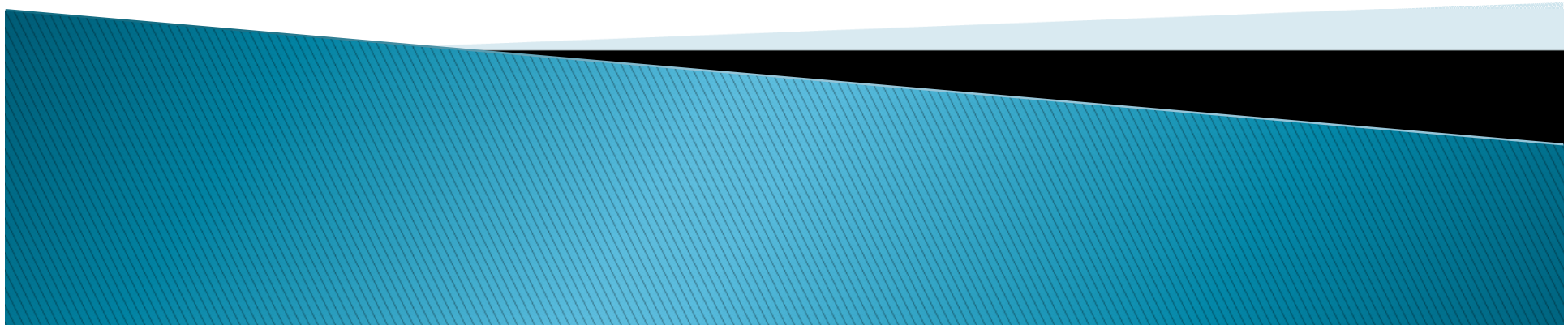


Chief Officers and the Ensuring Council

Neil Barnett, Leeds Beckett University
Arianna Giovannini, De Montfort University
Steven Griggs, De Montfort University



The issue

- ▶ Chief Officers and research– ‘The Missing Middle’
- ▶ Yet– much to suggest roles are changing– pressures.....
- ▶ Austerity
- ▶ Role in partnerships, commissioning, commercial activities....external facing
- ▶ Loss of support?
- ▶ New pressures, new skills?... How much has changed, and how?



- ▶ Commonly held assumptions–
- ▶ Chief Officers are ‘austrian realists’–no challenge, complying, firefighting... OR
- ▶ Chief Officers are helping create a ‘new model’ of Local Govt.–*very* strategic
- ▶ The *21st Century Public Servant*– diplomat, story teller, innovator.
- ▶ Do these match reality?



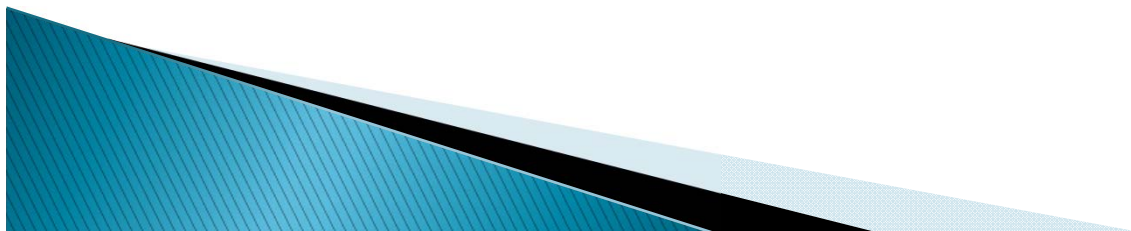
The Research

- ▶ Telephone interviews with @ 30 Chief Officers
– across UK
- ▶ Follow up with focus group
- ▶ Questions @ austerity; external facing and commercial roles; *p*olitical pressures and relationships with Cllrs and central govt.
- ▶ How do they experience change?; how do they see the 'austerian' world, as it is?



(Very) early thoughts

- ▶ Continuity!
 - ▶ Core values strong; policy tools change
 - ▶ More strategic– but what is strategic
 - ▶ Intermediaries
 - ▶ Optimism
 - ▶ Now the norm....this is what we do
-
- ▶ Questions– what is seen as strategy; how are these things interpreted?; how is austerity perceived in practice at various levels?





Laura Church
Corporate Director
Place and Infrastructure
Luton Borough Council



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