


Following the rule-book or doing the easy thing is the first behaviour, rather than leaning into something tricky and thinking, "what are the possibilities there, how could we make something of this by partnering up with other people?"



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'...social, political and economic pressures are making it increasingly difficult for local governments to achieve their social mandates without looking to partnerships as an alternative service delivery mechanism.'

(Frisby et al, 2004.)



Literature Review


Partnership is where the partners engage very early on in the planning process, not when one partner has made up their mind what they want to do and then seek others to come along for the ride. Partnerships are about joint planning and looking for joint outcomes.



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'Council needs to be selective in when and how it decides to partner. Decisions must be made on a case by case basis, with Council needing to be clear about what it is seeking to achieve and what this implies for whether it works with others, or journeys alone at each particular time. Being clear also means being honest and realistic about the opportunities and constraints for Council in each given situation. Commitments to collaboration and partnership should only be made when the Council realistically has the time, capacity and political/ organisational backing for a long term journey.'

(Waitakere City Council, 2009)



Literature Review

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'Government and local government agencies are publicly responsible and have to manage for risk. Partnering [will] require elements of risk-taking and will not be enhanced by over-emphasis on risk management, or by centralised rigid compliance systems. A balance will need to be developed which encourages and supports innovation.'

Putting Pen to Paper: Creating Partnering Agreements That Work, 2006



Literature Review

When it's a political decision to invest in it... the detail is not necessarily thought through, and then staff can be left to clean up the mess.



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'New kinds of agreement frameworks are needed to better support partnering objectives and approaches. Traditional top down contracting models do not fit easily with partnering. Written documentation is essential for successful interagency partnering and helps to mitigate against two common risks to partnering – personnel and environmental changes. It is also useful to have a clear documented vision for working together in case things go wrong.'

Putting Pen to Paper: Creating Partnering Agreements That Work, 2006




Literature Review

There's a perception that if council just delivered things directly it would be cheaper and easier. People say, let's just do it ourselves! Yes [a community-led approach] comes with a lot more challenges, but the outcomes are so much better.



The location was non-negotiable, so there was no analysis or formal business case done. It's not in the ideal place to service community needs. Despite the flaws it's a fantastic facility, but it hasn't taken that network approach.



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'[Partnership] brokers were described as critical in the process of relationship building but were also described as useful because they:


- fostered co-operation;
- kept a bird's-eye-view over work and made sure that everything was completed;
- provided [the partner] with capacity that they otherwise lacked;
- assisted in navigating state bureaucracy; and
- identified opportunities and resources.'

Improving Partnership Governance, Pope and Lewis, 2008



Literature Review

Councils have an operational culture that's unlike anything most people will have ever come across in their life. It's a daunting place to be for newcomers. Council people need to remove the organisational speak and culture and engage meaningfully right at the beginning.



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'...The first step in relationship building between Māori and non-Māori organisations should be discussion and negotiation. The importance of investing in relationship-building with Māori prior to any formalisation of partnership was strongly emphasised by Māori, with relationships seen as the glue holding partnerships together.'

Waitakere Māori Community Partnerships Report (quoted in Putting Pen to Paper, 2006)



Literature Review

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'... Some authors have questioned whether [partnerships] simply act as vehicles through which the state continues to enact its own policy goals in a top-down manner, rather than empowering more inclusive participation in policy formulation and implementation.'

Measuring the Performance of Partnerships, Kelly, 2012



Literature Review


The first engagement some of our partners have with council is a set of plans. They put the plans on the table and say "we've got this great idea!" And there's no business case, no evidence of a need for the facility in their community. And they say – "yes, but look at these plans!! We can do it!"



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'[Partnerships involving councils are] potentially subject to three-yearly changes in political structures and associated policy... the implications of this reality on the partnership should be discussed in advance in order to explore ways to 'protect' relationships over the long term and reduce the perception of ever-shifting goalposts. Having a partnership/relationship that endures irrespective of policy and funding shifts allows communities to plan with certainty.'

Putting Pen to Paper: Creating Partnering Agreements That Work, 2006



Literature Review

If we just outsource, that's not partnership, that's just trying to do things cheaper, and passing the buck. You might not save a lot at the beginning [of a partnership] because you might need to invest a lot in the relationship, but over time, you should be able to either generate more value or reduce costs.

