OVERCOMING GEOGRAPHIC BARRIERS TO ACHIEVE CROSS BOUNDARY PARTNERSHIPS

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Perceived geographic barriers to partnership working:

- Demographic differences
- Co-terminosity of public sector agencies
- Political differences
- Organisational differences
- Cultural differences
- Genuine concerns about access

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However, we are in a period of unprecedented change

- Partner organisations in LSPs are all changing
- New Government policies bring both opportunities and challenges
- There are tensions between bottom-up and top-down approaches to commissioning services

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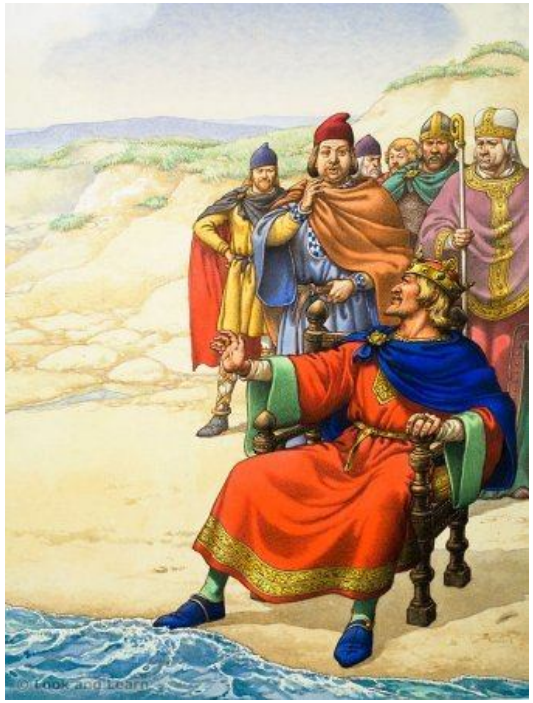
What we can’t do…..

- Hold back the tide of change ……



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- Try to carry on as if nothing is happening…

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We need to evolve in order to..

- Grasp opportunities, e.g. community budgets, the Big Society
- Better meet community need
- Provide best value
- Survive!

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It doesn’t have to be either/or…

- There can be Local Strategic Partnerships at District, ***and*** sub-regional ***and*** County level

- The success of such an approach depends upon two things: the level of differentiation of community needs, and the appetite for partnership working.

- The important thing is to start with community needs and identifying the appropriate level at which to plan to meet these

- This involves inverting the usual ‘hierarchical’ delivery triangle….

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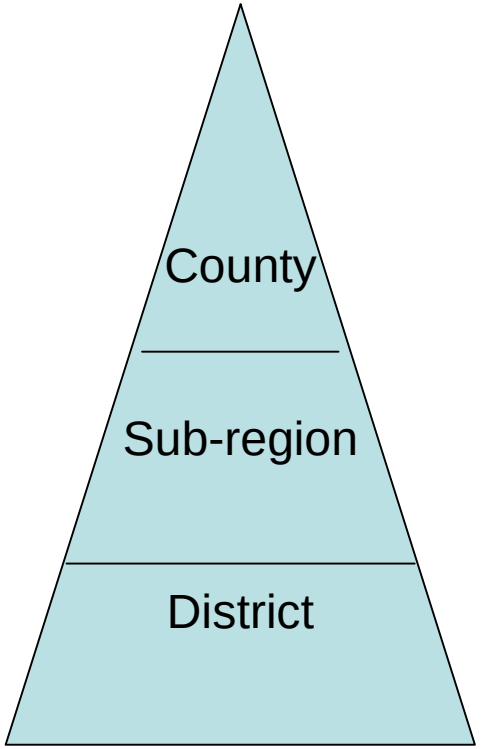
…. Starting with community needs

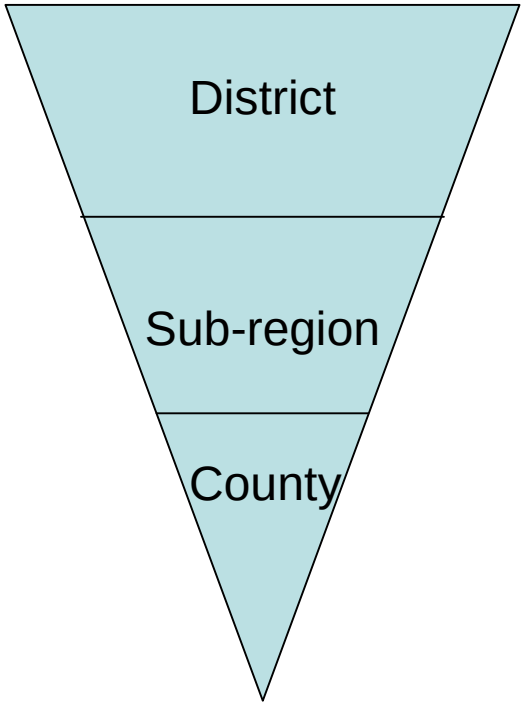
Traditional approach



Services to those in need

Needs-led approach

Those in need



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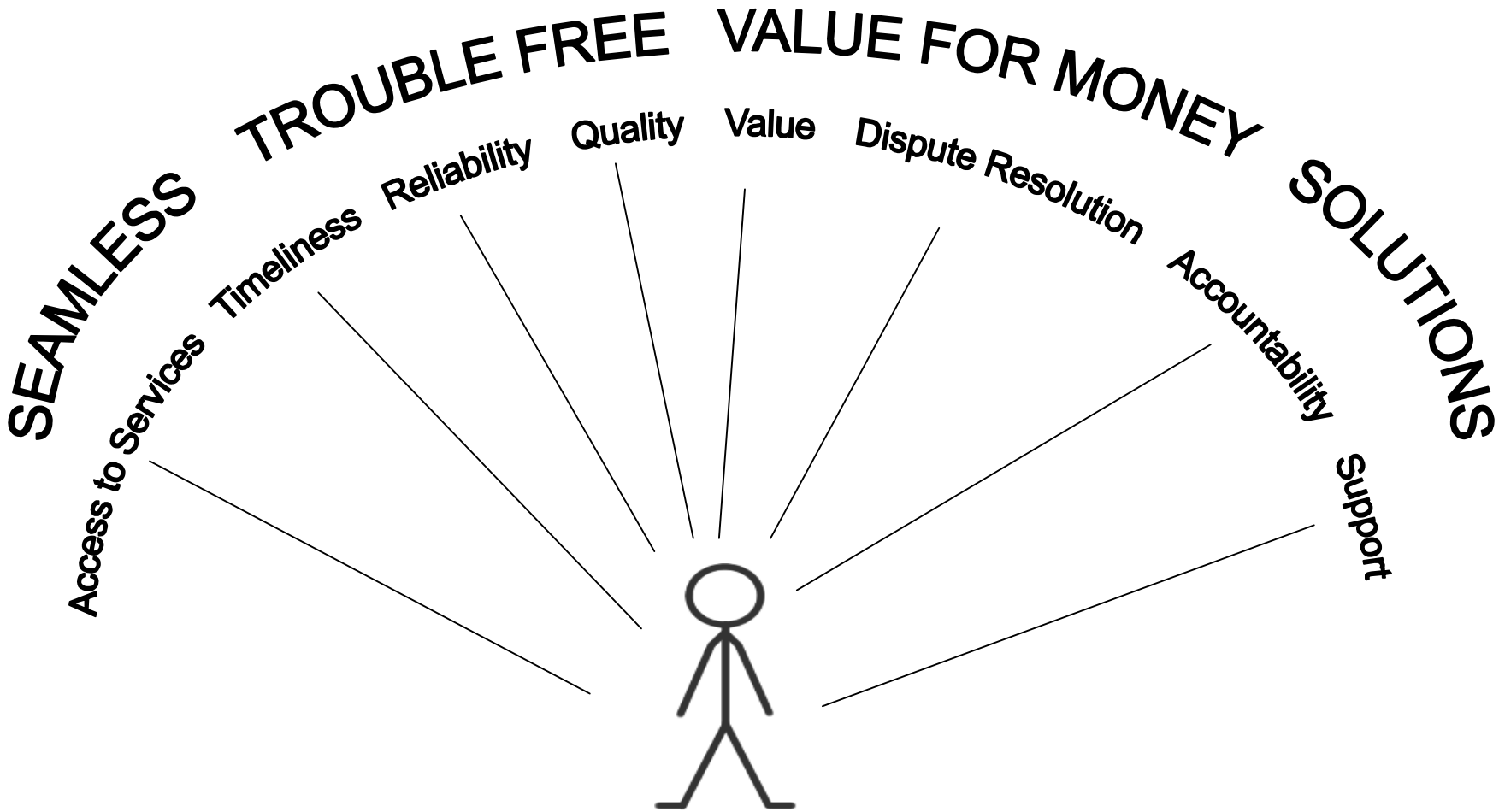
WHAT DO CUSTOMERS WANT?



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WHAT DO PARTNERS WANT?

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…. And then looking at the appetite for partnership working

- The barriers can often be broken down if there is sufficient incentive:
  - Economies of scale
  - Opportunities to share staffing/resources/training
  - Ability to put together stronger funding bids
  - Increased capacity to deliver improved outcomes

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- But if political, organisational or cultural difficulties cannot be overcome, there are alternatives to formal partnerships

- There are often opportunities to collaborate, share resources, enter into joint bids or procurement exercises without having a formal partnering agreement

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Collaboration/Partnership Matrix

Degree of Difference Required	Low	High
High	Indiv. Org.	Collaboration
Low	Collaboration	Partnership

Willingness to Partner

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Some examples from Harlow

- Harlow EssexFamily Project – at the Super Output/ Neighbourhood level

- Harlow Children's Partnership – at the District level

- West Essex Children's Commissioning and Delivery Board

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- Harlow Community Safety Partnership – District level
- Domestic Violence Sub-Group – joint with Epping Forest
- Prevent Strategy Group – with Epping Forest and Brentwood
- Safer Essex Partnership – County wide

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- Harlow Local Strategic Partnership
- West Essex Forum
- Essex Local Strategic Partnership

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Main points to consider…

- Be clear about community benefits of partnership working
- Be aware of the barriers and seek to overcome them
- Consider a range of ways of working in partnership
- Find champions to highlight the benefits and win hearts and minds
- Don’t get bogged down in finer details - just go for it, and work it up as you go along.

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