Are Public Leaders up to Standard?

Stephen Brookes

Abstract

The term leadership is so nebulous that no one has ever been able to measure it and yet everyone has tried to define it. Although the notion of leadership is beset by complexities in both the public and the private sector, it is particularly within the public sector that competing needs and expectations of diverse stakeholders exacerbate this problem. In both sectors it could be argued that leadership is not cross sectoral and leadership development is siloed. Within the private sector, strategic alliances may be formed albeit only when this can be perceived as a benefit to shareholders. This emphasises that the private sector is driven by customer-oriented profit in comparison to the public sector which is very much driven by government-imposed targets.

This paper suggests that improvements to leadership are required across both sectors. It will argue that to improve public sector leadership there must be shared aims and values in order to improve a sense of community well being. The paper further suggests that the development of public leadership standards is crucial to this improvement. Such standards should ideally apply across the public sector in order to help the development of a culture of “one-public-service” rather than many public services. The paper outlines a model of public leadership standards which has not previously been discussed by either practitioners or the research community and which has potential to offer a benchmark by which public leadership can be measured.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The key purpose of this paper is not to add to the plethora of arguments that already exist in relation to leadership. What it does suggest is that the time is now ripe to think differently about leadership. The complexities and challenges posed by the changing needs and expectations of the public present a significant opportunity to understand more about leadership within the public sector. Whilst this does not preclude consideration of the private sector (given the focus in the past twenty years on what has been generally accepted as ‘new public management’ (NPM)), the author of this paper is of the view that we are now at the cusp of a further shift in emphasis away from public management and more towards public leadership. The emphasis on new public management has been very much informed by private sector practices principally through the application of competition, viewing citizens much like customers and identifying the links between objectives, targets, outcomes and efficiency. As Dunleavy et.al (2006:468) argues, NPM “is no longer new. Rather, it is now a two-decades-old set of public management ideas”. They argue that the torch of leading-edge change has passed on from NPM and will not return. This paper suggests that the torch should be handed on to the proponents of public leadership.

The paper will briefly describe the theoretical approaches undertaken in relation to leadership and highlight some of the landmarks that underpin the assertion that we need to think differently.

2.0 Thinking Differently About Leadership

This suggested new thinking has its roots in the original meaning of the word ‘leadership’ and some of its cousins. It is interesting to note that “leading” and “leadership” derive from the old English words lederi and leadden (causative of lithan), which literally means “to go” (Talbott 1987). In this sense, leadership means to guide or give direction as opposed to dominating by power or by virtue of command. It has to do with going somewhere together with others provided that at least one of the group is able to “see the way”. It is not so much about “being top-dog” as it is about “leading the way” through one’s own actions. In today’s parlance we also talk of governance, a cousin to leadership. This word derives from Latin origins that suggest the notion of ‘steering’. This sense of ‘steering’ a society can be contrasted with the traditional ‘top-
down’ approach of governments ‘driving’ society or the distinction between ‘power to’ in contrast to governments ‘power over’ society. This is something that the venerable organizational theorist March recognized when he said that (organizations) had to be “sailed not driven” (March 1980).

The paper argues that we need to think differently about leadership and go back to the root of the word in the sense of ‘leading the way’. If leading the way is about achieving results through the leaders own and the followers efforts then to govern is to enable leaders to undertake these actions in a way that takes account of their own intelligence (in terms of possession of knowledge and facts) as leaders but within the overall rules laid down by the governors. If we put this meaning into the everyday world of public service delivery then government steers (by setting the rules and the framework) and public leaders show the way to achieve results. This relationship has not been universally applauded or supported as a brief historical review will illustrate and even today there is still a great desire to drive rather than steer and to lead by power and position rather than through collaborative and collegiate approaches.

2.1 Defining Terms This paper takes a different approach in thinking about leadership. It does not look at leadership as the innate characteristic of an individual; nor does it look at leadership as a set of behaviours that need to be directed towards the common good of all; while acknowledging the importance of situation, it does not place its main focus on identifying those situations that are favourable to leaders; similarly it acknowledges the importance of focusing on transformational (as opposed to transactional) leadership but does not use this as it’s central thesis. What the paper does argue uniquely is the need to combine all of these elements within a leadership style that is described as collective with the aim of achieving shared outcomes through collaborative working between different organisations on the one hand and distributing responsibility and encouraging teamwork through the collegiate efforts of those within each of the distinct organisations on the other hand.

For the purposes of this paper the term collective leadership can be applied universally. In relation to the private sector, the encouragement and development of strategic alliances would be well served by such approaches whereas partnership activity in the public sector would represent a useful testing ground for this novel approach to leadership. It is this latter aspect that represents the main focus of this paper. It begins with a brief examination of leadership theories and how these have developed from the classical thoughts through to the contemporists. A combination of these approaches has supported the development of the approaches outlined in this paper, the first task of which is to define what is meant by collective leadership. This definition is then broken down into two main concepts, collaboration and collegiality. These are then drawn together as a means of aligning respectively the efforts of a number of different agencies and those of individuals within each of the constituent agencies. In relation to collaborative leadership the leaders agree to pursue a shared aim. The leaders then encourage a sense of belonging within the constituent organisation, its aims and objectives and those of partner agencies. In keeping with the principles of collaboration, emphasis is placed on those elements of the shared vision that require joint working at different levels and how the strategy can be shared both across and within constituent agencies. Within organisations,
the principles of collegiality require the devolution and empowerment of more localised and specialist teams and structures but within a framework of accountability that preserves the overall vision and aims.

One can thus view this collective leadership approach within a framework that encourages both shared and distributed leadership within one-public-service. The paper will explore how this can work, how standards can be devised and how they can be measured and assessed. In sum, what the paper hopes to achieve is a means of answering the question “Are public leaders up to standard?”

3.0 THE IMPORTANCE OF LEADERSHIP
Leadership – particularly within a partnership or

(The model described here) has the potential to provide an evidence-based approach to leadership development and evaluation in seeking to answer the question “Are public leaders up to standard?”

alliance context – pervades and influences all aspects of collective working and clearly, its outcomes. There are three key reasons for looking at leadership within this increasingly important context of collective working.

First, collective leadership is needed in making collaborative and collegiate working a reality; yet leadership means different things to different people at different times and there is no real understanding as to what leadership is or what elements of leadership lead to successful implementation of a vision.

Second, collective leadership applies at all levels from central government through to individual teams. Central government – given their governance role in defining priorities and targets for public sector authorities - have a defining role. Having set the priorities, leaders then need to have confidence that the intended outcomes will be achieved. Leadership will be vested in different people in different circumstances and for different reasons. The focus on wider aims needs to be honed down to individual objectives and tasks. Within a partnership or strategic alliance context the first step is to communicate the shared aims and objectives in a way that secures ‘buy-in’. This is important if leaders are to turn strategy into action. The paper argues that this can only be implemented through different levels both within and across a whole range of organisations. It is in this respect that the concept of collective leadership becomes important. The aim is to draw together both shared and distributed leadership within a collective framework that encourages both collaborative and collegiate activities.

Third, it is fair to say that leadership is often the most lacking ingredient in making partnership work-

4.0 THE MEANING OF LEADERSHIP WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF PUBLIC SERVICES
The paper does not intend to offer a comprehensive review of leadership theory as these are many and varied and have been articulately

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expressed by many others. What the paper does offer is a new perspective on what is described as 'collective leadership' and, beyond that, the more specific context of 'public leadership'. In setting the scene it is important to understand the position that others have taken in relation to leadership more generally without getting into the detail. In briefly describing these approaches what the paper attempts to provide is some of the missing attributes that have potential to develop an evidence-based approach to the study of leadership.

4.1 Theorists at Work  Some previous writers on leadership have suggested that it is an innate characteristic. This raises questions such as that posed by Handy (1999:96) – “Are leaders born or made? Can anyone be a leader, or only the favoured few? Is there a particular trick to it or a particular style, something that, if we could learn it, would transform our lives? Are there models we should imitate, great men we can learn from? Do you have to be popular to be effective? Or is it the other way round: is it impossible to be both well liked and productive?”

Trait theories are the earliest and can be traced back to the start of the century although they remain within discussion on leadership today. These theories try to identify the ‘holy grail’ of leadership traits within individuals and there are almost as many traits as there are theorists. They are less successful in identifying why particular leaders achieve success.

Behavioural theorists emerged in the early to mid twentieth century. This approach focused predominantly on leadership within small groups and concentrated mainly on the emergence of particular leadership styles. As with trait theories they were successful in identifying how differing styles were manifest in group situations but were also less helpful in answering the ‘why’ questions.

The complexity of leadership received more attention by the situational and contingency theorists. The importance of context was given prominence with the concomitant need to identify the ‘best-fit’ between the actual situation and the style of leadership that was preferred (Fiedler 1967 and 1976). We then begin to see the emergence of more contemporary thought. Building on the notion of the ‘best-fit’ the dual importance of attentiveness to the needs of the followers (for example, Vroom and Yetton 1973,) and the alignment of leadership style with the needs of the organisation (for example, Adair 1983) came to the fore and is today expressed as transformational leadership (as distinct from transactional leadership or management). This has some interesting links with the earlier debate on the difference between (new) public management and public leadership.

As before the literature is overflowing with descriptions of transformational leadership. James MacGregor Burns coined this term in 1978 as a means of describing the ideal match between leaders and followers and the difference between transformational and transactional leadership. Many others have followed and built upon his ideas. One notable contribution is that of John Kotter (1999 and 2003). Kotter describes eight steps that are needed to transform an organization through leadership from establishing a sense of urgency, through to the consolidation of changes and institutionalization of new approaches. (Kotter, 1999). He and other contemporary theorists provide interesting perspectives in relation to the qualities of leaders. Some “talk a good job” but do not “walk the talk”. Kotters says that there are “too many people who talk enterprise-sensible vision but don’t act that way”. (Kotter 2003:25) He continues by describing good leaders as possessing humility, a similar made by Jim Collins in his analysis of executives who led only a handful of companies on the road from ‘good’ to ‘great’ (Collins 2001). In both cases there was a drive for the organisation rather than their own ego a clear sense of where they wanted to take their companies/organisations. In other words, they were leading the way but needed others to help to determine the direction (or, as Collins argued, the first task is “to get the right people on the bus before you decide the direction in which you are heading”).

4.2 Emerging Patterns  What begins to emerge is a focus on two things; first to make things
happen because they are important. This is what this paper refers to as distributed leadership. Second, leadership is also about securing ‘buy-in’ from across the range of stakeholders based on a sound vision. This is what is described as shared leadership. As Kotter (2003:26) argued in relation to change:

“…. you have to remember change for change's sake is not the point. For change to be good, you've got to make it happen, yes, but more important it's got to be in a good direction”.

This latter point emphasises once again the importance of ‘direction’ – a “way of seeing things” and thus the importance of developing ‘intelligent’ (“all-seeing”) leaders – those who collect and analyse the right information but also ensure that organisations learn through this information and its own people. Shared intelligence and information would be a critical element of shared leadership. A very recent thesis has been offered which suggests that “New Public Management is Dead-Long Live Digital-Era Governance” (Dunleavy et.al. 2006:467). In having some affinity with this view this paper supports the idea that IT and information systems changes now have a wide-ranging impact on how public services are organised and services delivered to citizens. It also changes the role of the public leader in relation to the development of shared aims and objectives within a shared vision.

The vision and strategy may be good, but if this is to be turned into action on the ground, more is needed. The traditional approaches suggest that leaders need followers. This is true, but for every leader at one level there will be a need for leaders at other levels. This is the notion of distributed leadership. Kotter further suggests that today's organizations need heroes at every level.

Keith Grint (2000) provides a further interesting perspective if we consider our aim of identifying what leadership really is and in asking the ‘who’, ‘where’, ‘how’ and ‘why’, questions. Grint makes an interesting comparison with the arts with respectively, the philosophical arts in creating a compelling sense of identity, the fine arts in determining the direction, the martial arts in the development of smart organizational tactics to achieve the vision, and finally the performing arts in persuasively communicating the vision and tactics to the organizations people.

In a later work (Grint 2005) he develops this further by examining the limits and possibilities of leaders based upon four ideal types all of which can apply at different times. He looks at leadership as a person; is it who leaders are that makes them leaders? Leadership as results; is it what leaders achieve that makes them leaders? Leaders as a position; is it where leaders operate that make them leaders? Leadership as a process; is it how leaders get things done that make them leaders?

Grint argues that all of these approaches apply at different times in creating what he describes as a ‘leaderful’ organisation. A key part of this is a need to encourage distributed leadership rather than centralising leadership at the top of the organisation. Quoting Raelin (2003) Grint suggests that we should “establish communities where everyone shares the experience of serving as a leader, not sequentially but concurrently and collectively”.

5.0 A COLLECTIVE LEADERSHIP FRAMEWORK FOR PUBLIC LEADERS

Most of the early theories on leadership were written during relatively stable times. We now live in a complex world and public leadership is a complex issue – much more complex than the private
sector. We see this in relation to the determination of local versus national priorities and local efforts in turning these strategies into effective delivery on the ground.

As the contemporary theorists grapple with the complex world of leaders our thinking begins to turn to the need for leaders to create opportunities for others to learn, for the leaders themselves to learn and to enable others to take a leadership role. This is the essence of what the paper describes as distributed (collegiate) leadership. If one then considers this within the context of public sector partnerships then we should also consider the concept of shared (collaborative) leadership. A combination of these two approaches has real potential in drawing together the complexities of leadership in the one sense but making sense of the complexities through comparison and consistency in another sense.

In keeping with the theme of this paper we can again look back to the origins of these two words as this will assist us in understanding the dynamics of leadership within a collective context.

Collaborate originates from the two Latin terms com- (“with”) and labore (“to work”) and thus to define the word as to “work with”. It is thus applicable as a means of describing shared leadership between different organizations but with some shared aims.

The term collegiate is of, relating to, or comprising a college which itself originates from the Latin ‘con’ (together) and ‘leg’ (law). It may be described as originally referring to people who are equally empowered members of the same organisation or society who work to a common set of rules. It is thus an appropriate means of describing individuals or teams within one organisation but with a degree of responsibility and autonomy. An example can be offered in relation to the structure of some universities in England which are known as collegiate universities. In such universities functions are divided between the central departments of the university and a number of colleges. It differs from a centralised university in that colleges have substantial responsibility and autonomy in the running of the university but with a focus on the more localised college. Consider here the structure of a police force and a local authority. Both would have a role in setting some parameters from the centralised headquarters but the emphasis today is on devolving authority to the local unit such as a police basic command unit or an area team. Devolution involves the shaping of policy as well as the implementation of programmes as opposed to de-centralisation which is where policy is determined centrally but delivered locally.

For the purposes of collective leadership, two definitions are offered:

- Collaborative: Where leadership is shared between different organisations which share a common aim and vision;
- Collegiate: Where leadership is distributed throughout the single (but collaborating) organisation.

![Figure 1: Two Dimensional Leadership Scale](https://www.csl.uoguelph.ca)
These can be assessed on a two-dimensional scale as shown in Figure 1. In assessing the different dimensions the following hypotheses can be suggested.

If an organisation takes an individual approach in relation to its own aims and objectives and similarly relies upon individuals to determine their own actions without effective distributive leadership then one could assume that the organisation would continue to operate in a vacuum (or silo) and have little regard to the aims and objectives of other organisations (collaborative) nor those of teams or communities (collegiate). The organisation is likely to be highly centralised and aims narrowly defined. This is called bureaucratically focused leadership and is likely to be underpinned by individual trait approaches.

If the organisation continues to operate in its own silo with narrowly defined aims and objectives but does provide some authority to its teams or units then it could be described as collegiate (through effective distributive leadership) but not collaborative. The organisation is likely to more locally structured but lacking joined-up working. This is called locally focused leadership and is likely to be underpinned by behavioural and transactional approaches.

The third scenario is where the organisation takes a collaborative approach (through shared leadership) in taking forward a shared vision, aims and objectives with partner organisations, but does not match this with distributed leadership within the organisation. The organisation is likely to be more joined up at the executive levels but less so at the non-executive levels and is likely to be more centrally determined and hierarchic in nature. In this case the organisations may take a multi-agency approach at the executive level but could not be described as integrated at non-executive levels with a focus on high level aims and objectives but less emphasis on local integrated delivery. This is called visionary focused leadership.

The final hypothesis is where the organisation displays both collaborative (shared leadership) and collegiate (distributed leadership) approaches. In this case there will be a multi-agency and integrated approach to collective leadership both across and within the constituent organisations or enterprises. The organisation is likely to be strategically focused at the executive level with an emphasis on multi-agency collaboration but with an increasingly integrated approach at the non-executive levels with fully devolved authority and responsibility and decentralised structures.

The overall approaches can be illustrated in Figure 2.
6.0 ARE LEADERS UP TO STANDARD?: A Practical Framework for Evaluation

An important point to reiterate is that it is very difficult to establish whether leadership is effective. The evidence base is not substantial and where evidence is available it often relies upon the views of leaders themselves which can be self fulfilling through their own justifications. There is a need to get beyond this and to establish how leadership can be assessed and how its effectiveness can be measured thus providing a realistic evidence base that thus far has been elusive. This paper suggests that we can begin to assess the effectiveness of leadership by looking at the two dimensions of collaborative (shared) and collegiate (distributed) leadership.

We must first understand what public leadership is about and what it is intended to achieve. The Local Government Act 2000 introduced a new responsibility for local government which is “to promote the social, economic and environmental well-being of the community” and, for the first time, provided a statutory authority to work in partnership and expend public finances to achieve shared aims. It is important also to understand the concept of public value. This is a concept that was first described by Mark Moore (1994) but which is receiving specific attention in the UK (Work Foundation). Quite simply, public value may be described as the public sector equivalent of the private sector focus on profits for shareholders. Creating and demonstrating public value is much more difficult in the public sector than it is in the private sector. A first prerequisite of public value must surely be to identify what it is the public actually does value. This is what Moore calls the social goals. The introduction of the community leadership role for local government is a key step in this direction and requires local authorities to identify and respond to the needs and expectations of the public. This is thus one example in which the effectiveness of leadership can be demonstrated. Alongside this is the need for other public sector organisations to undertake similar identifications. There is clearly potential to share the responsibility between public organisations in identifying these goals.

The next stage of creating and demonstrating public value is to deliver the services in a way in which it is perceived as legitimate by the public. Governance arrangements themselves can increase the legitimacy of governments, its decision making and outcomes (Demery et al. 1993). At the public organisation level the way in which the local services are delivered and perceived will also impact the legitimate delivery of public services and thus, accessible to evaluation. The third element of Moore’s model is the capacity of the public services to deliver the social goals. Capacity will include the extent to which leaders proactively position the public service and its people to improve delivery.

Public value therefore begins to map out a high level means of evaluating public leadership. Based on the extensive literature review of leadership issues, previous research (Brookes 2006) and experience a definition of excellent public leadership can offered as a means of developing standards and measures.

Excellent leadership within the context of collaborative public service delivery is likely to be reflected by a partner who follows that listed in Figure 3.

Having defined the standards, it is then important to develop measures by which the standard of public leadership can be assessed and evaluated. Some suggested standards were included in Brookes (2006) and related primarily to the notion of shared leadership. This form of leadership can improve partnership working. The definition can act as a means by which shared leadership can be evaluated. Further measures will also need to be developed to assess the extent to which leadership is also further distributed.

By drawing together both shared and distributed leadership we thus start to get real meaning. Keeping within the context of the paper, the issue of meaning is further explored and, with the help of the Concise Oxford Dictionary the following further distinctions are offered:

Collective Leadership – taken as a whole (thus supporting the notion of leadership as part of a system) by all for the benefit of all.
Within this we may break collective leadership down into two further definitions as follows:

**Shared Leadership** - equitable division with others or to apportion among others or endure jointly with others (thus supporting the sharing of leadership across public body leads)

**Distributed Leadership** – deal out responsibilities at different points of time (thus supporting the notion of allocation of leadership based on need and capacity).

**Individual Leadership** is still important but only in ensuring that others can lead within the parameters given.

These concepts are not new.

**Shared leadership** can be described as a social process (Doyle and Smith 2001) - something that happens between people or between partners. In this sense it does not depend on one person or one partner, but on how people or a number of partners act together to make sense of their particular agenda and shared outcomes. Different partners may take the lead but at different times.

**Figure 3: Leadership Attributes within Collaborative Public Service Delivery**

- **Display Community Leadership** in all aspects of the role through active engagement with key stakeholders and, in particular, to both reflect and engage with community-led priorities. Excellent leaders will be open to the sharing of expertise and bring positive benefits to their own and other partnerships.

- **Secures accountability** to and with key stakeholders in relation to clearly defined outcomes and readily engages in dialogue to further secure continued improvement.

- **Shapes the Future** through a shared vision which inspires and motivates.

- **Leads delivery** through distributed responsibility supported by regular monitoring and evaluation of the effectiveness of community outcomes.

- **Building Capacity**: Builds effective relationships between and within partners and enables others to achieve. Excellent leaders should be committed to the development of others as well as self development to enable leaders to deal with the complexity of the role.

- **Manages the organisation** through the improvement of good communication, organisational structures and functions based on a sound understanding of the need to respond to change.

**Distributed leadership** is a very similar term but has been linked more to the related concept of being collegiate. For example in the world of education, the National College for School Leadership argue that the concept of distributed leadership has a variety of meanings, and that some of these meanings (explicitly and/or implicitly) resemble earlier notions such as collegiality.
6.1 Model Application  The paper now illustrates how this framework can be applied in practice. First, let us consider the ‘typical’ community safety partnership:

The police commander, chief executives and other senior leaders from constituent partner agencies will normally form the leadership group (or responsible authority or other pseudonym for the statutory partnership). The group will have shared aims (the strategy) and will clearly wish to achieve the objectives of these aims. Most partnerships will deliver this through a ‘shared’ action plan.

The paper thus suggests that public leadership can be viewed as the function of a system rather than the property of an individual and that it is the leadership style that will enable the inter-relationships of this system to work together within a process. This is not to dismiss the importance of individual leadership but rather to suggest that sustaining improvement in delivery of public outcomes can only be achieved by what is described as collective public leadership comprising of both shared and distributed leadership.

As a result, the partnership moves toward its goals with unity. This is the first key step in a public leadership challenge – that is to share the leadership across the relevant partnership players. The second step is to assess its effectiveness and to drive it through the constituent organisations.

This second stage starts with efforts to ensure that the leadership is appropriately applied within each of the constituent organisations that make up the partnership. At the local level we know that police inspectors, assistant directors and similar people within organisations will receive instructions from their
more senior colleagues in taking forward the strategy. We would equally expect these people also to share the leadership at a more tactical level – and so it will continue – until it reaches the beat officer, the housing officer and so forth. By distributing as opposed to instructing the commander retains leadership responsibility. It is also the case within the other organisations.

Effective distributed leadership is suggested as the key to ensuring that the shared visions and strategies developed by executives are delivered ‘on the ground’. Failure to do this is what is described as the ‘implementation gap’. It becomes a tad more complex as one moves through the organisation.

In evaluating the effectiveness of distributed public leadership in turning strategies into delivery it is important to identify the context and ask “what is the main purpose and role for the leaders team?” Teams and roles will differ and thus will require different leadership styles.

First and foremost is the need for ‘middle leaders’ to both understand and “buy-in” to the overall vision. Middle leaders then need to drive the distributed leadership. How can this distributed leadership close the implementation gap? This is an important question if we are to look at how distributed leadership can be evaluated. Some suggested means are:

- Ensuring that the vision and strategies of collaborating partners are in alignment through integration and inclusiveness. This is clearly the role for the executives of the organization, but integration and inclusiveness is both vertical (throughout the organization) as well as horizontal (across a range of organizations). Middle managers have a dual role in assisting in the development of, and taking responsibility for, the strategy within and across their peer groups and respective teams.
- There are clear lines of communication within the respective collaborating organizations. Middle managers seek to build on and support this communication.
- There is a focus on the achievement of joint objectives and outcomes. Middle managers will drive the action plans to achieve these objectives whilst keeping an eye on and influencing ‘the bigger picture’. This requires leaders to put ‘intelligence’ at the core of their leadership role.
- Middle managers take responsibility to develop their own and their team members’ leadership skills and seek to build capacity to work within a devolved structure and develop an understanding of the need for effective governance arrangements.

In evaluating the effectiveness of distributed public
in partner organizations. In ensuring that shared leadership from the executives is properly informed it is further suggested that middle leaders should also lead ‘up’ the organization in the sense of shaping the vision.

Finally, distributed leadership also requires attention to the competences and commitment levels of followers. This is a further extension to Blanchard and Hersey's work which could be of benefit to middle leaders. Distributed leadership does not just require attention to followers – followers can also be leaders and it is important to understand what leaders do and who can do it. A good leader will recognize and appreciate the skills of other and delegate leadership to those with particular skills. Some of these leadership tasks are illustrated in Figure 5.

At the centre of this suggested skill set is the need for knowledge management. This is the key to aligning the shared leadership with distributed leadership and thus achieving the goals of public leadership.

Envisioning requires attention to the wider vision and aims of the organization and its partners. Nurturing applies to both the followers of the leader and the need to network with peers in other organizations. Organization of the strategy and its links with delivery is vitally important and underpins the importance of transactional (as well as transformational) leadership and, finally, collective public leadership requires mediation. There will be competing goals and cultures which need to be led and developed. This is perhaps the greatest challenge for public leadership.

8.0 CONCLUSION

Knowledge is the lifeblood of leadership and the paper concludes that the complex world of public leadership relies upon both shared and distributed leadership and these in turn rely upon good information and intelligence across a range of agencies if the other tasks of both shared and distributed public leadership are to be achieved. If we are to measure and assess whether public leaders are indeed up to standard then we need clearly to understand what we mean by public leadership:

It is a form of collective leadership in which public bodies and agencies collaborate in achieving a shared vision based on shared aims and shared values which seek to promote, influence and deliver improved and sustained social and economic well-being within a complex and changing social context.

The attainment of these ideals will require a new way of thinking about leadership and the means of assessing achievement. The aim of this paper has been to start that debate.
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**Author:**

Dr. Stephen Brookes is a senior fellow within the Centre for Public Policy and Management (Manchester Business School, University of Manchester). He specializes in leadership and organizational development across the public sector generally and policing and community safety more specifically.

An established scholar, Dr. Brookes also has senior level experience in the police, central and regional government and local government. Immediately prior to his University of Manchester appointment, he was the Home Office Director for the Government Office for the East Midlands. He was also a member of Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary, and led a multi-inspectorate national review of crime reduction. He was awarded the Queens Police Medal in the Jubilee Birthday Honours in June 2002 for distinguished police service and is a member of the Chartered Management Institute.