

**AN INTRODUCTION TO PUBLIC SOCIAL PARTNERSHIPS**

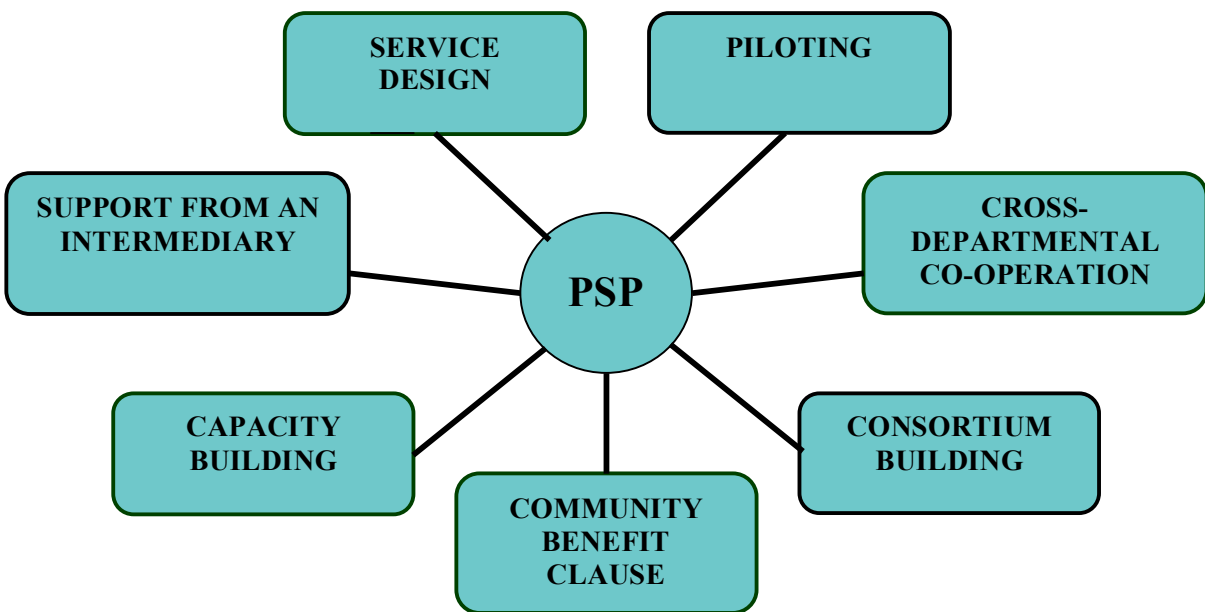
Public Social Partnerships (PSPs) bring together Local Authorities and social enterprises to create well-designed services that benefit the local community.

The PSP model aims to break down the barriers to Local Authorities procuring services from social enterprises. PSPs involve service users in the design of the services and the model allows contracts to reflect the added benefits that community organisations can bring to the running of services by including a community and/ or environmental benefit clause.

PSPs are based on the Italian 'co-planning' model which has been very effective in helping social enterprises to win contracts with the public sector in Italy. PSPs are new to the UK and are being piloted in Scotland through the European-funded EQUAL project. There are two PSP pilots running, one in Renfrewshire and one in North Lanarkshire.

**THE PSP PROCESS**

The PSP process begins at least a year, preferably eighteen months, before a contract goes out to tender. At this stage, the Local Authority should have some information about the services they require and an idea of which social enterprises they want to work with. A third party intermediary is then brought in to manage the process until the contract goes out to tender. The new elements that PSP brings to the procurement process can be broken into seven categories (see below).



- 1) **Service Design.** Service users, the Local Authority, social enterprises and other agencies work together to design the services.
- 2) **Piloting.** The social enterprises have an opportunity to pilot the running of the services for at least six months before they go out to tender. During this time, the delivery of the service will be closely monitored so that information can be fed into the tender.
- 3) **Support from an Intermediary.** A third party facilitates the development of the PSP and acts as an intermediary between the Local Authority and social enterprises.
- 4) **Capacity Building.** The social enterprises are assisted to cost out the services and build capacity during the service design process.
- 5) **Cross-departmental co-operation.** Representatives from different departments within the Local Authority or other public sector body sit on a Steering Group. The role of this group is to enable the Local Authority to take a holistic approach to working with the social enterprises.
- 6) **Consortium Building.** The social enterprises are brought together at an early stage to form a Design Committee which could lead to the setting up of a new jointly managed business.
- 7) **Community Benefit Clause.** The Local Authority will draw up a tender that will include a community and / or environmental benefit clause. This enables the Local Authority to take both cost and additional benefits into account when a service is put out to tender.

### **RENFREWSHIRE PILOT**

The Renfrewshire PSP focuses on services to the elderly and is led by Renfrewshire Council for Voluntary Services (RCVS). Renfrewshire Council Social Work Department had approached RCVS for assistance with redesigning its services to the elderly. Both parties felt that PSP provided an opportunity for the services to be designed in an innovative way.

Through the PSP, a number of social economy organisations came together to set up a consortium called Reaching Older People Across Renfrewshire (ROAR). This group designed and developed a low level care and befriending service for elderly individuals. The consortium is testing the services through an informal arrangement with Renfrewshire Council.

### **NORTH LANARKSHIRE PILOT**

The North Lanarkshire PSP is being led by the Community Recycling Network for Scotland (CRNS). The PSP covers three services: emergency storage of furniture; emergency (temporary) furniture packs; permanent furniture packs

North Lanarkshire Council wanted a people-centred service that would meet the needs of its service users and achieve added benefits, including the provision of training and employment to young homeless people and the reuse/ recycling of unclaimed goods from the storage service.

The services are being piloted by three projects: RECAP, Beulah Scotland and St Patrick's Furniture Project, which have come together to form a consortium called Homereach. The contract will go out to tender in July 2007.