



Iceland Collaboration Institutions and innovation don't mix – the role of leaders in transforming governments

Dr Su Maddock

Senior Fellow, Manchester Business School

Visiting Professor UWE

Former Director Whitehall Innovation Hub



Public sector innovation has a vital role to play in tackling intransigent problems such as climate change, inequalities, social care, long-term disaffection and long term incapacities.

Local public services have learnt to get closer to the problems, work with communities and staff and now seek to collaborate rather design services for people.

Utilising communication technology, it is people who are the innovators who determine how innovation flows.

More Innovative solutions where staff and citizens collaborate could result in savings and more person centric services, but not overnight – we need to build trust and capabilities...



UK Public Service Innovation examples

Sure Start (early years focus collaborative relationships)

Patient Opinion, (patient share comments on healthcare)

Glasgow approach to knife crime, (a call to youth)

Recovery in mental health (change through hope in the future)

All the above demand a radical readjustment in how government views those who cost money as a ‘problem’ or people with potential.

Too often public institutions and government stifles this process. Why /How ?



Why are governments unresponsive to innovation ?

Tendency to control,

'Focus on systems not people'

command control management

Culture of conformity, fear and risk aversion

Cultural separate from the public 'not like us'

Few positive incentives to be more creative

Leadership in civil service passive – reluctance to tell the story of why necessary .

Sir Gus O'Donnell recognizes the pace of change in central government has been slow- even though there is an urgent need for public service innovation and more open public servants in all public bodies.

Will the new Coalition government be able to foster ownership of public innovation through a more collaborative and less centralist approach?

Need to learn from the other countries, regions and localities.



Sustaining and scaling innovation depends not on systems but on the energy and motivation of people

THE BIG challenge is in motivating staff to be positive about the innovation journey and risk new ways of approaching problems.

Public services in the English regions and Scotland have become much more innovative.....



Firstly, identify the problem and the scale of change needed to implement -not one solution

Easy	Hard	Demands radical system change
Using technology to tackle specific problems.	Public service innovation sought hard to deliver	Youth knife crime in Glasgow—no known solution
Smart phones for those with diabetes etc – easily adopted no necessity to persuade	Hard to get staff to change; eg ‘Recovery’ in mental health –	Need for creative champions to imagine ways of overcoming gap between youth and services
All sides happy, the market tends to drive uptake.	Accepted in theory- service find delivering hard	Demands high- level support and imaginative people to get close to realities and persuade others
Improves user communication but do not tend to challenge to the way people work.	Requires new respectful relationships with the public and on new capabilities within services and government	Results in new settlement with communities and systemic innovation



Public Service Innovation

Learning from places where service innovation evident.

Lancashire Police
South Tyneside MBC
Pensions Service
Barking and Dagenham BC
Rotherham MBC
Manchester Innovation Boardroom
& Knowledge Capital

What they have in common?

Focused on the problems to be tackled
Transforming collaborative leadership
Thinking whole systems (Total Place)
Innovation not just about service but platforms for
social change



Common Change Strategies

- Articulated as part of whole dynamic & adaptive system.
- Not abstract connected to the problems to be solved
- Senior leaders give permission for staff to connect and experiment
- Connect staff to the problems ask them to work with the public /service users
- Make explicit too partners and staff
- Incorporate innovation criteria in all management processes and training



Critical leadership role

If innovation is to become integral then leaders have a critical role to play in carving out new set of relationships with staff and with the public – some leaders in the regions are already doing this. (Place Based Innovation)



Leadership

Effective Leaders are adaptive with a public value base, they

- explain why & tell a good story
- are agents of change and close to the problems
- listen & are open to ideas
- respect the public
- seek out innovators on the margins (outliers/mavericks)
- reflect & engage in diagnosis /inquiry
- invest in people and reduce the time spent on unnecessary audit/paper work
- champion diverse solutions
- transform corporate functions and governance.



Coalition Government needs to ...

Innovation cannot be an excuse for financial cuts, investment in capabilities and experiments will reap rewards of investing in people in the intermediate term.

Readjust

- **Time frames**
- **Target areas on key challenges**
- **Loosen central control towards greater sensitive to diversity**
- **invest in future public servant capabilities**
- **Use the coalition government model for transforming government processes**
- **Invest in sub-regional platforms to forge the connections between business, HE and the public services.**
- **Transform government processes that inhibit innovation, including excessive audit, commissioning, investment criteria & measures of productivity.**
- **Gather research evidence of longer term social and financial benefits of sustaining innovations**



Squaring the Circle – better services for less money.

Finding savings from innovation means first it has to be implemented – public service innovation involves

- **a less cynical approach to transforming the state and services**
- **Narratives are important, if leaders cannot justify the innovation and say how it will benefit people then it will hard to persuade citizens to engage.**
- **The role of leaders is to motivate sceptical players that a better life can result from the innovations suggested.**
- **The role of the government is not to merely decide but to persuade**
(Change we can believe in Obama)
- **Short recognition of cuts will be accepted for very short period articulating a more sustainable society by new settlement between public, staff and policy makers is the big challenge for innovation narrative.**
- **Raise the bar and invest in process of local determination.**



National School
of Government

Su [Maddock@mbs.ac.uk](mailto:Su.Maddock@mbs.ac.uk)

The Institute of Innovation Research

Manchester Business School

University of Manchester

Su.maddock@uwe.ac.uk

Visiting Professor

University of the West of England.