

# Supporting Total Place

In an environment where local government is under public scrutiny to provide more and better services for less, Counting Cumbria demonstrated the potential for place-based approaches. With the impact of the economic downturn on public finances, the evolution of this concept is even more critical, and it has the ability to provide radical solutions to re-write the future of public services.

The Total Place initiative, recommended in the final report of HM Treasury's Operational Efficiency Programme (OEP) and announced in the April 2009 Budget, aims to identify service transformation opportunities across a locality, in order to improve services to customers, deliver better value and realise early efficiencies. It also aims to develop a body of knowledge on how effective cross-agency working can deliver these benefits.

This holistic place-based approach will be critical to achieving savings of the scale identified in the OEP. It will also be crucial to sustaining and enhancing the quality and effectiveness of these services as well as improving their efficiency. The potential that Total Place has to rewrite the future of public services has been recognised by many local authorities and their local strategic partners, who are already progressing its concepts, prior to the conclusion of the pilots.

## Key challenges

The OEP report identified two primary factors that enable effective collaboration locally:

1. the commitment of local agencies' leaders
2. central government flexibility with national delivery structures.

However, before these factors can be tested, there are challenges inherent in the Total Place approach that must be effectively managed. These include:

- managing the critical 'counting' element of Total Place. In particular, being able to apportion central government, regional government and NDPB spend to a local area so that they are meaningful; for example, undertaking effective spending analysis in relation to the priorities of the local area
- understanding what elements of the spend can be locally controlled or influenced, and how this analysis can best be used to identify service delivery improvements; such as removing duplication across agencies, or identifying new ways of delivering services at a lower cost through joint innovation
- understanding the voice and changing needs of the customer and how this

must shape service improvement locally; for example, by integrating delivery channels and customer pathways across agencies

- overcoming cultural and organisational barriers to cross-organisational improvements
- being able to understand cost-benefit investment decisions at the local level by looking at the costs and benefit to the public sector as a whole in that place
- being able to effectively benchmark spending analyses across localities
- being able to articulate changes required by the national government to affect improvement locally; for example, amendments to performance frameworks, financial regulations and ring fences.

## How Grant Thornton can help

Grant Thornton has strong analytical and financial capabilities, a deep understanding of local government and the wider public sector, a thorough knowledge of the improvement and efficiency agenda, a track record of innovation and creativity and expertise

in managing multi-stakeholder projects. All of these enable us to support you in finding solutions to the challenges above, including:

- mapping public sector spend to a locality and modelling the impact of changed funding assumptions across services
- understanding how the different agencies' financial and performance frameworks operate and obstruct effective co-ordination at a local level
- multi-agency service redesign, including the use of Lean and Systems thinking to drive improvements by identifying cross-agency customer pathways and maximising value from partnership working
- increasing value in the use of estates and other assets across a locality
- understanding the economic impact on a locality of any planned service or funding changes that arise from Total Place analysis
- benchmarking cost and performance across local services using our award winning Use of Resources value for money tool
- supporting the introduction of strategic commissioning across agencies.

## Our experience

In the last five years we have worked with over 50 local authorities, helping them and their partners to adapt, evolve and improve their performance.

Examples include supporting the local authority to understand the impact of CSR07 on the public sector in the Yorkshire & Humber region, working closely with HM Treasury's OEP property team to reconfigure NHS Estates in London and our work as partners-in-change with Torbay Council to transform the organisation into a commissioning authority. We are also the financial advisers of choice for many local authority PPP/PFI schemes and the joint largest provider of audit and related services to local government via the Audit Commission.

Our NHS advisory and consultancy clients range from mental health and acute trusts to strategic health authorities and PCTs. We provide audit and assurance services to 30 NHS trusts and PCTs. We also act as financial advisers to 25 NHS LIFT projects and won the 2008 "Best LIFT Adviser" award. In addition to working directly with NHS clients, we are one of five firms that act as reporting accountants to the foundation trust applications on behalf of the Department of Health.

We have also advised over 20 fire and rescue authorities and a number of police authorities on improvement based assignments.

## Contact us

For further information on how we can help you, please contact:

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### Guy Clifton

Government and Infrastructure Advisory  
T 020 7728 2903  
E [guy.clifton@gtuk.com](mailto:guy.clifton@gtuk.com)

### David Shaw

Government and Infrastructure Advisory  
T 020 7728 2964  
E [david.shaw@gtuk.com](mailto:david.shaw@gtuk.com)

### Damian Dewhirst

Government and Infrastructure Advisory  
T 020 7728 3067  
E [damian.dewhirst@gtuk.com](mailto:damian.dewhirst@gtuk.com)