggested means (using the ‘COMPASS’ framework) are:

- Creating a Collective Vision: Ensuring that the vision and strategies of collaborating partners are in alignment through integration and inclusiveness.
- The vision needs to be Outcome focused: This is clearly the role for the executives of the organization, but integration and inclusiveness is both vertical (throughout the organization) as well as horizontal (across a range of organizations).
- There are thus Many leaders: Clear lines of communication within the respective collaborating organizations is essential. Middle leaders seek to build on and support this communication.
- Middle leaders have a dual role in assisting in the development of, and taking responsibility for, the strategy within and across their peer groups and respective teams. This requires an appreciation of and commitment to Partnership working.
- There is a focus on the achievement of joint objectives and outcomes through joint Action Plans. Middle leaders will drive the action plans to achieve these objectives

whilst keeping an eye on and influencing ‘the bigger picture’. This requires leaders to put ‘intelligence’ at the core of their leadership role.

- Middle leaders will play a key role in the development of Systems to support the vision and action plans.
- Middle leaders take responsibility to develop their own and their team members’ leadership Skills and seek to build capacity to work within a devolved structure and develop an understanding of the need for effective governance arrangements.

In evaluating the effectiveness of distributed public leadership in turning strategies into delivery it is important to identify the context and ask “what is the main purpose and role for the leaders team?” Teams and roles will differ and thus will require different leadership styles. For example, middle leaders of teams may have a purpose of developing policy or processing, undertaking problem solving projects or promoting activity and, not least of which, actually delivering the service. Each activity will require a different range of leadership skills.

Context is just as important for middle leadership as it is for senior leadership. The same can be said of the leadership from the very top of the public sector through Whitehall. The essence of 360° compass leadership described above maps very closely with the national context described in the introduction to this paper. The real challenge for public leadership is to get seamless alignment between the two extremities – the national politicians and senior civil servants and those who deliver on the front-line of public services.

Conclusion: Implementing Effective Public Leadership

360° leadership represents a new way of thinking about public leadership in which shared and distributed leadership is a dual focus for all leaders. Individual leaders (from the most senior levels of public sector delivery to the most junior) will need to adopt collective leadership styles which involves an appreciation and selection of the appropriate collective style (either shared or distributed) as it applies to the particular public leadership context at that particular time. This context is represented by community leadership, political leadership and organisational and individual leadership.

At different times, different leaders will need to apply both shared and distributed leadership attributes. Each will require different leadership systems and skills which need to be developed in line with the overall collective vision. Only by recognizing and then responding to the differing contexts will public leaders be successful. The development of public leadership and the research undertaken by the research community to support it must therefore focus on the intractable nature of the leadership contexts;

- Community Leadership
- Political Leadership
- Organisational and Individual Leadership;

the type of leadership style that is needed;

- Shared Leadership
- Individual Leadership
- Distributed Leadership;

and the intended outcomes of public value;

- Social Goals
- Legitimacy
- Organisational Capability.

In this model senior leaders may need to be prepared to relinquish an element of personal control in order to allow middle leaders to take on the responsibility of leadership. This may also mean accepting that middle leaders may have the answer to organisational problems and challenges. This would not reflect a total abdication of senior leadership responsibility but a move to a position which could assess the outcomes of middle leadership as well as providing support for that role. In return, middle leaders should be prepared to take on new responsibilities and challenges and be committed to shaping the vision as well as merely responding to it. This requires a new way of thinking about leadership. This paper suggests that a 360° leadership approach – using the COMPASS principles – could provide a firm foundation for the development of this model of public leadership which additionally could address the challenges for public leadership that this paper has highlighted.

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