

leadership development commission

an **emerging strategy** for
leadership development
in local government



foreword



The importance of leadership in local government has arguably never been as significant as it is today. The Government's modernisation programme is all about delivering quality services and providing community leadership to local people. Good, effective leadership, both political and managerial, is integral to making this happen.

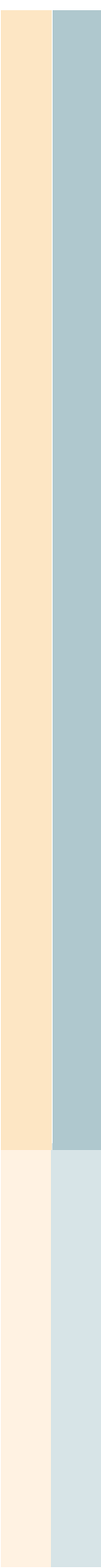
Over the past few years the Audit Commission through the Comprehensive Performance Assessment has identified effective leadership as being critical to securing the improvements we all want to see.

I welcome the report of the Leadership Development Commission within this context. It will provide local authorities with a strategic framework for considering their own leadership development needs while not being prescriptive as to how these should be met in the local context. The Strategy also makes a series of important recommendations for national organisations, which I would urge them to consider.

I have already given my support in principle to the emerging Local Government Leadership Centre and look forward to its launch later this year. I am sure that those involved with its development will consider carefully the recommendations that are made in the Strategy.

I strongly believe that the development of effective leadership in local government is one of the key challenges at the heart of central and local government's drive to improve local democracy and the quality local public services. I welcome the contribution that this Strategy makes to taking forward the work that has already begun to meet that challenge.

Nick Rumbold

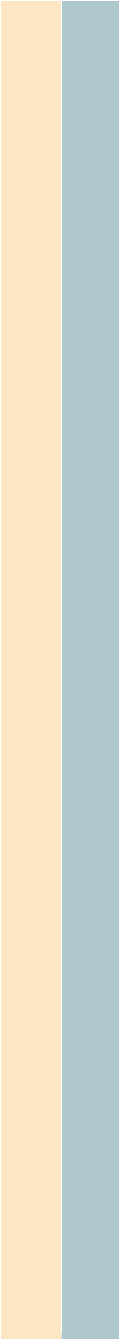


'In most organisations, leadership is the key that unlocks or blocks change. The public service is no different, so the consistently poorer ratings accorded to public sector leaders is a key cause for concern during a period of major reform . . . '

Sir Michael Bichard, Chair of the 'Leading Change in the Public Sector' project Advisory Panel

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executive summary

The Leadership Development Commission (LDC) was established in 2002 to 'review the current situation in leadership and leadership development ... and to develop a National Strategy for Local Government'. The LDC comprises a range of concerned stakeholders from local government (elected members and senior managers), central government, regional employers' organisations, leadership development practitioners and academics excelling in the leadership arena.

There are a number of factors that will effect the building of leadership capacity in local government. These range from the drive for efficiency across the sector to the development of new partnership arrangements across public services.

This strategy aims to provide a framework which will stimulate leadership development at the individual, team, local authority and national levels. It puts forward priorities that will enable leadership development within and across the sector as a whole, making a distinctive contribution to the wide-ranging initiatives that are emerging and already exist.

Although we have consulted widely, we recognise the strategy will not reflect the views of all interested stakeholders as it stands, and for this reason we describe the strategy as one which is emerging – able to respond to changes as they occur.

'All members of the local government family have a duty to promote, and indeed model, good leadership in this sector. Good, effective leadership, whether exercised politically, managerially or jointly is the key to empowering local communities and improving local services.'

Lucy de Groot, Executive Director, IDeA

key drivers for local government leadership

The LDC believes there are significant and substantial improvements in leadership required across local government both to 'lift its game' and to replicate best practice more widely.

Over the next 5 – 10 years, well-performing councils will have the primary-drivers to gauge and respond to diverse community needs and values, and to deliver the right services in line with customer requirements.

This will require leadership of individuals and organisations which seeks continual improvement of services as customers wish to see them.

the challenge for enabling leadership in local government is therefore:

- to provide a joint leading partnership of local politicians and managers
- to ensure a strategic influence over the multiplicity of key partnerships
- to recognise the need to spot and nurture leadership from others at all levels inside and outside the authority
- to develop an adaptable mindset and culture which is responsive to the evolving local context.
- to offer continually a bridging role between different people and interests.

Indeed, it is for these very reasons, that the focus on developing leadership skills in local government lies at the heart of a new Local Government Leadership Centre (LGLC) to be launched in 2004.

Established in partnership between the Office of Public Sector Reform (OPSR), The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM), the LGA, the IDeA, the Employers Organisation and SOLACE, the Centre has been conceived to address the gap in leadership development that is increasingly apparent in the public sector in general, with a particular emphasis on local government

The centre will build on the work of the LDC and will have a remit for sharing and disseminating best practice in leadership and leadership development across the sector, as well as creating or 'badging' targeted leadership development programmes reflecting the specific needs of senior officers and elected members.

Through this approach, the Local Government Leadership Centre will play a pivotal role in improving local government leadership, driving up the quality of local services and thereby enhancing the lives of local people.

'The National Leadership Development Strategy is an important contribution towards developing future leaders and leadership, both managerial and political, at all levels, in local government to ensure the continuous improvement of services to communities. This is a priority for local government, as is looking at the way in which future leaders are recruited from both within, and outside the sector.'

Rob Pinkham, Executive Director, Employers' Organisation for local government

summary of recommendations

The following summary of recommendations have arisen from the case made for leadership development as articulated throughout this strategy. The recommendations are aimed at three different audiences:

- national organisations
- local authorities
- individuals and teams

Improvements in leadership will only occur when all three audiences tackle leadership development in local government in a convincing way.

Full recommendations are included within pages 25 – 29 of this strategy.

1. developing leaders; national support and guidance

a The Local Government Leadership Centre (LGLC) will be set up to:

- stimulate thinking and practice.
- commission research and debate; to include such areas as examining and addressing the constraints and blockages that prevent effective leadership in local government and providing guidance on succession planning in an equal opportunities context.
- advise national and local government on the progress of 1b – 1f, as outlined below
- carry out surveys and impact assessments to build on existing benchmarking eg. 2004 leadership development survey.

b The LGLC to support the **further** development of the Framework of Leadership Capacities, [see page 20] which identifies local government's key political and managerial leadership needs.

c The LGLC to broker and fund a joint network of procurers and providers that will develop and evolve a framework within which leadership development and good practice could be exchanged and evolve.

d The LGLC to establish, fund and provide network support to action learning, mentoring and coaching throughout the local government sector.

e The LGLC to fund an information exchange point for models, methods, good practice and providers of leadership development; to include the promotion of best practice in developing future leaders.

f National political parties, trades unions and the Employers' Organisation are asked to advocate the use of the framework of leadership capacities in the selection for leadership positions, both political and managerial.

g National political parties to develop initiatives to attract top quality candidates for political office, and encourage the support of more women and people from black and minority ethnic communities to become local authority councillors.

h The Audit Commission to build into the CPA process, measures to assess the quality and effectiveness in leadership in local authorities.

2. developing leadership within the local authority

- a All Authorities to link their organisational development and leadership development agendas, including issues of succession planning, and attracting, recruiting and retaining top quality applicants for senior management positions, including those from non-local authority backgrounds.
- b All Authorities to recognise that, leaders, whether political or managerial, still need development opportunities to improve and maintain effectiveness in their role.
- c All Authorities to undertake a regular overall self assessment of their leadership capabilities using a diagnostic tool and address any deficiencies.
- d All Authorities to ensure they have tailored development for their leading teams, especially for the Executive, Senior Management Team, and jointly between the two.
- e All Authorities are strongly encouraged to use a nationally agreed framework of leadership capacities as part of their selection processes for leadership roles, both political and managerial.
- f All Authorities are strongly encouraged to support more women and people from black and minority ethnic communities to become senior managers.
- g All Authorities to take responsibility for sharing good practice and resources for leadership development; to support better cross-authority and partnership working and the sharing of public sector leadership development practice as a whole.

3. developing individuals and teams

- a All leaders and leadership teams (political, managerial and combined) to own and take responsibility for their leadership development and learning.
- b A self assessment diagnostic tool is made available to both those in leadership positions and their teams, both new and longstanding, to encourage and enable self directed learning.
- c All those in significant leadership positions are strongly encouraged to engage with coaching, mentoring and action learning and, where appropriate, leadership programmes.

In 2001/2, there were 21,850 elected members, with 44% aged 60 or over. Induction and training was patchy and spend on member training and development averaged only £230 per member. This is a matter of concern, given that the Audit Commission has identified a link between lack of capacity and understanding among councillors and poor performance of a council in the CPA. Local and central government together will need to address issues around local democracy, communication, image, diversity, organisation and remuneration in order to increase the number of good candidates.

ODPM/EO (2003) Pay and Workforce Strategy

democratic, diverse and dynamic

an emerging strategy for leadership development in local government

The prize for the well performing council of the future is to be recognised by the community for delivering more than is reasonable on its needs and wishes. This despite the fact that there will always be too many demands, too limited powers and too few resources. The challenges to be met are many, but fundamentally the local council will only perform well if its leadership is:

- **democratic** – having healthy representative and political processes working in genuine partnership with managers and the community.
- **diverse** – drawing leadership from all levels and backgrounds within the council, and in the wider community and from partner agencies.
- **dynamic** – adapting proactively to the current, and likely future, demands of its customers, citizens and communities.

This strategy statement by the Leadership Development Commission [LDC] expresses our emerging thinking about what development in local leadership is necessary to achieve this. It is neither definitive – much integration needs to be done – nor is it the last word – that needs to come more fully from wider local government, other stakeholders and crucially its communities. However, the LDC considers that the Strategy has something important to offer to the continuing debate in local government on building leadership capacity.

We set out our thinking in the following sections:

- why focus on leadership and leadership development?
- what does the LDC mean by local government leadership?
- what are the key demands and qualities of the well performing council?
- what specific leadership challenges does this present?
- how could leadership be developed in local government?
- recommendations

why the **focus on leadership** and **leadership development** in **local government**?

Local Government is continually under pressure to improve, from both inspections such as Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA), and from its wider public. Local Government does not generally get a good press from its public or its inspectors. Public opinion and the Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) make enough of a case for local government improvement. In addition internal pressures for improvement are also strong, notable even in CPA 'excellent' authorities. The future will demand yet more economic, social, environmental and technological change, all in a setting that offers limited predictability and control. It is hardly surprising that current ideas about government stress the adaptive state (ref 1). There is a pressing case for local government to improve and be adaptive, incrementally in many respects, dramatically in others.

Critical to improvement is effective leadership; local leadership that understands competing needs and demands, makes hard choices and sets a direction which is planned and delivered within its own sphere of influence, capabilities and resources.

'The role of the Chief Executive is changing. It is moving away from the concept of the heroic leader towards transformational change. It is about being supportive rather than saying I know best'

Mike Pitt, CEO Kent County Council

There are many examples of effective leadership emerging to tackle local difficulties sometimes through continuous improvement, sometimes by more dramatic measures. What is needed is a more consistent application of effective leadership across local government appropriate to each local situation. This strategy sets out ways of improving local government's leadership performance in the next 5 – 10 years.

The importance of leadership in local government, and the leadership development which would support it, is underpinned by two factors:

Firstly, **the scale of the local government sector**. It consists of over twenty-one thousand elected members and two million employees, all of whom are there to serve the diverse needs of local people and local communities. It touches the everyday lives of all its citizens. Add to this the pressures of cultural change, innovation, increased performance indicators, an ageing workforce and disenfranchised communities and electorate, and the need for effective leadership has never seemed greater.

Secondly, there is a wide consensus that **leadership is a critical means for the improvement of local government**. It is the catalyst for resolving problems, transforming dire situations and, above all, getting things done now and in the future. Leadership can bridge political and managerial divides, bring the communities and government closer together, close the gap between the dominant and the disadvantaged, and enable complex plans to be manifested in the delivery of practical results. It is for these reasons that the LDC argues that local government leadership, as a whole, must strengthen its local leadership. It is a prize worth striving for by both local politicians and managers.

the central role of leadership



This diagram illustrates how many key players see leadership as the central driver in many initiatives notably the community leadership, improvement and capacity building agendas.

Whilst we do not wish to claim leadership is the sole panacea, it is central to tackling the council's local priorities, its commitment to improvement and its need to enhance its capacity to represent community needs and deliver quality services.

what does the LDC mean by Local Government Leadership?

Organisations need both management and leadership to perform well. Local government is no exception. Whilst the distinction is complex to draw, and the two are closely interrelated, we have relied upon the following working assumptions.

Management is the effective handling of complex situations and demands to deliver what **should** be happening, be it a service or an initiative.

Leadership is creating and 'making happen what wouldn't otherwise happen'. Above all it is getting significant new things done or improvements made.

community, political and managerial leadership

We similarly distinguish between three types of local leadership – community, political and managerial. Community leadership is top of the list. It is the setting of direction, making choices and delivering as far as possible on the local needs and aspirations of the constituent communities, directly through services and indirectly through influence.

Supporting **community leadership** are two types of leadership by individuals with a different basis of authority within the council: the political and the managerial.

Political leadership has the democratic authority of the community to set the Council's direction and make choices on its behalf.

Managerial leadership has the appointed authority to act on these choices and deliver services and influence through the Council's organisation.

External to the Council, there are a range of leadership contributions that impact on the overall community leadership agenda. They include, for example, leadership from within local communities or from local public agencies and private businesses as exercised through Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs). All, it seems to us, contributes to the wider debate around local community leadership.

The chief executives leadership role is about managing external and internal relationships, managing the councils reputation and winning resources. Handling internal relationships involves creating a sense of corporate identity and a single organisation.

Derek Anderson, CEO Wolverhampton City Council

individual and organisational leadership

Similarly, there is a distinction to be made between individual and organisational leadership.

Individual leadership, which often takes most of the limelight, is critical and its development must focus on an individual's position, capacities and potential. However we also see leadership as a distributed activity resting with more than an individual or a few people at the top of the organisation.

Organisational leadership is the collective activity of people, sometimes in teams, extending throughout and beyond the organisation. The wider organisational climate created by structures, systems and culture does much to help or hinder the development of leadership where it is needed. Its development has a wider, and potentially more complex, set of possibilities across many individuals and teams.

Whilst community leadership may rest on key individuals, ultimately we regard it as the capacity of many people in the Council and outside to harness people and resources to address a challenge. It has more prospects of success when individuals can compensate and complement one another. It does however mean distributing power and influence more widely than is often currently the case in local government.

In order to develop effective leadership for the Council it is essential to have a clear vision of the well performing council.

'Leadership is a thing that's hard to define but when you go into a council you quickly know whether its there or not. Is there a sense of vision and purpose within the Council? Are people united behind those visions and purposes? Is there a feeling of confidence about the direction being taken and a 'can do' approach to delivery? Do leading members and leading officers know their role in delivering the big picture to internal and external stakeholders?'

Cllr Richard Kemp, Liverpool City Council



what are the **qualities** of the **well performing** council?

Central to this strategy is a picture of the effective or well performing local council over the next five-ten years. Leadership, and indeed leadership development, are a means to this end. What is our vision of local government in which we are saying that effective leadership is so vital?

The full character of the well functioning authority over the next five-ten years is being set out by a range of bodies including local authorities themselves, Government, LGA, EO, IDeA, and Audit Commission. Our vision would include two aspects central to leadership;

- the scope of the Council's role;
- the basis of decision-making.

The first core aspect is the scope of the council's role. In a recent DEMOS publication *The Adaptive State* (ref.1) it is argued that the public will want more than better services from government, they will want 'public value'. 'Public value' is what distinguishes local authorities from market providers and is what the 'public are willing to make sacrifices of money and freedom to achieve.

We expect the CPA to lead to a greater level of movement at senior levels in local government, especially where ambitious managers move to poor and weak authorities where there is scope to lead and deliver improvement.

Thus the problem at this level seems to be that the pool of potential applicants for senior jobs is limited, rather than the capabilities of existing staff being inadequate. This underlines the need to bring more potential leaders into local government from outside the sector and for authorities to get better at bringing on talent already in their organisations.

This means something for the individual as both customer and citizen. As customers, public value means;

- increasing levels of service provisions;
- improving the quality of service, particularly respecting the individual.

As citizens, public value means;

- being treated with equity and fairness;
- ensuring sustainability of service provision;
- respecting social and civil justice;
- enhancing trust in government. (ref.1 p128)

The paper goes on to say 'It is clear that the pendulum is swinging back towards a concern for public services... this is why public service reform needs to embrace a much wider conception of what the public wants'.

A second core aspect of the local authority is its democratic authority to make decisions.

Central to this is the local democratic authority to make decisions. We would support the view that, 'political processes exist precisely to make sense of what the public values and translate that into ...budgets and policies' (ref.1). Judgements will always need to be made and will be contentious e.g. between better roads and a better environment.

Such 'contentious' decisions will always be the right and proper subject for local politics and where demands are not met then 'protest, complaint and grievance will result' (ref.3). This is the strength and reality of local democratic choice. We suggest these two issues lead to two primary drivers central to local governments' role:

- the drive to reinvigorate the local democratic function through community leadership by acting as the bridge between communities on the one hand and delivery agencies (the council included) and central government on the other.
- the drive to deliver consistent, personalised services in an effective, efficient and equitable way and thereby increase 'public value';

The exact balance between the two and the nature of each must be locally determined. There is and should be much democratic debate about local choice within the challenging demands of Government policies and resources.

Local leadership rests upon the potential for local choice and determination. This strategy aims at recommending ways of strengthening local government leadership but it must do so in the context of sufficient local leadership choice. Effective leadership may need to earn the right to greater choice– hence the CPA improvement agenda – but it will be stifled if more freedoms are not forthcoming having won this right. Leadership is therefore the catalyst in becoming, and staying, a well performing council.

'Local authorities are seen by many, especially, black and minority ethnic people as 'all white' organisations - organisations that take taxes but do very little for certain sections of the community. They are not represented at levels where key decisions are made. It is therefore, very important, for Councils to target under represented sections of the communities and to provide extra support and development to recruit and retain them.'

**Cllr Ansuya Sodha,
London Borough of Barnet**

what are the **specific** leadership challenges in a well performing council?

There is a lot we already know about the existing challenges that face us in local government. The Audit Commission argues in detail that the leadership challenges are the political-managerial relationship, the cultural changes necessary, increasing levels of trust, and improved diversity of approach. Key demands, as we see them, are community engagement and well-being, effective community representation and democratic accountability, delivering services well, continuous improvement, public service reform, and the inspection/freedoms regime. Providing leadership on all these fronts and making the most of them will continue to be extremely demanding.

In addition there will be many **future demands** – economic, social, environmental, technical and political. Many of these are unknown, unpredictable and beyond control - certainly in their specific character and impact. One challenge therefore is to build leadership capacity that has an ‘adaptable or diverse mindset’, able to respect and respond to different opportunities, threats, interests and values as they emerge (ref.1). We need to attract and develop leaders who will bring fresh, new and differing perspectives, experiences and attitudes to local government, which will reflect the diversity of the communities being served.

These leadership challenges run through our analysis below and need to be the focus over the coming five-ten years. It is central to our vision for building effective leadership capacity in local government. eg. What leadership does this well performing council require?

There is an answer at two levels:

- Firstly, and briefly, a backcloth of a wider and more general set of capacities, common to much leadership, public and private, which may be called upon at different times.
- Secondly, and crucially, a series of leadership ‘givens’ which we believe all local government leaders, political and managerial, must respond to.

Both are essential in shaping leadership development.

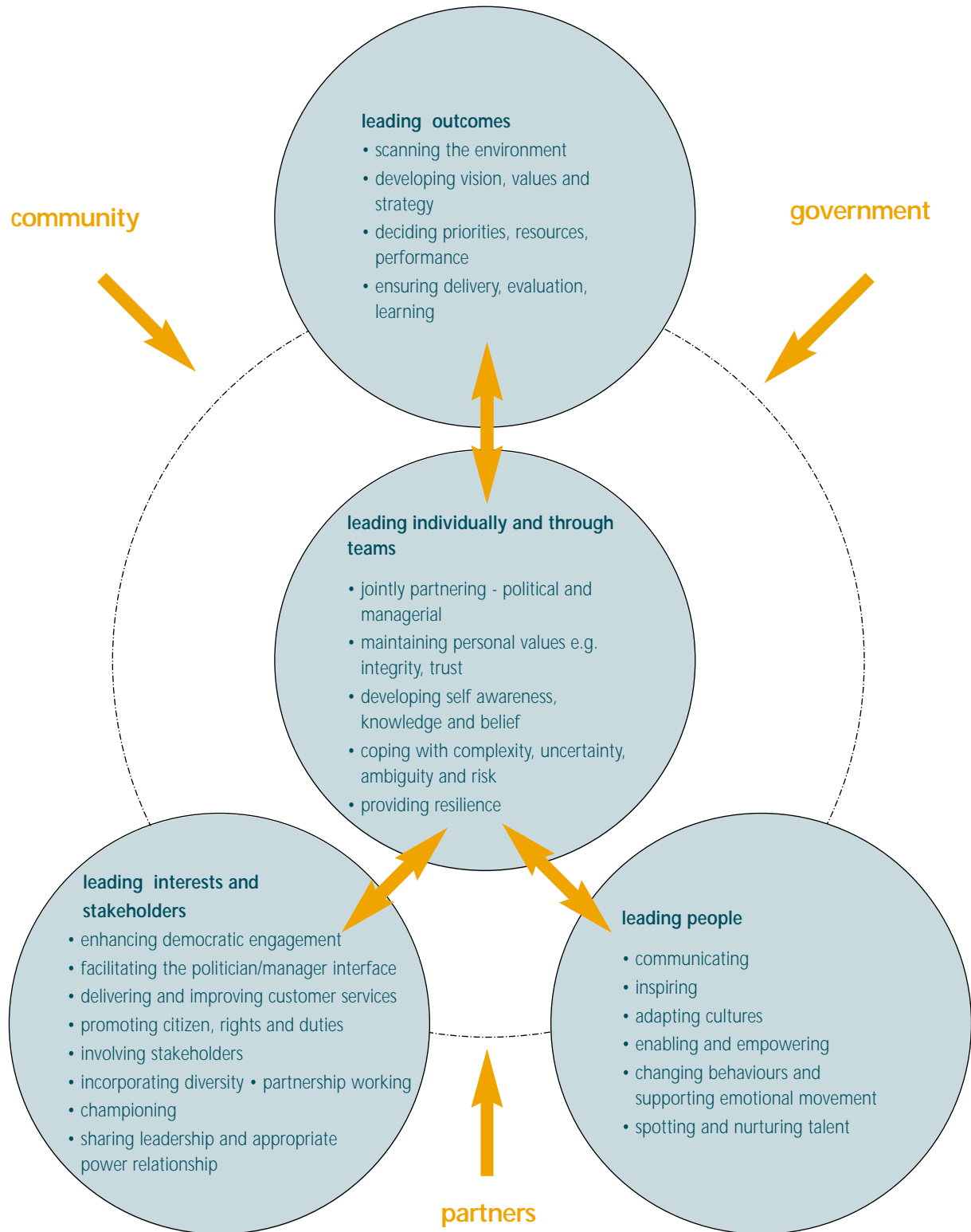
‘Nothing can fully prepare you for leading a council. The 360-degree scrutiny by the public and fellow councillors, along with the responsibility that goes with the post creates a massive challenge. I suspect the threat of isolation and loneliness are the hidden challenge; taking people with you and keeping your feet firmly on the ground is the trick.’

Cllr Jeremy Webb, East Lindsay District Council

the competing demands of leadership in local government

The LDC’s work has shown up an enormous range of demands and requirements of the modern leader. In the diagram (page 16) we illustrate many that are key to local government leadership. The diagram illustrates the ‘backcloth’ or context to which local authorities must respond.

the competing demands of leadership



the 'givens' of local government leadership

The leadership 'givens' paint a more particular picture of the requirements ahead. Our analysis of the situation over the next 5-10 years leads to seven 'givens' (ref. 5) They are 'givens' because they are unlikely to change over the period of this strategy and they must be adequately tackled by any effective local leadership, political and managerial. The first two relate directly to the two primary drivers for the well performing council - community leadership and delivering services and are just that, drivers. The rest enable the leadership of change but are nonetheless critical.

The next 5-10 years will require leadership which responds to the primary drivers by:

- recognising and leading, where appropriate, the response to diverse community needs and values.
- seeking out continual improvement of services as customers wish to see them.

local authorities can enable these primary drivers by:

- providing a joint leading partnership of local politicians and managers;
- ensuring a strategic influence with the multiplicity of key partnerships;
- recognising the need to spot and nurture leadership from others at all levels inside and outside the authority;
- developing an adaptable mindset and culture which reads and responds to the particular evolving and uncertain situation in the authority;
- continually offering a bridging role between different people and interests.

These are shown diagrammatically below, and explored in more detail overleaf.



community engagement

Recognising and leading, where appropriate, diverse community interests, which is not just a leadership task, but it is **the rationale** for local government. Leaders will increasingly need to take this on as their central task.

service delivery

A central role for local government is **the delivery of personalised services**, not necessarily directly by it, but through a combination of its resources, partnerships and influence in a way that matches community and national requirements. Whilst much of the delivery is managerial in character, there will continue to be a leadership role in driving up standards, tackling problem areas and finding ways of delivery that are modern and cost effective. Political and managerial energy has gone into this strategic aspect of service delivery and it must continue to do so to meet local and national demands.

'I am a people person and enjoy working with others. Being Chief Executive is about having good relations with leading politicians and with the community. I have been lucky as I have always worked with leaders with a positive approach'

James Hehir, CEO Ipswich Borough Council

Charles Leadbeater (ref. 8) sets out several examples in *'The man in the caravan and other stories'* which illustrates good distributed leadership. Tom Bentley and James Wilsden (ref.1 p16) argue that 'public services in diverse societies must offer far greater flexibility to meet a personal need, whilst keeping the ability to connect resources and activities across entire systems of governance'

political/managerial partnership

The relationship of leading politicians and managers is critical for the effectiveness of an authority. Whilst each has a distinctive role, the level of mutual understanding and agreement as to how leadership is exercised, jointly and separately, can cause a council to sink or swim. Strengthening this aspect of leadership across local authorities is crucial - equal partners with distinctive roles in a shared leadership.

If the leadership through this unique 'democratic – managerial' partnership could be consistently improved across local government then this would be a very large prize. Enormous amounts of political and managerial time are spent in second-guessing, defending and under performing because the leadership demands are not well understood, negotiated or respected. This is not a counsel of perfection as there are numerous examples of partnership working well in 'excellent authorities', and perhaps more importantly, in authorities with difficult conditions. When the partnership works well the results follow, when not, it can be dire.

partnership working

The capacity to work through partnerships, of which there is no shortage in number or complexity, is hard enough; to exercise leadership through influencing them is far harder. Yet it can and is done well and will remain a central activity of leadership both political and managerial for local government.

diverse leadership and succession planning

Good leadership is also about giving it away appropriately. The scale and purpose of local government requires the **identifying, nurturing and empowering of leaders** internally at all levels of the organisation and externally in the community and partner organisations. The genuine inclusion of groups whether lacking power or representation is critical e.g. much has been recognised in women and black minority and ethnic groupings but much more needs to be done.

adaptive capacity and mind set

A key quality which runs through successful experiences of leadership is the ability or mindset to **'read a situation' and make the right contribution**. For example negotiating with various interests may, at a particular moment, take precedence over developing the vision, and tackling culture blockages may matter more than introducing performance management systems. The implications are that,

- **there is a distinctive skill in working in the 'here and now'** and deploying what is appropriate – this point is particularly powerfully made in the recent Ashridge study of leadership (ref.4);
- **there will be no single leadership approach or model for all situations** – situations demand very different styles, models and approaches – this point is strongly made in the SOLACE report (ref.2).

bridging groups and interests

One quality which runs, 'Blackpool rock' like through local government leadership is the ability to provide what we call 'bridge building leadership'. More than almost all leadership roles, including many in the public service, **the central task of leaders in local government is to bridge different interests and forge relationships**. This is critical in the hard-nosed prioritising of service delivery and resources as well as community engagement and enhancement. Whether the different interests are community and government, democratic and managerial or the very

vocal and those with no voice, these interests need bridging as part of the essential role of local government.

An illustrative (and yet to be fully developed) way of bringing these elements together is outlined in the diagram (page 20). We call it an 'umbrella framework' because the 'givens' as we have described them previously, apply to both political and managerial leadership. Joint leadership tasks are also highlighted and remain, for local government, a critical area for improvement.

'I think that introducing a major change programme can only be successful if you are able to demonstrate clear leadership. It is about setting out a clear vision and putting the necessary building blocks in place. One of the first questions to ask I think is 'what sort of an authority do we want to be and how do we get there? It is important to work well with all elected members because they have such an important role to play.'

Deborah Cadman
CEO St Edmundsbury Borough Council

an 'umbrella' framework for local leadership capacities

political	joint	managerial
community leadership		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Set political values, objectives and practices (ideals, manifesto and roles) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agree the leadership and Council's contribution to the Community Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consult and engage to establish community priorities
delivering services		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Define, review and act on performance Scrutinise 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agree targets and outcomes Agree performance system 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Achieve results and performance through management systems
setting the direction, priorities and resources		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Define political priorities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Devise and agree the corporate priorities and plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish work priorities derived from national, community, corporate and service policies
partnership working		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work through partnerships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agree representation and roles 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deliver through partnerships e.g. LSPs
organising and changing		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with politicians and the public Facilitate political change Sustain ethical and political values 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work across the political/managerial interface Jointly manage capacity and resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with employees and others Facilitate change Sustain professional, financial and ethical values
personal and team skills, experience and mindset		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Manage self and personal skills Executive development Improve political group working 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Joint team work Pairing of portfolio holder and director 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Manage self and personal skills Develop management teams Improve the relationship of management, staff and organisation

We recommend to the LGLC that a framework of leadership capacities, based on the work already undertaken by the LDC, is drawn together, combining the best and most appropriate elements of the general demands on leaders, the 'givens' and the 'umbrella framework' set out in this section (Recommendation1b).

how can leadership be developed in local government?

Setting out the demands on local government leadership, is one thing, but enabling individuals, councils and the national system of over 400 authorities to develop, is another. We set out in this section some ideas on what works well, a sketch model for learning, and our recommendations at three levels:

- the national network of support, resourcing and provision
- the local authority
- the leading individual and team

Leadership development comes in many guises, from elaborate programmes off-the-job to mentoring and learning on-the-job. We recognise the necessary repertoire of mechanisms for development and learning which are necessary to meet different circumstances and the needs of individuals and groups. Research by SOLACE (ref. 2) reinforces the need for this range. We quote:

“The best return on investment comes from:

- developing leadership teams and not just individual leaders
- developing individuals and teams within a context of integrated strategy and culture change
- attending to the whole action learning cycle combining action, reflection, new thinking, informing new planning and rehearsal, leading to new action
- providing real-time strategic challenges to leadership learning groups or teams, that require them to relate in new ways and think outside the box

- requiring leaders to work across sector boundaries in partnerships in a way that also reflects on the partnership working
- providing just-in-time learning when people have the need for the learning activity or input.”

“In short, leadership development is most effective when we take development resources to the places of needed leadership, rather than potential leaders to off-site gatherings.”

But also:

“There is a place for off-site development activity particularly for elements and aspects of personal development which need protected space away from the hurly-burly of everyday demands, which can reinforce habituated patterns of behaviour.”

We recommend the range of development methods drawn together by both procurers and providers (Recommendation 1c). We also suggest the development of more specific leader focussed support such as mentoring, coaching and action learning (Recommendation 1d). This would be supported by a common information point (Recommendation 1e).

leadership development: diagnosis

There is a multiplicity of models for leadership development that address a range of learning styles to suit different people. The key for leaders, as individuals and as teams, is finding a path that suits them and addresses their needs. Essentially we believe that leadership cannot be taught it can only be learnt – it is an applied art. ‘Living out’ the learning is both a powerful way of developing as a leader and the ultimate test of any leadership.

Essential to leadership development is diagnosis, whether at the individual, team or authority level. We suggest that self-assessment tools as an aid to this diagnosis are nationally promoted, and that they are for the individual, team and authority. There are many models available but they need tailoring to the specifics of local government.

‘The Leadership Journey’ is one such model that focuses upon the development of leadership through assessing the familiar and straightforward categories of:

- where we come from
- where we are
- where we are going
- what we do.

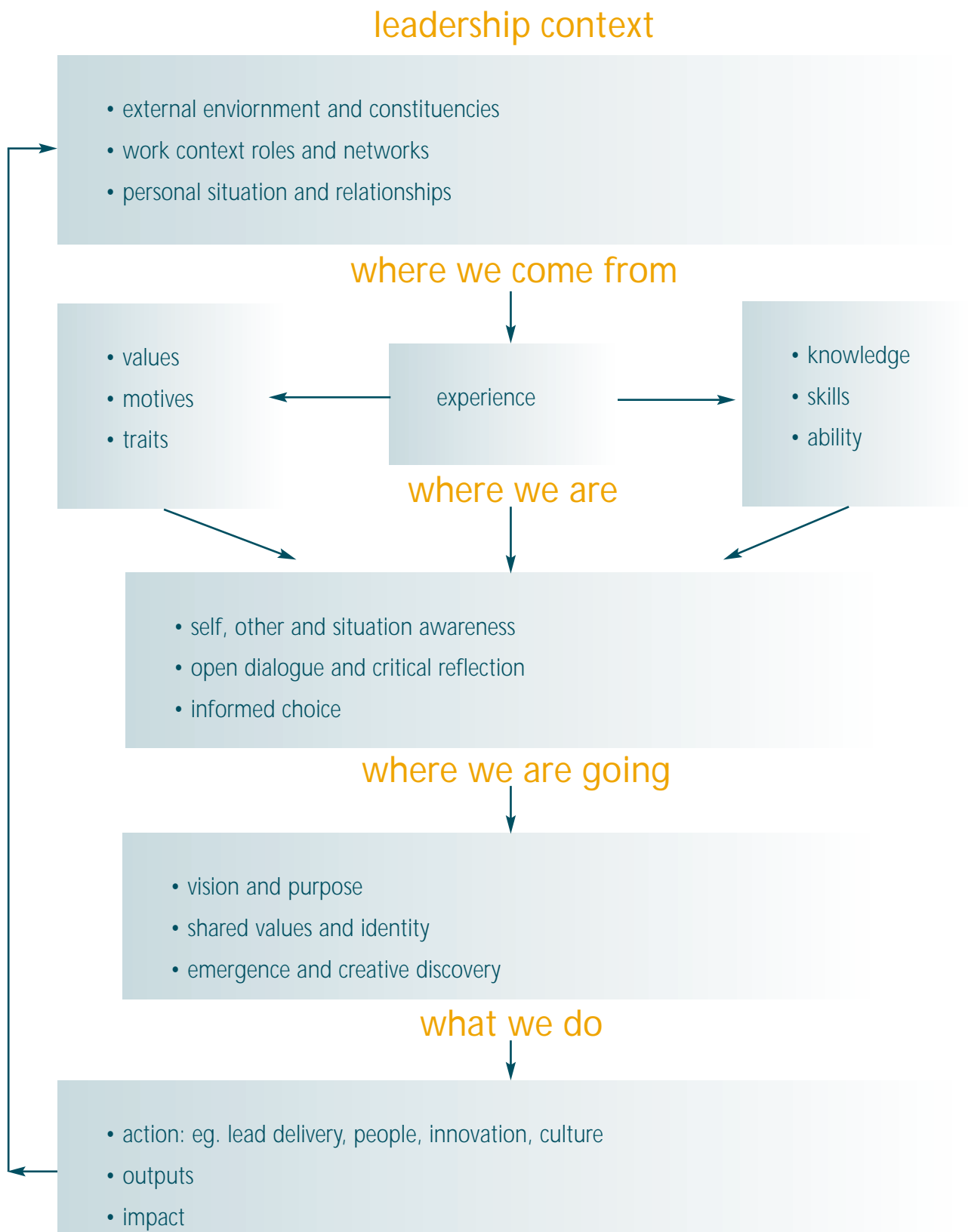
The diagram on the next page illustrates it. We believe a further elaborated and practical version of this model could assist local government leaders in diagnosing their personal and collective development needs as they face their particular situation.

We recommend the development and use of a diagnostic tool for individuals, teams and authorities (Recommendations 1b, 2c, 3b).

Aspects of the local government culture need changing so they support performance improvement. This would include finding ways to empower people at all levels, to take decisions rather than simply follow procedures. It also involves improving member/officer relations, including managed risk taking as part of people’s work and ensuring that staff receive proper recognition and are valued for the work they do.

ODPM/EO (2003) Pay and Workforce Strategy

the leadership journey



source: IES, 2003, adapted from Locke, E.A. 1991. *The Essence of Leadership*

leadership development commission recommendations

The following national strategy recommendations follow from the case we have made for leadership development and are aimed at three different audiences:

- national organisations
- the local authority
- individuals and teams

We believe that change will only occur when leadership development is tackled, and convincingly so, by all three audiences. Most of the national implications are mentioned earlier, those for the authority and individual or team draw from the tenor of the argument.

The Local Government Leadership Centre will build on the work of the Leadership Development Commission and will have a remit for sharing and disseminating best practice in leadership development across the sector, as well as for creating or 'badging' targeted leadership development programmes reflecting the specific needs of senior officers and elected members.

Through this approach, the Local Government Leadership Centre will play a pivotal role in improving local government leadership, driving up the quality of local services and thereby enhancing the lives of local people.

We would acknowledge the current wide range of activity supporting leaders which we have become more aware of during the LDC's investigation (ref.6). There is much development being undertaken by individuals, teams and authorities – both members and managers engaging in leadership programmes, mentoring and action learning sets for example. A wide range of leadership development providers exist (academic, consulting and within local government) and nationally there is advice, enabling and resourcing available. We see this strategy adding value to these activities by providing a stimulus, priority and structure to them.

'Interpersonal skills are a key part of any leadership role and all the hard work is directly translated into benefits for local communities'.

Paul Bettison is a Conservative and the leader of Bracknell Forest Borough Council

we therefore recommend

1. developing leaders national support and guidance

a The Local Government Leadership Centre (LGLC) – the recently emerged focus for the co-ordination of leadership development activities across the sector - has the role to:

- stimulate thinking and practice, broker advice and good practice, and enable assessment, development and monitoring of leadership throughout local government;
- commission research and thinking on leadership and leadership development in collaboration with others; including examining the constraints and blockages to effective leadership within local authorities, and provide guidance on effective succession planning in an equal opportunities context
- advise national and local government on the progress of the leadership capacities framework, the self assessment frameworks and their application, the stimulation of mentoring, coaching and action learning, and the central directory of information (1b - 1e) below);
- build on the benchmarking of leadership development in local authorities provided by 2004 National Leadership Development Survey (ref. 7) as a basis for future surveys and impact assessment
- tackle a few key initiatives at a time, by clearly prioritising in the short, medium and longer term and assessing the potential impact of specific initiatives in improving leadership in local government e.g. the outcomes of programmes for bringing on both political and managerial leadership talent, or the increase in representation of under represented groups/backgrounds.

b The LGLC to support the further development of a Framework of Leadership Capacities.

This development would build on the Leadership Capacities Framework developed by the LDC so far, which has drawn from a wide range of work on leadership and leadership development, both existing and emerging. It is important to bring this together for the sector. Whilst there is a perceived, and often very real, tension between integrating political and managerial capacities within an overall leadership framework, the LDC believes that the development of an initial 'map' of both terrains is a useful starting point. An integrated framework should be further developed, validated and used with local authorities and political parties, and subsequently used by and across local government. Individuals, teams and authorities should build these leadership capacities into diagnostic tools for self-assessment (below 2d, 3b).

c The LGLC to broker and fund a joint network of procurers and providers which will develop and evolve a framework within which leadership development and good practice can be continually exchanged and evolve. This recognises the need to integrate thinking, development and practice and to develop a vehicle for co-determining the best ways forward. With the establishment of the leadership capacities, (b) above, this would focus the convergence of support and provision to address core needs. It would be advisory rather than regulatory. The LGLC to encourage the dissemination of best-practice information and support from a national developers' network through regional networks.

d The LGLC to establish, fund and provide network support to action learning, mentoring and coaching throughout the local government sector. There is widespread experience of the benefit of peer and peer group support, particularly through action learning, mentoring and coaching. It has been particularly effective for leading managers e.g. SOLACE action learning sets and for leading politicians e.g. IDeA's Leadership Academy and peer mentoring/coaching schemes. We believe these 'confidential'/'off line' mechanisms are particularly effective for leaders who are concerned about tackling real and specific leadership challenges. Their availability needs to be more comprehensive and consistent than at present, if as we believe, they could become the norm rather than the exception.

e The LGLC is requested (and funded) to provide an information exchange point for models, methods, good practice and providers of leadership development. We recognise this is a substantial task and it could build upon the work of IDeA Knowledge and an emerging IDeA Leadership web resource, drawing together information from key players in the sector.

f National political parties, trades unions and the Employers Organisation are asked to

advocate the use of the framework of leadership capacities for selection to leadership positions both political and managerial. This would rest on the adequate development and validation of the Leadership Capacities Framework (1b above).

g National political parties are requested to develop initiatives to attract top quality candidates for political office. All political parties to be encouraged to consider initiatives that would encourage a diversity of people to consider standing for election and particularly to support a range of people from under represented groups/backgrounds to become local authority councillors.

h The Audit Commission to build into the CPA process, measures to assess the quality and effectiveness of leadership in local authorities. With the increasing importance and emphasis on continuous improvement in councils, and the regular assessment of performance embodied in the CPA process, the Audit Commission is requested to build on their reviews of the early rounds of CPA and the evidence from them, to develop measures for assessing the effectiveness and quality of both managerial and political leadership in authorities.

Only 4% of authorities have succession planning in place and only about 10% make any effort to identify 'high fliers' in their appraisal process. Local Government needs to increase investment in developing its own leaders and to open up the top jobs market much more to good candidates from outside the sector. Both strategies will require planning and a deeper understanding of the nature of leadership in the sector.

ODPM/EO (2003) Pay and Workforce Strategy

2. developing leadership within the local authority

- a All Authorities to link their organisational development and leadership development agendas.** Much of the next five years will be developing the authority in response to community demands, CPA inspections and policy pressures both national and local. This will require radical development in all authorities of their services, structures, roles, processes and culture. Significant leadership will need to be exercised to achieve any such organisational development goals, and leadership development must be linked to this agenda. Authorities should also address the issues of succession planning and attracting, recruiting and developing top quality applicants for senior managerial positions, including those from non-local authority backgrounds. Programmes to support this include the EO National Graduate Development Programme (ngdp).
- b All Authorities to recognise that once selected or appointed leaders, whether political or managerial, still need development opportunities to improve and maintain effectiveness in their role.** What is appropriate and what is available will vary but leadership development should be the norm for politicians and managers. It may, for example, require internal 360 degree assessments, internal or external programmes, mentoring or action learning groups.
- c All Authorities to undertake a regular overall self assessment of their leadership capabilities using a diagnostic tool and address any deficiencies.** An explicit review of this type may have only taken place as part of a CPA inspection or assessment for EFQM but the end result often clarifies areas of weakness that have resisted attention and action. A more systematic review throughout the authority will identify strengths and areas for improvement
- d All Authorities to ensure they have tailored development for their leading teams, especially for the Executive, Senior Management Team, and jointly between the two.** There has been considerable experience of team leadership improving through training, development and facilitation of their leadership work. This type of facilitation has borne considerable dividends for joint Executive/ Senior Management Teams, in workshops, which have clarified the joint and separate roles at both team and individual levels e.g. the portfolio holder/director relationship.
- e All Authorities are encouraged to use as part of their selection processes for both leadership political and managerial, nationally agreed framework of leadership capacities** (above 1b). This explicit use of leadership criteria, particularly if political parties are willing to utilise the qualities as part of their selection/ election processes could refine the routes to both political and managerial leadership.

f All Authorities are encouraged to support people from a range of under represented groups/ backgrounds to become senior managers. Equality and diversity are essential strands that run through this strategy. This reflects the growing recognition of the benefits of a diverse and integrated workforce. In general, women are over-represented in the workforce but under-represented in senior positions. People from minority ethnic backgrounds are under-represented in the workforce as a whole and clearly under-represented in senior positions. [A similar pattern is present in relation to elected members]. Authorities need to be drawing on all the talent in their employ and from their communities, by offering leadership development opportunities to as wide an audience as possible throughout their organisation.

g All Authorities take it as part of their responsibility to share good practice and resources for leadership development. Many authorities already have activities which would be of value to others, and authorities are encouraged share this in cross-authority fora and partnership working. The examples are many and varied e.g. peer support, providing mentoring, seconding leaders, opening up leadership development programmes to neighbouring authorities and shadowing arrangements. Authorities are also encouraged to draw learning and ideas from leadership development across the wider public sector.

‘Clear and visible leadership is critical in engaging staff in a shared vision of the council and promoting a culture of empowerment. Good leaders lead by example, and are seen as being in touch and accessible, constantly reinforcing the messages that their staff matter to them. It applies not only to chief executives and leaders but also to all managers within the organisation. Successful councils acknowledge that good people management is a two-way relationship and actively foster a culture of involvement and questioning, promoting open and upward feedback’

**Audit Commission Learning from Comprehensive Performance Assessment –
Local Government briefing paper 3**

3. developing individuals and teams

a All leaders and leadership teams (political, managerial and combined) to own and take responsibility for their leadership development and learning. Over the next 3-5 years it will become even more critical that leaders and aspiring leaders, political and managerial, take up opportunities for development. Leaders who regard themselves as knowing the job by dint of their election or appointment are unlikely to perform to their limits or the limits required. Much of leadership is 'learning-as-you-go' and as such will be a continuing development process both 'on and off-the-job'. All leaders must be encouraged to recognise that learning never stops and continuing development has to become the norm.

Women continue to be under-represented amongst senior officers, albeit less so than in the past. **13% of chief executives and 19% of chief officers are women, compared with 1% and 5% respectively in 1992.** A similar pattern is evident for councillors, amongst whom, in addition, retired people are over-represented and those from minority ethnic groups are under-represented

b A self assessment diagnostic tool, is made available to both those in leadership positions and their teams, both new and longstanding, to enable self directed learning. We recommend a tool of this kind is devised, disseminated, and backed by nationally using the *leadership journey model*. It would be based upon a set of agreed leadership capacities for both politicians and managers, a way of assessing the situations where they are needed and enabling leaders to identify their own short and long term needs. It could distinguish between emergent, established and advanced leadership and provide a separate analysis for individuals and teams.

c All those in significant leadership positions are strongly encouraged to engage with coaching, mentoring and action learning and where appropriate leadership programmes. There is considerable evidence that the opportunity to acquire fresh ideas, stand back, and to network with fellow leaders is, despite time pressures to the contrary, time well spent. It may require some suggested standard e.g. 8-10 development days per year as with continuing professional development. These requirements could be reinforced for politicians through requirements built into the constitution and, for example through special responsibility allowances.

conclusions

measuring the impact of leadership development

The Leadership Development Commission has played a significant role in raising the profile of leadership development in local government and have stimulated a continuing debate of the place of leadership in community engagement and service delivery improvement.

There is a need to move beyond the high-level concepts contained within this strategy to a model that actually assesses the impact of leadership development. Measurable performance indicators must be developed that can demonstrate whether:

- there has been a progressive improvement in authorities CPA scores
- local government's image as an employer has improved and that authorities are finding it easier to recruit, especially to hard to fill posts.
- local authorities are actively engaged in developing the leadership capacity of the workforce and elected members
- each local authority has clearly identifiable budget allocations for leadership development
- each authority have a sufficient pool of people with political and managerial leadership skills
- local authorities have a more diverse workforce and elected membership that is responsive to, and reflects the needs of, a rapidly changing community
- Increasing numbers of people who are at present under-represented within the current structures, reach senior positions in political and managerial leadership within their authorities.

The Leadership Development Commission has contributed significantly to central government thinking around the establishment of a National Centre for Local Government leadership. Key local government stakeholders are now charged with building on the work of the LDC in supporting the development of leadership in local government.

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project team

Fiona Turton [EO], Maxine Tomlinson [IDeA],
co-ordinated by Nicole Clayton [IDeA]

editorial board

Andy Holder [AHA Consultancy], Carol Brown [Walsall MBC], Cllr Kevin Wilson [Milton Keynes], Colin Everett [WLGA], Danny Chesterman [SOLACE], Darryl Stephenson [East Riding of Yorkshire Council], Diane Neale [Audit Commission], Fiona Turton [EO], Julia Vernalls [ALG], Mandy Skinner [ODPM], Maxine Tomlinson [IDeA], Nicole Clayton [IDeA], Paula McDonald [OPSR].

LDC board

Alison Carter [IES], Andy Holder [AHA Consultancy], Anna Freeman [WLGA], Annie Ralph [Consultant], Anton Florek [Virtual Staff College], Bridget Williams [Shropshire County Council], Carol Barrie [IDeA], Carol Brown [Walsall MBC], Carol Hayden [Audit Commission], Carole Hassan [Trafford MBC], Cheryl Miller [East Sussex County Council], Chris Bockock [Malvern Hills District Council], Chris Waterman [ConFed], Clare Pierce [Department for Education and Skills], Colin Everett [WLGA],

Colin Williams [WMLGA], Danny Chesterman [SOLACE], Darryl Stephenson [East Riding of Yorkshire Council], David Beech [The Leadership Organisation], David Clark [SOLACE], David Lloyd Williams [North Yorkshire County Council], Diane Neale [Audit Commission], Dr. Barbara Wilson [Welsh Assembly], Eleanor Hayward [NEREO], Fiona Turton [EO], Francesa Okosi [SOCPO], Garth Wood [WMLGA], Geoff Tierney [ODPM], Gordon Mitchell [Nottingham City Council], Helen Goulding [Audit Commission], Hilary Patterson [EMRLGA], Ian Briggs [Leeds University], Ian Swithenbank [Northumberland County Council], Jacky Holmes [Nottingham City Council], Jan Parkinson [Gateshead Borough Council], Joan Munro [EO], Joanna Webb [IDeA], John Alban-Metcalf [Leeds University], Judi Billing [IDeA], Julia Vernalls [ALG], Kate Gibson [SPDS], Kathryn Kelly [EO], Kelly Sandiford [EO], Ken Green [City of York Council], Leatham Green [East Sussex County Council], Liz McQue [NWEQ], Lorraine Chicken [SWRA], Lorraine Pitt [SOCPO], Lyndsay Rachman [Warwick University], Lynne Butler [EO], Madeleine Sumsion [SEE], Mairi McLean [Waveney District Council], Marcus Coulson [IDeA], Margaret Martin [Nottingham County Council], Mark Humble [Cabinet Office], Martin Horton [IDeA], Maxine Tomlinson [IDeA], Michael Greenwood [Tameside MBC], Mick Brodie [NEREO], Mike Leitch [Yorkshire & Humberside LGMB], Mike Mosely [EERA], Naomi Hunt [ODPM], Niki Luscombe [Kent County Council], Nicole Clayton [IDeA], Pam Fox [ODPM], Paul Wheeler [IDeA], Paula McDonald [Cabinet Office], Prof. John Adair [Exeter University], Prof. Sue Richards [INLOGOV], Richard Billingham [Birmingham City Council], Richard Dix, [Newark and Sherwood District Council], Richard Wheeler [COSLA], Rob Sykes [Worcestershire County Council], Sarah Phillips [Audit Commission], Stephen Bubb [ACEVO], Tony Jefferson [ACEVO], Zoe van Zwanenberg [Scottish Leadership Foundation].

