

Working Better Together? Managing local strategic partnerships

Local Area Agreements 09

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Working better together?

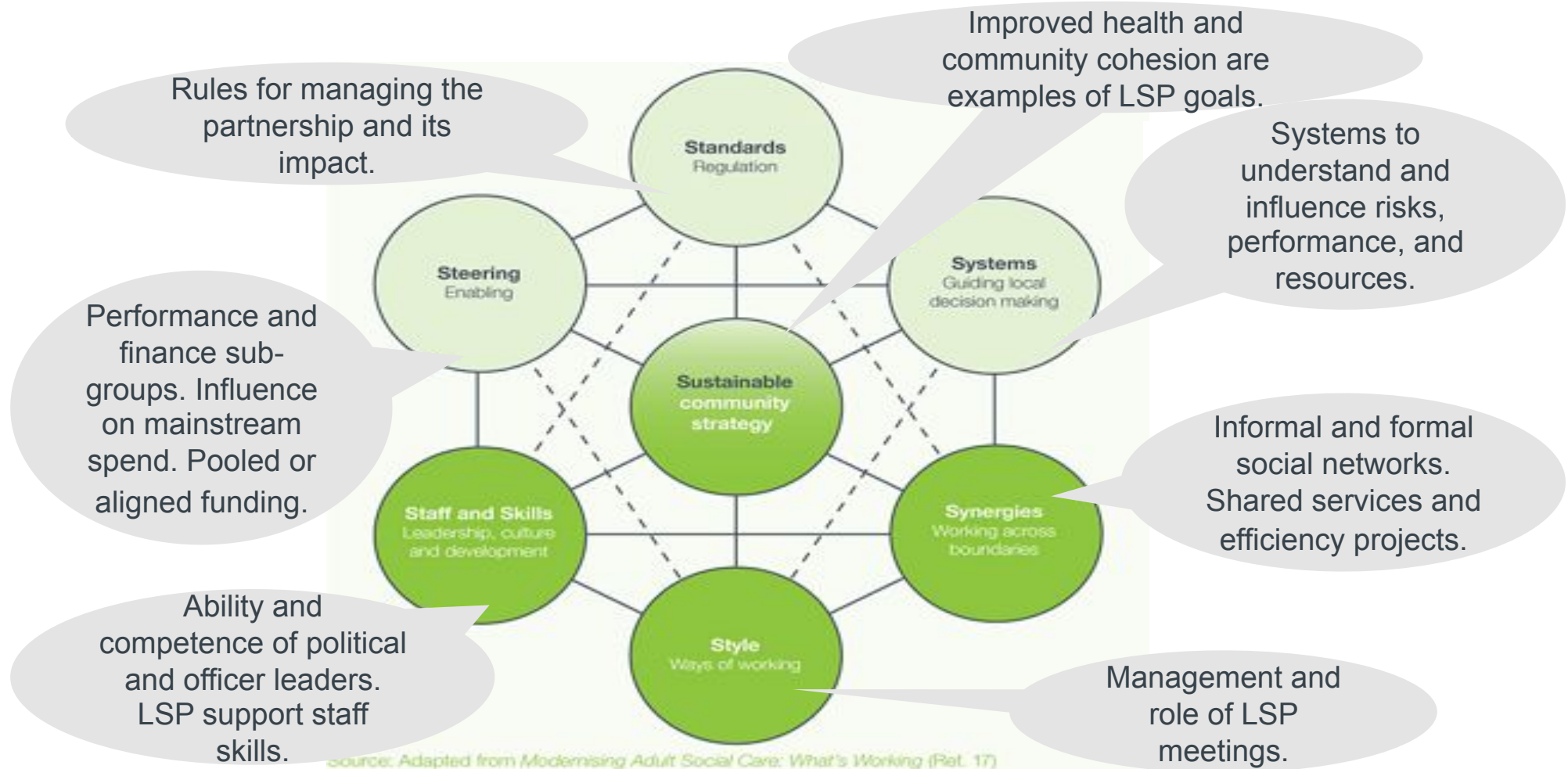
- Reviews arrangements for performance, resource management and governance
- National report and guidance for LSPs
 - Key messages
 - Analytical tools
- Guidance includes – delivery chain analysis paper and tool, self-assessment checklist for LSP improvement, scrutiny and governance papers, and examples of notable practice



Some areas have three decades experience of joint working



Joint working has many aspects



... and they all inter-link

LSPs need a layered approach to performance and resource management



Source: Audit Commission, 2008

Some areas have confused the layers

LSPs work through the 'soft' issues of leadership, culture, and relationship management

- Effective joint working needs **leadership, relationship management**, trust and openness
- An LSP reflects the **leadership style** of the chair, the board members, and the local authority
- Strong **social networks** involving the representatives of the member organisations are crucial for effective LSPs
- LSPs' success depends on the **co-operation of partners** with unequal stakes in success, failure, resources, and responsibilities
- In multi-tier areas partnership working is **more complex** but councils and stakeholders experience of partnership working is **less developed**

And they work with standards, steering and systems that support their layered roles

- LSPs need **clear roles and standards** for their strategic, executive, and operational levels
 - Performance, risk, and financial reporting **should be appropriate** to each of these layers
 - Common performance measurement and reporting systems can provide a **consistent view** of performance and progress
 - But shared performance monitoring takes time to develop and it requires **common data quality** standards
 - Performance management and influence is **unevenly developed** across LSPs
 - LSP accountability and governance arrangements should be **appropriate** for their roles and tasks
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Partnership resources are a fraction of mainstream spending



Recommendations

- **Monitor and review local achievements** against a regularly updated SCS and the LAA
- Critically assess the **costs and benefits** of joint working arrangements
- **Test current arrangements** using notable practice examples, the whole systems model, and delivery chain analysis
- Ensure that local arrangements **support the strategic, executive, and operational layers** of joint working
- Review progress, **make decisions and challenge one another** based on performance and resource information
- **Engage elected members** through training and development, and stronger partnership scrutiny

More information can be found on

www.audit-commission.gov.uk/lsp

