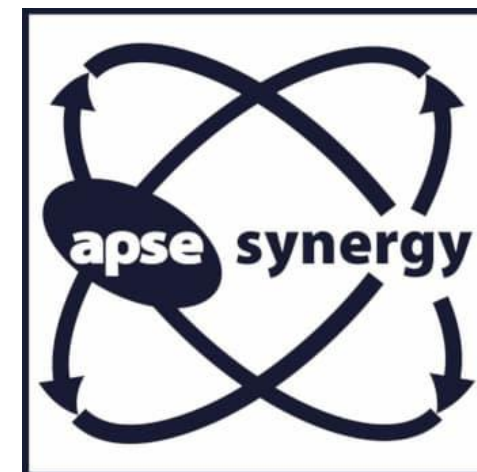
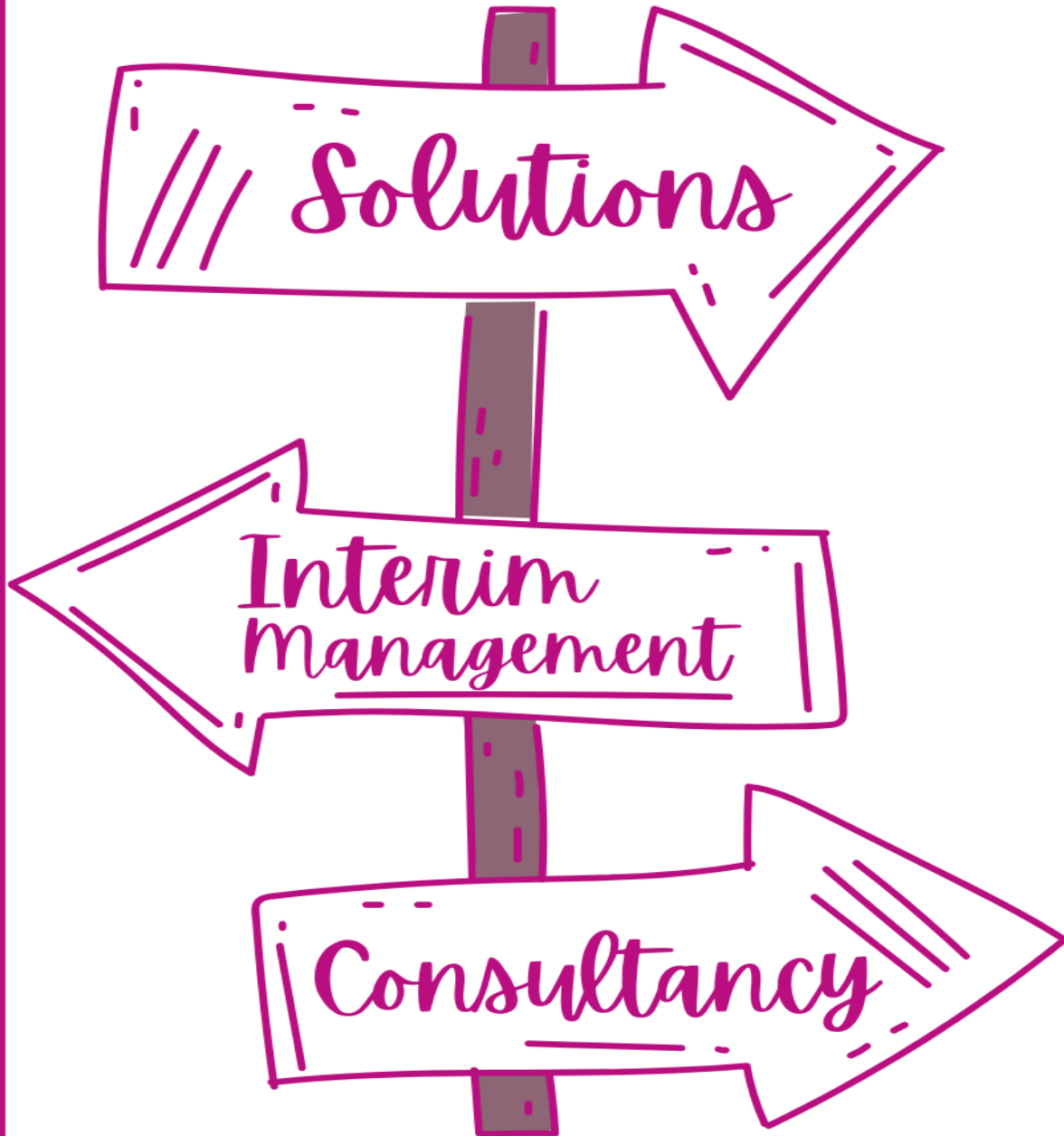


LGR – Operational Necessity

Matt Miller, Executive Consultant
APSE Solutions





solutions

Interim Management

Workforce strategy

Survey-based work

Commercial development

Diagnostic health Checks

Coaching and mentoring

Service improvement planning

Comprehensive service reviews

Bespoke process benchmarking

Local Government Reorganisatio n (LGR)

Fundamental changes in service delivery and governance for affected areas

What does it mean for front-line services?

What are the key challenges?

What opportunities can and should be taken?

What does success look like?

What are the pressing issues to be tackled in the next two years set against the longer term?

NB. This has already happened in some areas (e.g., Northamptonshire, Cornwall, Wiltshire, Cheshire, Cumbria etc.)

What support can APSE provide?

The most consistent messages across all reorganisations, are:

1

Start early, plan thoroughly, and secure strong governance.

2

Get senior leadership in place quickly.

3

Prioritise ICT, HR, finance, and data integration from day one.

4

Drive cultural alignment and avoid replicating legacy structures.

5

Expect benefits to take years, not months, to materialise.

6

Communicate clearly and maintain ownership across all councils.

LGR Opportunities and Challenges

Strategy)

- Reducing duplication and ensuring more consistency in service delivery
- Create clearer accountability to residents and members
- Opportunity to invest time and resources into modernisation
- Identification of transition costs, savings, and efficiencies
- Transfer of contracts, liabilities, assets, and property to the new unitary authority.
- Ensuring continued compliance with procurement, regulatory, and statutory obligations.

However:

Avoid the hazards of **democratic deficit** by:

- Dealing effectively with community identities
- Maintaining a consistent local and community focused service delivery
- Developing a new clear identity for the new authority.

Where sovereign councils did not fully “own” the agreed model or business case, transition was harder. Cultural resistance, especially after contested proposals, can delay implementation and undermine collaboration.

LGR – Frontline Services

- The most visible services to residents
 - High customer contact and expectations
 - Operationally complex and resource-intensive
 - Budgets have been historically squeezed.
- Public perception will depend on service continuity and accountability
 - Hence the need for short term two-year planning within a longer-term integration plan
- **Current Mix of Front-Line Service Provision**
 - Waste Management - Treatment) Two Tier (Collection and
 - Highways - County / Unitary
 - Street Scene - District /Unitary
 - Parks and Grounds Maintenance - District /Unitary
 - Fleet - District /Unitary/County
 - Culture and Leisure - District /Unitary/County
 - Planning and Regulatory Services District /Unitary/County

Other Factors

- Relationships and arrangements with the Strategic Mayoral Authority - Strategic Transport, Strategic Planning, Economic Development etc.
- Long-term waste planning
- Authority level highways investment plans
- Climate and sustainability alignment
- Improved long-term outcomes linked to health, regeneration etc.

New unitaries that invested early in **clear governance, risk management**, and **decision-making structures** had a “stronger start.” Weak governance or unclear ownership of the chosen model created friction and slowed progress.

Opportunities



An investment opportunity to establish:

A single, consistent model for service delivery and accountability

Adoption of best practice

An improved customer experience

Greater buying power and reduced duplication

Digital transformation

Workforce planning

Create positive cultural change



Start early, plan in detail, and don't underestimate the complexity



Late starts and compressed timelines create avoidable risk.



Detailed programme design early on saves time later and gives staff confidence

Steps to Service harmonisation and change

Produce a Service delivery matrix and plan for:

- Workforce integration
- Fleet and depot rationalization
- Data and systems integration
- Contract alignment
- Customer services arrangements
- Internal and external Communications

Focusing only on **minimum compliance** can lead to **over-preserving the status quo**. Councils that used LGR as a chance to redesign services at scale saw better long-term benefits.

Avoid bottom-up service design that simply replicates legacy councils

Councils advise designing **future-focused operating models**, not stitching together old ones.

An Overarching Delivery Programme

- Rationalising multiple depots with varied capacities and geographies
- Decisions on consolidation and maintaining resilience during transition
- Different waste collection frequencies with different bins, colours, and policies
- Mixed fleet age and specs
- Varied highways standards and arrangements

- Mixed economy of different contract terms and timelines (in house, arms length, contracted out) - Waste disposal usually long-term, Highways contracts vary

Requires phased implement to an agreed program for convergence:

- Interim solutions.
- Continue with a county or region wide disposal or highways contract or develop a unitary level alternative?

NB. The overall implementation end time could be more than 10 years.

New unitaries have **not yet realised the financial benefits** originally planned, due to inflation, service pressures, and the scale of change. Councils should expect a **multi-year journey** to achieve savings and transformation

- TUPE transfers from multiple councils
- Pay, terms, and conditions
- Alignment of Organisational cultures
- Maintaining morale during change
- Retaining local knowledge

Core Essential Requirements

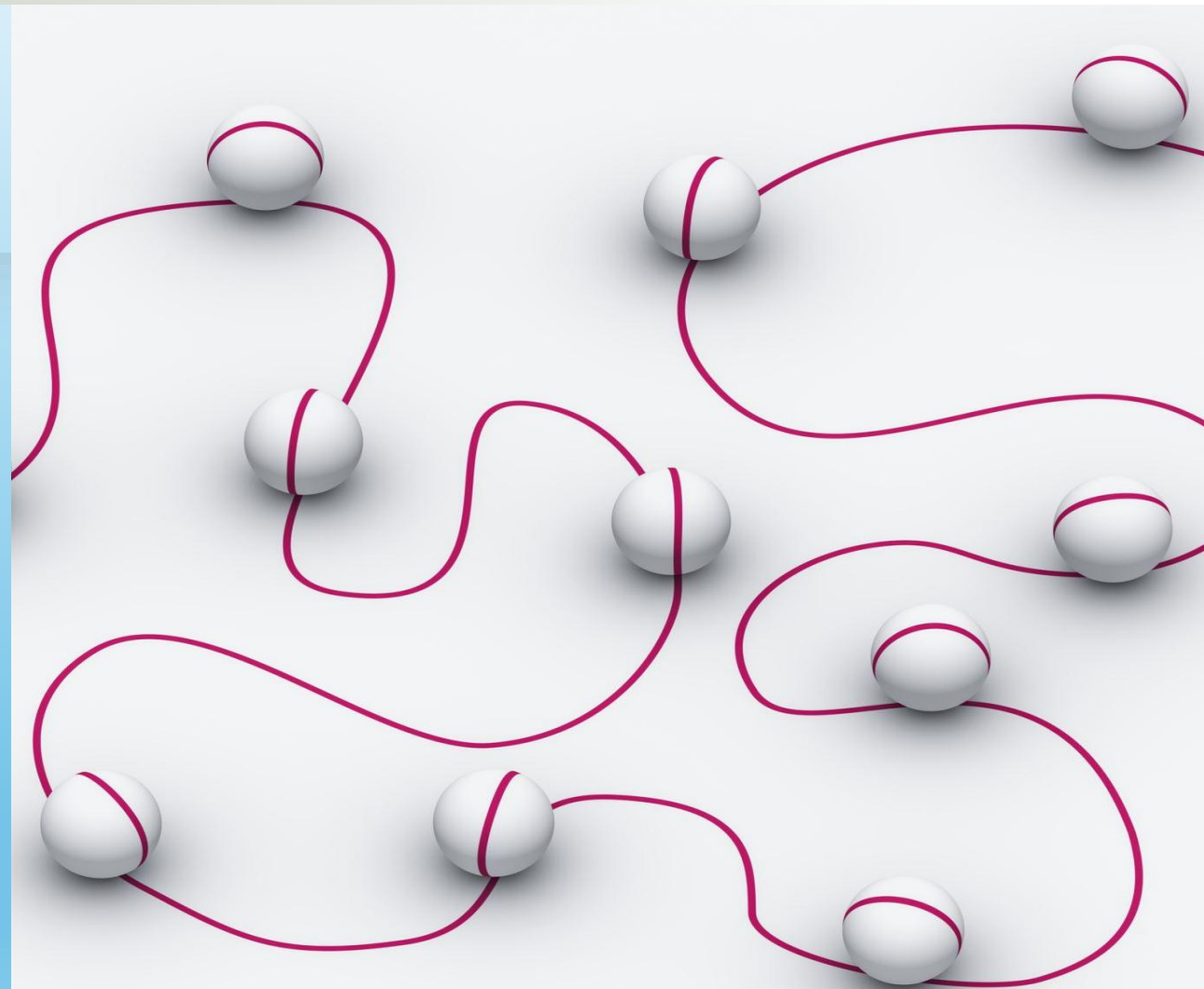
- Service level plans feeding into corporate level service development and integration plans
- A Workforce Strategy
- Corporate and service level communication plans
- Organisation-wide cultural strategy

Workforce Planning

Communications and Managing Change

- Clear messaging to residents, staff, partners, and elected members.
- Managing expectations about service continuity and the benefits of reorganisation.

Authorities that **communicated** clearly with staff, residents, and partners reduced uncertainty and built trust. Where **communication** was weak, rumours and resistance grew, slowing progress.



Customer Interfaces and Accountability

Current multiple
CRMs and asset
systems

Need for data
cleansing and
training

Maximizing the use
of chosen CRM
products

Building a customer
service that works
for all

Supporting elected
members

A Customer Services
Strategy – In tandem
with service delivery
strategies

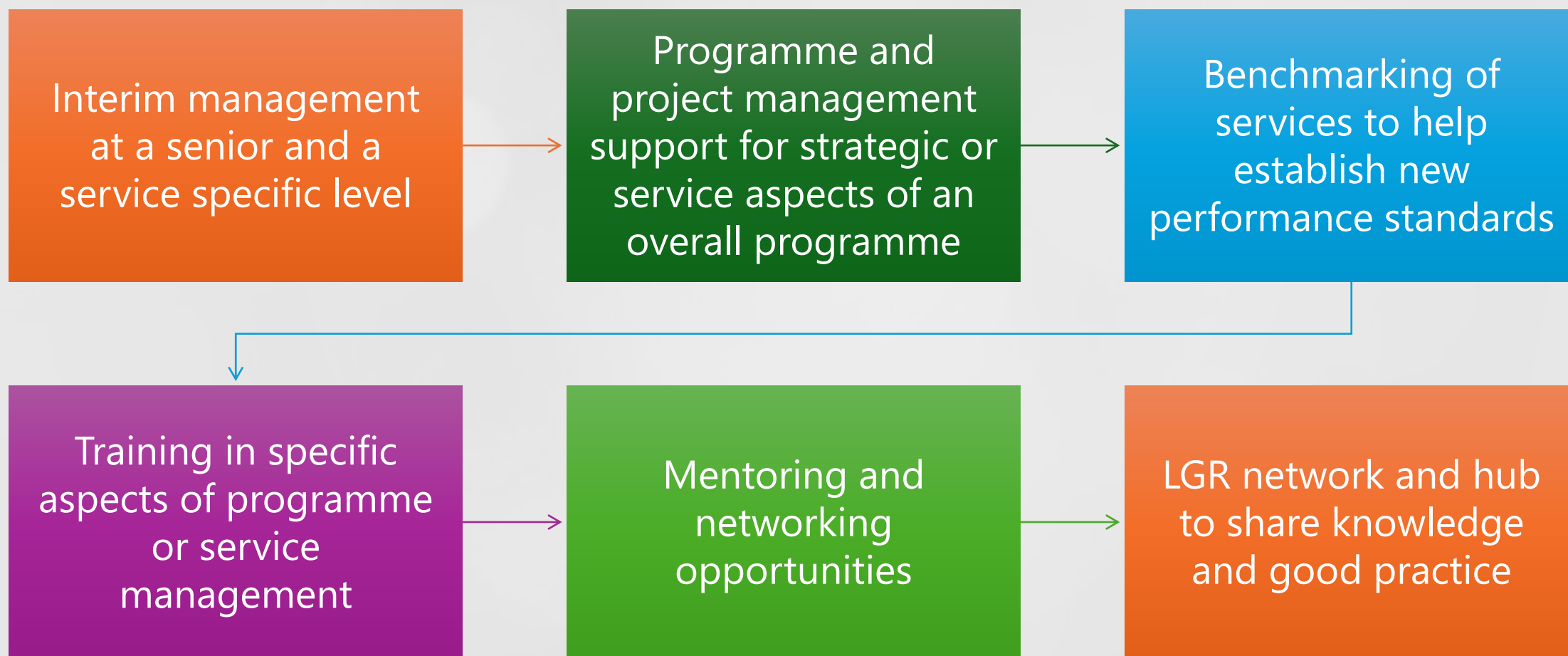
A Communications
Strategy

Councillor protocols
and standing orders

Authorities often focus on frontline services first, but **ICT, HR, finance systems, and customer services** are the backbone of Day 1 readiness. Neglecting these creates operational risk and slows integration.

APSE Support

APSE can provide a number of bespoke levels of support in this area:



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