

Strategic Review of GPDF

Table of Contents

- Strategic Review of GPDF Remit.....1**
- Methodology.....1**
 - The nature of organisational change2
 - Organisational Resilience Framework.....2
 - Competing Values Framework3
 - Value Chain.....4
- Findings.....5**
 - Commitment/Passion5
 - Confidence.....5
 - Support Activities.....5
 - Change and Resilience5
- Conclusions6**
 - Commitment/Passion6
 - Confidence.....6
 - Support Activities.....6
 - Change and Resilience6
- Recommendations7**
 - Commitment/Passion7
 - Confidence.....7
 - Support Activities.....7
 - Change and Resilience8
- A Footnote9**

Strategic Review of GPDF Remit

We (Attend) are engaged on the following basis.

A proposal for organisational development advice, 'Towards Brilliant Basics', which will include:

- (a) advice on process for restructure, recruitment and employee engagement, in accordance with best practice;
- (b) advice and provision of a proposal for non-executive director skill set, remuneration and recruitment;
- (c) a review of existing key third party contracts and advice on contract actions in the context of the new GPDF operating functions;
- (d) a review and advice to improve the GPDF levy collection system processes;
- (e) processing data of which GPDF are the data controller; and
- (f) undertaking any other advisory tasks, which shall be agreed with you as and when required.

Methodology

1. We met with former members of staff prior to their departure.
2. We attended the LMC conference at Friends Meeting House on 18th and 19th May 2023.
3. We have engaged with current Board members.
4. We have attended 'project' meetings.
5. We have met with LMCs
6. We have spoken to other organisations in the sector.
7. We have carried out desk research, and analysis of information we have on the organisation.
8. We have considered how similar organisations operate.

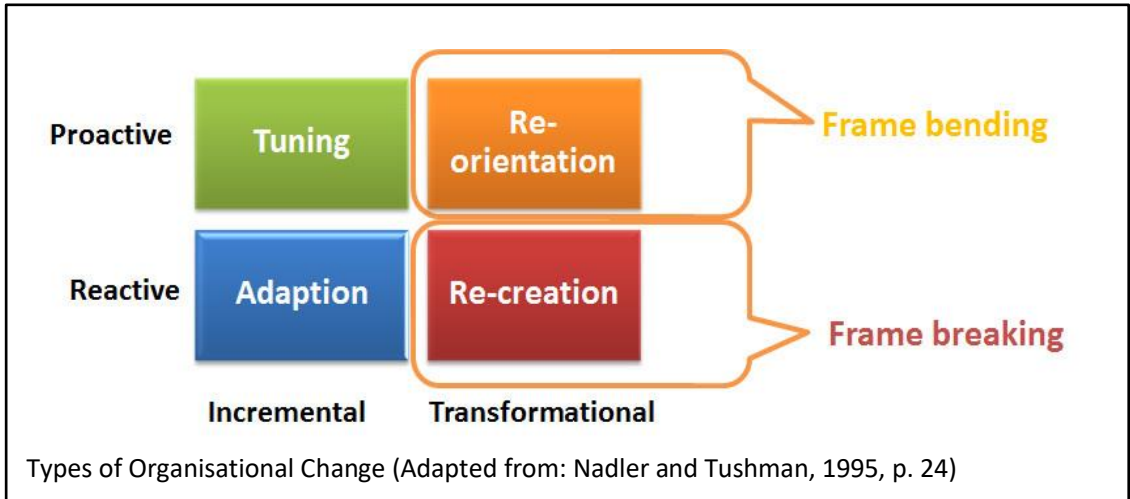
Alongside this, together with our original brief, we have also delivered support to the 'back office' function of the organisation, which has given real insights, and a greater sense of feel for the organisation, its operation, and potential contribution.

The approach we have taken to analyse the current situation utilised the central concepts of **the nature of change** and **organisational resilience**. The models adopted as an analytical framework to support this review were:

- Types of Organisational Change (Nadler and Tushman, 1995)
- Organisational Resilience Framework (BSI, 2020)
- Competing Values Framework (Cameron and Quinn, 2012)
- Value Chain (Porter, 1985)

The nature of organisational change

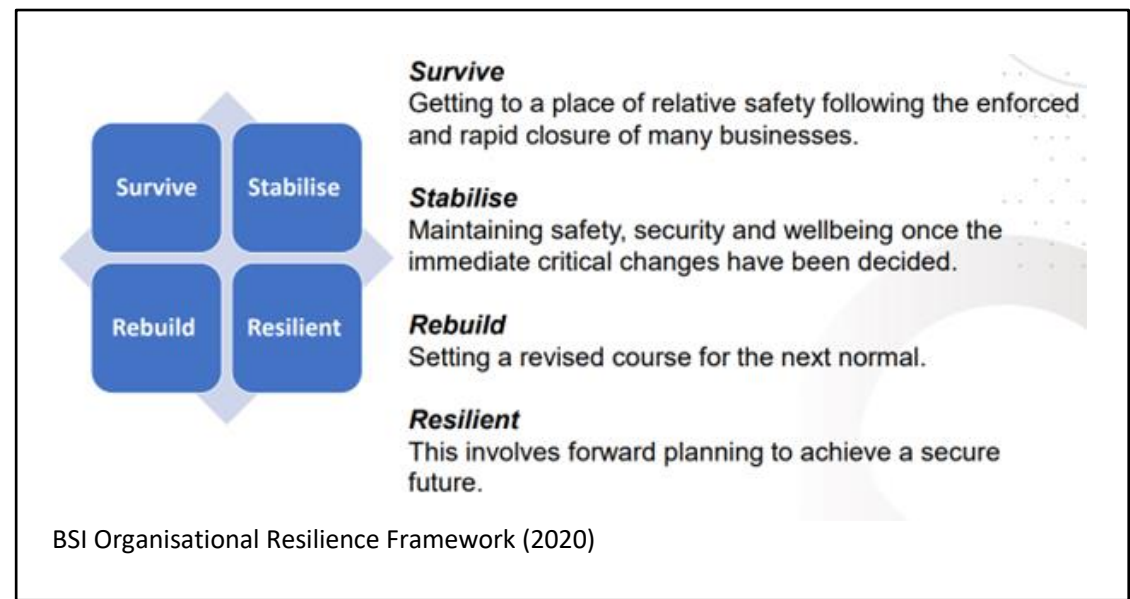
GPDF are clearly undergoing some significant change, and some theoretical consideration of the nature of this change would be helpful to both diagnose the current situation and consider a way forwards. The initial assessment was that GPDF was experiencing a mixture of (initially) reactive (and more recently) proactive transformational change. Therefore, the concepts of re-orientation and re-creation applied in particular.



Organisational Resilience Framework

The BSI Organisational Resilience Framework (2020) was designed to support organisations following the impact of the pandemic. This model has been chosen as it seeks to support organisations moving from an old way of working to a ‘new normal’. The initial findings indicated that GPDF is on a similar journey, not necessarily driven by a response to Covid, but having a number of similar drivers to rethink the fundamental ways of working, and its relationships with key stakeholders.

The model considers the following stages: Survive, Stabilise, Rebuild, Resilient



Competing Values Framework

This model incorporates 4 concepts relevant to GPDF in its recent history and current journey:

- (i) Organisational culture
- (ii) Types of change
- (iii) Leadership types/styles
- (iv) Value drivers

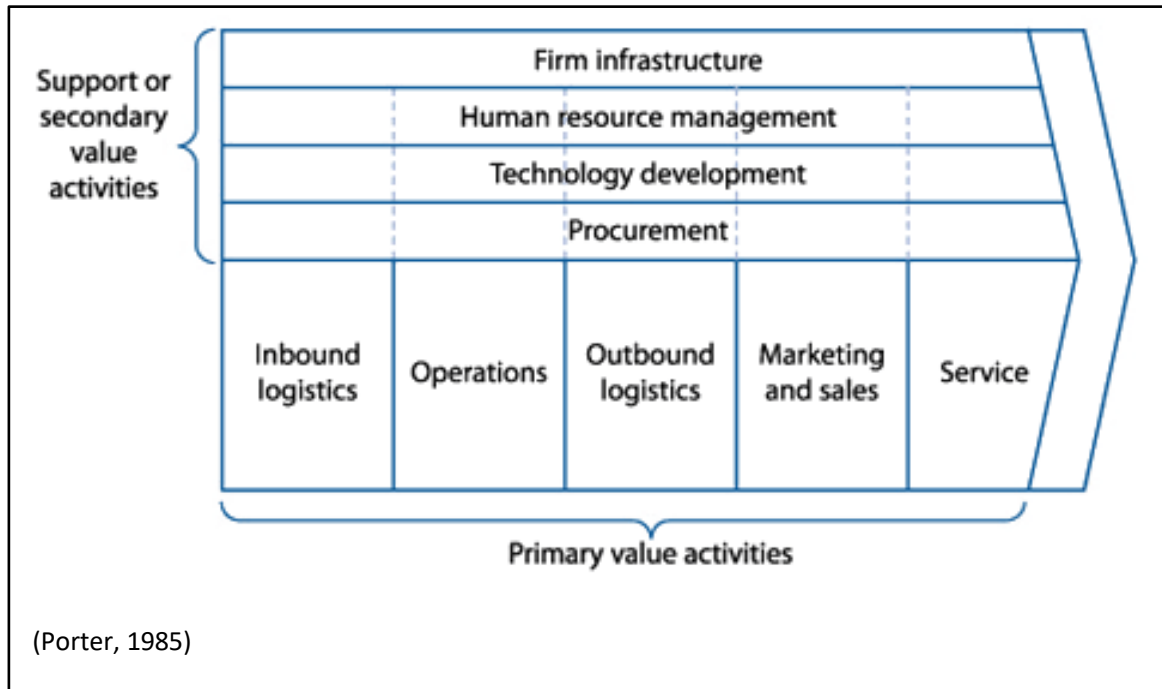
These concepts can be applied to GPDF to provide some focused analysis, leading towards some helpful insights into the issues that GPDF are looking to address.

It will also help to recognising any tensions that might exist, or become apparent, and what issues the organisation could be mindful of as it seeks to enhance its relevance to key stakeholders moving forwards.

		Individual Flexibility			
Long-term Change	Internal maintenance	Culture Type: CLAN Orientation: COLLABORATE Leader Type: Facilitator Mentor Teambuilder Value Drivers: Commitment Communication Development Theory of effectiveness: Human development and high commitment	Culture Type: ADHOCRACY Orientation: CREATE Leader Type: Innovator Entrepreneur Visionary Value Drivers: Innovative outputs Transformation Agility Theory of effectiveness: Innovativeness, vision and constant change	New Change	External Positioning
		Culture Type: HIERARCHY Orientation: CONTROL Leader Type: Coordinator Monitor Organiser Value Drivers: Efficiency Timeliness Consistency & Uniformity Theory of effectiveness: Control and efficiency with capable processes	Culture Type: MARKET Orientation: COMPETE Leader Type: Hard driver Competitor Producer Value Drivers: Market share Goal achievement Profitability Theory of effectiveness: Aggressively competing and customer focus		
Incremental Change		Stability/Control		Fast Change	
Competing Values Framework (Cameron and Quinn, 2012)					

Value Chain

Finally, in considering what a resilient and robust organisation looks like, we have reviewed models that highlight the activities that are needed for an organisation to be effective.



The discussion will include a particular focus on the support activities needed, and also consider the marketing and service elements of the primary value activities, in relation to supporting LMCs.

Findings

Commitment/Passion

In all our engagements with the Board, members have exceeded our expectations, both for their commitment to the GPDF, and their determination to strengthen its future. There is a ready willingness to give both of time and skills, as well as take responsibility for workstreams. This is underpinned by a collective sense of fortitude.

The organisation has been set up with a very 'FTSE Top 100' feel. In some ways it could even be seen as mimicking the BMA too, in its style and delivery. Also, it can appear that the energy motivating the organisation has been finance, and particularly its reserves, rather than a passion to make a defined and tangible difference to the world of LMCs.

Confidence

The organisation has been through many challenges in the last twelve months, challenges that would have broken others, in our experience. It is a tribute to the tenacity of the Board that it continues to try and define itself, and ensure its future contribution.

However, there are different voices with strong opinions that have sought, and continue to seek, to influence the future contribution of the GPDF. These may be helpful or unhelpful, and the Board needs to be confident in itself, its narrative and the journey it is shaping.

Whilst there are some plans for developing an induction and a review programme for Board Members, these are embryonic, with any current support being provided on an ad-hoc basis. This is particularly pertinent at the time of major change in Board composition.

Support Activities

Since the Meldrum reforms, the organisation has been virtual. For many national bodies this is an early adoption of the model that many have chosen, or are now forced, to follow.

However, through this it has not developed a strong core, or learned from the new ways of hybrid working, which have become more common in the wider world, particularly since Covid. It all feels very fragmented. This is compounded by the boxes of papers and artefacts currently held at the BMA (contents unknown), and the IT frameworks that are also significantly underdeveloped. The model was one where paid staff predominantly seemed to 'hold the reins' rather than do the work themselves. Practically day to day delivery seems to have been done by a range of consultants and professional advisors. In some cases, the purpose and secured outcomes of efforts are either vague or unknown.

Change and Resilience

The commitment of the Board has helped to develop a confidence between the directors that they can work together to **re-create** the areas that needed a fundamental rethink, particularly around relationships with key stakeholders. Also, some **re-orientation** has already taken place in developing systems and processes to support the changes. The direction is not yet clear, however the strategic intent to develop an organisation that is relevant and responsive to the needs of LMCs is strong.

As such GPDF has demonstrated the ability to **survive** and has progressed to **stabilising** in a number of areas. However, to continue to **rebuild** towards **resilience**, there needs to be a stronger sense of passion and clarity for the mission of the organisation, with more agreement around what might be achieved and what the priorities are, as well as how this can be achieved and what supporting infrastructure will enable this.

The relationship with LMCs is critical in to **rebuilding** towards **resilience**. The current relationship is strained, with ad-hoc communication and involvement practices. Board diversity can promote LMC engagement. Whilst the diversity of the Board is not representative of the GP demographic, it would be helpful to reflect the demographic of LMCs as much as possible. However, the current election system can reflect the adage "*You attract what you are*" and has resulted in a lack of diversity.

Conclusions

Commitment/Passion

From our perspective, the organisation has narrowed its activities to being transactional [negotiating the Deed of Grant, paying for legal cases, giving grants]. These neither inspire, nor generate support. Also, while their basic housekeeping will never build a bedrock of enthusiasm, better and more transparent controls may reduce the clamour for change. In summary:

- (i) There is clearly “something” to believe in at the GPDF. It is felt, but not well articulated.
- (ii) Greater definition of the responsibilities and delegation of workstreams might help future growth.

Confidence

- (iii) The Board need a more united view on the future definition of the GPDF and its contribution to the LMCs.
- (iv) As part of that it needs to develop more confidence in dealing with those with differing viewpoints. It needs to learn how to say “no” effectively, and without fear of repercussion that it cannot manage.
- (v) The continuity of contribution of the Board is undermined by an unplanned induction programme, together with unstructured review and support activities for Board members.

Support Activities

- (vi) The review of organisational ‘Support Activities’ has identified the organisation lacks:
 - A defined business location
 - A well-developed IT infrastructure
 - A diverse team with different skills, experience and interests to support its back-office function
 - A business plan
 - Well-developed operational frameworks
 - A documented way of working, and organisational memory

As such, the delivery of the organisation’s ‘Primary Activities’ is significantly undermined.

Change and Resilience

- (vii) There has been a need for **fast change**, which would indicate that **firm leadership** would be helpful. This has been clearly evidenced by the Chair in particular, and with a responsive Board.
- (viii) However, GPDF is also aspiring to achieve **long-term change**. The current high commitment and fortitude of the team is particularly helpful here, and there is a **culture of collaboration**, supported by evidence of a **team-building** leadership style. The evidence indicates that the organisation is **managing the current tensions of competing values effectively**, which promises well for a successful transition.
- (ix) The review indicates that GPDF is currently seeking to **stabilise** and **rebuild**, and that work is needed here before the organisation can progress towards **resilience**.
- (x) There needs to be a stronger relationship with LMCs, supported by a coherent communication and involvement strategy. Board communication needs to be clear, corporate and consistent.
- (xi) GPDF needs different voices, with different tones, and experience on the Board. It also needs to be aware of LMC’s potential perceptions of the current composition, its allegiances (declared or undeclared), and potential values.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are focused on **stabilising** and **rebuilding** GPDF, to ensure it can develop its foundations to move forwards.

There are also some broader proposals designed to move the organisation towards **resilience**.

Commitment/Passion

1. GPDF needs to clarify 'what it does' in the simplest of terms. Whether it is simple functioning, or seeking to inspire others towards a vision, it needs to be clear 'how' it does it; what gives it a distinctive remit, and why LMCs should allow GPDF to deliver this. Phrases like 'efficiently' appear self-evident, but other phrases, such as 'with compassion', or 'respecting our history' may embrace the essence of the organisation. All need to be captured in its uniqueness. One way of considering this, is how the world would be different if GPDF didn't exist, or another organisation was doing the work.
2. Once the Board are comfortable with that, they need to test the language in different settings, and then test it on LMCs to check how their expression resonates.
3. GPDF then need to rebrand and restructure all their documents, and website, to support what it genuinely is and the new messages.
4. To develop a strong communications strategy based on the messages, including face-to-face, newsletter, and a strategy for Listserver posts.
5. GPDF needs to develop its own voice on relevant issues, and not be seen as supporting other national voices that are not within its remit.

Confidence

6. To develop a Board induction plan. To consider a mentorship programme.
7. To develop a process of review for Board members, with associated support activities.
8. To develop a programme of delegated responsibilities for each Board member.
9. To consider and appoint further independent Directors (Board members) to support identified gaps in Board skills and experiences.
10. To pilot and review the current grants programme to establish/evaluate its ongoing contribution to GPDF.

Support Activities

11. To consider what visual image GPDF want LMCs to have of the organisation. To think about how GPDF would like LMCs to perceive the organisation in terms of character/place, as well as permanence and future.
12. To become independent from other organisations in terms of information and hard copy storage.
13. To develop the embryonic IT infrastructure and to improve clarity in storage.
14. To develop Board members greater access to information and documents.
15. To develop email communication, and consider giving more team members their own GPDF email.
16. To continue to assign responsibilities in the back office function, and develop roles considering how they might help GPDF fulfil its aims.

17. Have a Business Plan with SMART objectives, which is regularly monitored and reported on to the Board.
18. Ensure the Business Plan is clearly linked to the budgets, and these are clearly tracked and reported to the Board.
19. Develop a supporting range of strategies, policies and procedures that the Board feel an affinity to, and are regularly reviewed.
20. Develop quality frameworks, which review and improve services and systems.
21. To continue to develop the operational guides [how the Secretariat do things], which should be available to the Board.

Our view is that it will take at least another twelve months of determined effort to build a confident organisation that LMCs can understand and believe in. Part of that journey will depend on the leadership and composition of the Board, post the Annual General Meeting in September 2023.

A key outcome of that AGM will also indicate whether the leadership have done enough to inspire the support of the LMCs to be able to set a clear path over three years. A journey that moves the organisation from Stabilising and Rebuilding, to Resilience.

Equally, our view is that the foundational work done in the next twelve months will give the launch point for a more substantial agenda for a move to resilience.

Change and Resilience

22. To navigate the current challenges, GPDF will need effective Board leadership at this time. This leadership needs to give a clear direction, with elements of visionary and team-building styles. There may need to be a training budget for the Board corporately, or individually.
23. To review the Board election processes in order to avoid wholesale changes of personnel on an annual basis. For example, with staggered appointment periods.
24. To review GPDF's working relationships with LMCs and develop projects, or initiatives, that can build on these.
25. To develop a communications strategy, particularly with LMCs.
26. To develop the diversity of the Board, potentially through the appointment of Independent Directors.
27. All member LMCs should be allocated an elected Board Member as a first point of communication.

Further, rather than continue this strategic plan as a separate and potentially over-looked workstream, it is recommended these points are built into the Business Plan, and its regular reporting framework to the Board.

A Footnote

When we were engaged to do this project on 17th April 2023, we had no idea that we would have ‘rolled up our sleeves’ and got so involved in the organisation. We have got to experience the DNA of the organisation in a way that no limited external review would usually have the opportunity to. We have not come up with trite and over-simplified responses to the initial objectives.

However, returning to these specific aims we would advise:

(a) Advice on process for restructure, recruitment and employee engagement, in accordance with best practice;

During the process of writing the report, Attend has been appointed to deliver the Secretariat function, which gives GPDF the opportunity to track and review the skills and resources it needs to deliver the best service it can, to meet the changing needs of the LMCs. This will involve the development of a whole suite of strategies, policies and procedures.

(b) Advice and provision of a proposal for non-executive director skill set, remuneration and recruitment;

In thinking about this, we have looked particularly at the NHS Framework for Non-Executive Directors of Trusts, and how they might fit with the GPDF’s Independent Directors.

Our view is that this should be the benchmark for engagement of Independent Directors and GPDF should neither consider, nor make reference to either City business, or terms and conditions. Our view is that sends a more acceptable message to LMCs about who GPDF is, and its values.

Equally, we do not believe it sends the right message if Independent Directors are paid more than Elected Directors.

The process of election does not guarantee all the skills of the Board needs. In fact, it is unlikely to. Our view is that Independent Directors are likely to provide the diversity of skills and experience required, and should be used as such.

(c) A review of existing key third party contracts and advice on contract actions in the context of the new GPDF operating functions;

We have engaged with most suppliers of services to GPDF.

Our expectation was that we would be recommending change for most suppliers. However, our sense is much rather that many suppliers have been poorly, or inappropriately, commissioned (as with IT), haven’t been worked with to best advantage (such as with our Auditors and Investment Advisors), or have been allowed to become complacent (as with Lawyers).

In most cases, we believe an opportunity to work alongside some advisors may give rise to better outcomes for GPDF. This may be a better option, and ensure more stability, than wholesale and immediate change. However, this does not rule out future change.

(d) A review and advice to improve the GPDF levy collection system processes;

Attend is already more actively advising the Board on unpaid Levy payments, and beginning to set a framework with them on collecting unpaid debts, or writing them off, as appropriate.

The Board is going to announce the implications of not paying the Levy at the AGM. This should be documented into a formal strategy.

Collection of the next Levy will give insight into the process, but we do not see that as a complex procedure, once it has been given a stronger framework.

(e) Processing data of which GPDF are the data controller;

We have reviewed GPDF's current policies, and for example, have written new Data Protection policies and procedures.

We have transferred GPDF's IT provider from one which was essentially domestic, to one which is both more appropriate, and with more protections.

We have also taken advice, and purchased insurance against cyber-crime.