

# What needs to connect?

Start with the benefit for residents. Work back through what groups must make possible together.

## INTENDED BENEFIT FOR RESIDENTS

**Residents can rely on service promises that the county has understood and agreed to support.**



## FOR THIS TO BE POSSIBLE...

The initial offer and its limits are clear

Continuing commitments have an agreed decision route

## WHICH CONTRIBUTIONS DOES THAT DEPEND ON?

### Human Services

Connections to resident support

### Budget & Finance

Funding assumptions

### Human Resources

Workforce capacity

### Technology & Data

Shared information

### Facilities & Fleet

Buildings, equipment and vehicles

## SUPPORT TO EXAMINE

Executive Office · County Legal Services · Procurement

## OTHER BODIES AND PARTNERS

County Council · Community & Health Providers

## WHERE SHOULD INQUIRY BEGIN?

Which commitments will continue after the initial funding ends, and who is assuming responsibility for them?

Read from the benefit back to its dependencies. Arrows mean “depends on a contribution,” not reporting authority or proven causation. Partner boundaries remain distinct.

# What do solid connections look like?

Eight relationships to examine across groups. Each opens a different kind of question.

## 01 / NEEDS

### Whose needs should shape shared choices?

Groups develop a shared understanding of residents, including people their services may miss.

## 02 / CONTRIBUTIONS

### What must each group make possible?

Groups explain what their contributions should make possible together and where they depend on others.

## 03 / CAPACITY

### What support are these commitments relying on?

Funding, workforce, technology, procurement and facilities are considered together before commitments are relied on.

## 04 / HANDOFFS

### Can the next group use what we provide?

Groups agree what they will provide, what the receiving group needs and how exceptions will be discussed.

## 05 / AUTHORITY

### Where should an unresolved question go?

Responsibilities and decision routes distinguish executive management, council decisions and independent partners.

## 06 / AGREEMENTS

### Which agreements guide how we work together?

Groups can surface where local arrangements differ from shared commitments and discuss whether either should change.

## 07 / INFORMATION

### Does the same information mean the same thing?

Groups can interpret information together, including definitions, limitations and differing accounts.

## 08 / LEARNING

### How does learning reach a decision?

Important questions reach a suitable forum and may lead the authorized parties to revisit an arrangement or decision.

An original Symphonic educational reference. Local authority, scope and applicability need discussion; this is not a universal county operating model.

# Where would a closer look be useful?

8 of 8 answered. Fictional Executive responses illustrate this situation. They do not establish countywide findings.

|                                                           |                          |                                                             |                            |
|-----------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| <b>1. Needs</b><br>Resident needs inform shared choices   | Alignment reported       | <b>2. Contributions</b><br>Groups know what they contribute | Mixed or partial alignment |
| <b>3. Capacity</b><br>Shared commitments have support     | A potential gap reported | <b>4. Handoffs</b><br>Contributions are useful to others    | Mixed or partial alignment |
| <b>5. Authority</b><br>Issues reach the right decision    | Not enough visibility    | <b>6. Agreements</b><br>Shared agreements guide practice    | Mixed or partial alignment |
| <b>7. Information</b><br>Information builds understanding | Alignment reported       | <b>8. Learning</b><br>Learning reaches decisions            | Mixed or partial alignment |

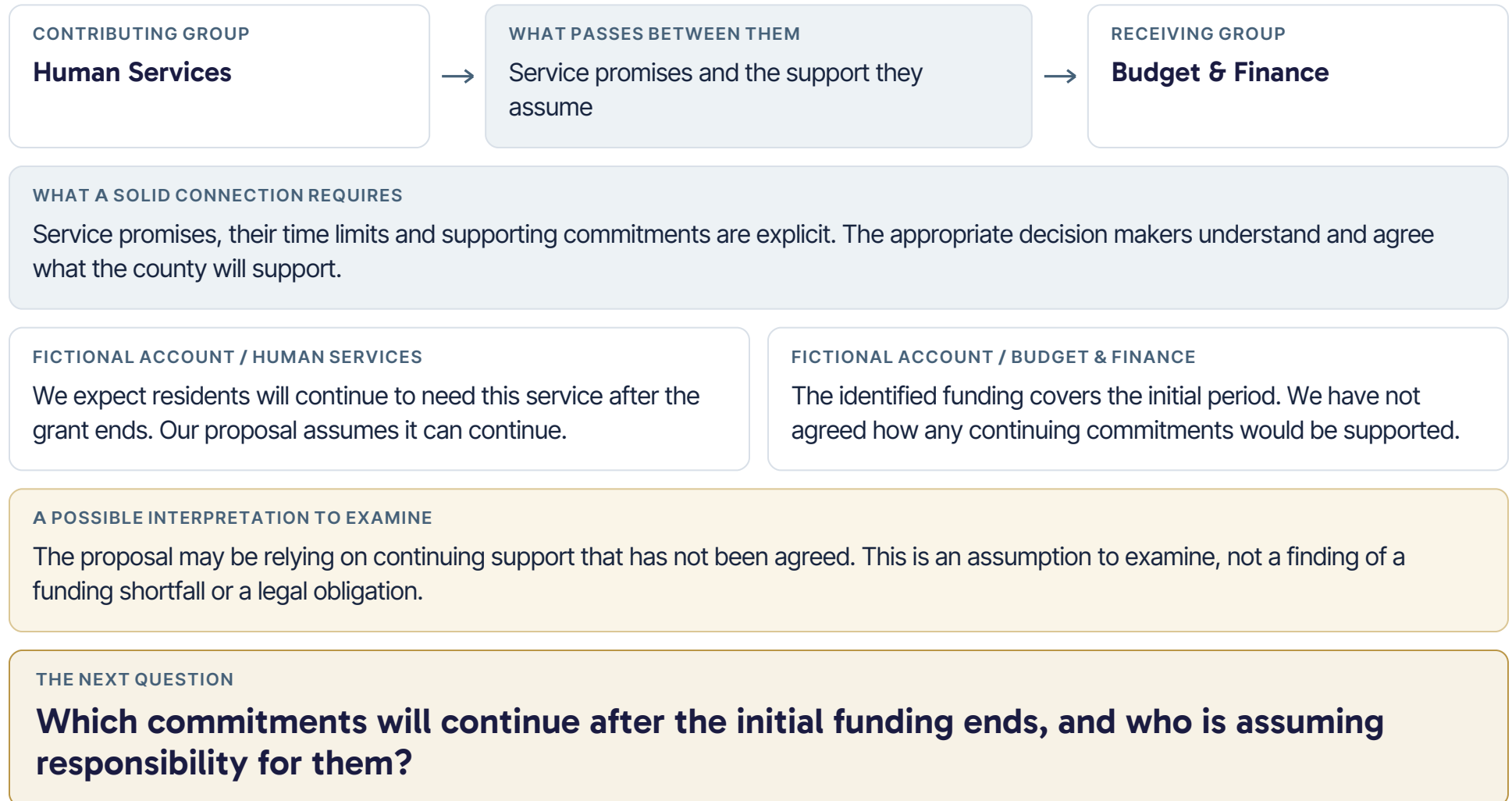
## THREE USEFUL PLACES TO BEGIN THE CONVERSATION

|                                                                                                             |                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                  |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Shared commitments have support</b><br>What have we committed to that depends on support not yet agreed? | <b>Groups know what they contribute</b><br>Which contribution are we counting on without a shared explanation of its purpose? | <b>Contributions are useful to others</b><br>When we call our part complete, can the next group actually use it? |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

Green: reported alignment. Yellow/red: potential gaps to explore. Visibility, applicability and unanswered items stay separate. There is no overall coherence score.

# Same connection. Different expectations?

Compare the accounts with the reference before deciding what they mean.



The accounts give us a reason to inquire. They do not establish which explanation is correct or whether either group is at fault.

# Who else could help us understand this?

A useful snapshot makes the next conversation more specific.

## THE NEXT QUESTION

**Which commitments will continue after the initial funding ends, and who is assuming responsibility for them?**

### WHOSE PERSPECTIVE COULD HELP?

Human Services; Budget & Finance; Human Resources;  
Technology & Data; Facilities & Fleet; Executive Office; County  
Council

### WHAT COULD HELP US CHECK?

Compare the proposed resident offer, funding period and  
assumptions in each group's account.

### WHICH DECISION ARE WE TRYING TO INFORM?

Which continuing commitments is the county prepared to accept  
before the service launches?

### WHAT REMAINS OPEN?

What is being promised beyond the grant, what support would it  
require, and who has authority to agree? Continuing support is  
an assumption to examine, not an established obligation.

### WHAT WOULD CHANGE YOUR UNDERSTANDING?

Ask what an account leaves out, which alternative explanation remains possible, and whose information could help distinguish them.

### What would this reveal about your county?

Begin with your own perspective. A sponsored review can bring other views together with agreed privacy and participation arrangements.

# Why does this question belong now?

Start with the uncertainty that could change what you ask next.

## INTENDED BENEFIT

**Residents can rely on service promises that the county has understood and agreed to support.**

### CONTRIBUTING GROUP

**Human Services**



### WHAT PASSES BETWEEN THEM

Service promises and the support they assume



### RECEIVING GROUP

**Budget & Finance**

## THE NEXT QUESTION

**Which commitments will continue after the initial funding ends, and who is assuming responsibility for them?**

### WHY NOW?

Funding a launch does not settle the promise beyond it. The next question should expose continuing assumptions before the county relies on them.

### WHAT PROMPTED THE QUESTION?

The fictional Executive reports that the service proposal assumes continuation while the identified funding covers only the initial period.

### WHAT COULD HELP ANSWER IT?

Compare the groups' accounts, agreed requirements and one shared example. Keep alternative explanations visible.

### WHAT DECISION COULD CHANGE?

Which continuing commitments is the county prepared to accept before the service launches?

# One answer changes the next question.

These are possible learning outcomes, not established findings. Follow the branch supported by what you learn.

## 1 / IF WE LEARN

**The future promise is unclear**

**What support are we promising after the grant ends?**

Without a shared promise, groups may be considering different commitments.

Then ask: Which commitments would follow from that promise, and which are still assumptions?

## 2 / IF WE LEARN

**The promise is shared; support is not agreed**

**Which continuing commitments depend on resources no group has agreed to provide?**

Agreement on the offer does not show that staffing, technology and space have continuing support.

Then ask: Which choices need to be brought together before anyone relies on that support?

## 3 / IF WE LEARN

**Commitments are understood; authority is unclear**

SELECTED FOR THIS TEACHING  
PATH

**Who can decide whether the county accepts these continuing commitments?**

Groups understanding a commitment does not establish their authority to approve it.

Then ask: What must each decision maker understand before deciding, and when should the question return?

## WHY THE SEQUENCE MATTERS

Clarify the future promise before asking what could support it. Once the commitments are understood, establish who can decide whether to accept them.

Other explanations may emerge. These three branches illustrate the method; they do not exhaust the possibilities.

# Bring a better question into the room.

Selected teaching path: Commitments are understood; authority is unclear.

## THE NEXT QUESTION

### Who can decide whether the county accepts these continuing commitments?

#### WHO CAN HELP ANSWER?

Human Services; Budget & Finance; Human Resources;  
Technology & Data; Facilities & Fleet; Executive Office; County  
Council

#### WHO HAS AUTHORITY TO DECIDE?

Finance and service leaders bring the assumptions to the  
Executive; Council retains its budget authority.

#### WHAT WOULD SUPPORT AN ANSWER?

Confirm the applicable county decision routes with Legal,  
Finance, the Executive Office and Council.

#### WHAT COULD THE ANSWER CHANGE?

The proposal may need consideration by more than one  
authority before commitments are made.

#### WHEN SHOULD THIS QUESTION RETURN?

Revisit it when the expected contribution, an important assumption, the parties involved or the decision boundary changes.

### What would this reveal about your county?

Use the method independently, or work through it with a Symphonic facilitator. A broader engagement can establish who holds important questions, what supports answers and when learning should reopen them.

This brief supports strategic inquiry. It does not assign implementation tasks, assess individual performance or establish a cause.