

New Model Public Management, Discovering “Facilitative Public Management”

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New Model Management of the Public Sphere - Discovering ‘Facilitative Public Management’

This paper explores and develops two contrasting models of managing the public services and public goods¹ – old style bureaucratic management that remains the dominant model for the UK public sphere; and a newer and more agile, “facilitative” model. Facilitative public management is described, debated and tabulated (table pages 4 and 5). The core argument of the paper is that the involvement of citizens (as service users, residents, patients) in producing and deciding about services and public facilities is essential and that managers and policy makers have to re-shape engagement with their many publics in order to make this happen in a meaningful way.

In these tough times for the public sector in the UK and internationally the public purse is being squeezed whilst government and managers in public services seek to extract more and more value and outcomes for less money. The accountancy approach to management seeks the reduction of public services spending. Planning for cuts obscures the critical questions which are as present and pertinent as they ever were. These questions are: – what should public services² do?; how should they be designed and managed? and how will they combat complex and worsening problems - such as obesity, anti-social behaviour, poverty, educational under-achievement or depression?

Long before the Conservative Party’s localist tendencies or Labour’s community empowerment programme people at the grassroots have been deploying ways of engaging with their own networks, communities and “publics”. From the ‘top down’ policy makers, leaders and managers have, to varying degrees, sought to engage or at least consult with people whilst from the ‘bottom up’ people have sought to influence and shape the public sphere.

The paper argues that a more person-focussed and facilitative approach that puts people in the middle of shaping our many public goods (that is people as citizen, client, patient or services user) would deliver better services and better outcomes for people as well as achieve better value for money. Facilitative Public Management can deliver more public

¹ Public goods meaning any facility, service, activity or resource provided for to the general public or a section of the general public

² Public services in this paper means services, activities or facilities provided where a large share of the resources for public services comes from government or from voluntary and charitable contribution

commitment to public services and the public domain in general as well as civic and public participation in the longer term.

Presently the goodwill of the general public towards the state, government and public leadership is tarnished and a new deal between the citizen and government is required. This paper specifies a relatively new approach that the public sector needs to deploy in order to come to a new deal with the citizen and services user. The new deal puts the citizen at the centre of what public services do and how they do things. The approach also starts to address the extremely limited use made of the expertise, resources and solutions that people, service-users and communities have. This great 'solutions capital' needs investment and needs the right circumstances created in order that it can flourish. We need to get people to participate in what is theirs as well as find solutions to complex economic and social problems. Public investment needs shifting away from services and activities that have poor outcomes into ones that have a better chance of succeeding.

Rolling back the targets culture

Much debate about the public sector in recent years has focussed on costs and value for money, as well as on *what* the state should or should not provide directly through public sector services, or indirectly through the third sector and the private sector. As politicians and civil servants seek ever greater savings and efficiencies from the public purse so this continues. Successive governments have been driven by management and accounting methodologies in the attempt to drive public services to do more for less. This has often obscured consideration about *how* the public sector does things and how it should manage itself. The management model for the public sector is as critical to its success or failure as is the need for efficiency and economy. For instance the mission to deliver complex outcomes such as caring for the elderly and disabled or teaching children cannot be driven only by an accounting model that merely seeks to purchase homogenous, manufactured packages of outcomes at an ever cheaper price. Instead the job of the public services manager or leader is to put in place the most effective ways of designing and delivering complex and often differentiated interventions to meet equally complex outcomes. The obsessive, simplistic and centralised target culture of the public sector has had to be rolled back³ as it has emasculated innovation and change and it has not produced the improvements in outcomes and efficiency that was intended. Also it has consumed scarce public funding on an obsessive quest for better performance rather than devoting investment into innovation.

Providing public benefit by doing the right things

Even when the public services 'do things right', it does not necessarily follow that they are 'doing the right things'⁴. Take the example of adult social care in the 1940s through to the 1980s. For decades the accepted model of looking after people with disabilities or

³ One part of the roll back from the target culture was the reduction in centralised performance targets from over a hundred to 35. Now the centralised targets approach has been mostly abandoned as the Audit Commission had been abolished. This will be replaced by local targets and some continuing, measureable expectations from central government albeit in a different form.

⁴ *Managing the Non-Profit Organisation*, Peter F. Drucker 1990. Drucker emphasised the need for management and leadership to concentrate energy on making sure that the organisation is 'doing the right things' and not merely doing things right that can well be the wrong things

mental health problems was to put them in a home, an institution. By the end of the 1970s many of these homes were doing a good job. They were 'doing things right' by providing better homes for people and offering loving care. However they were not necessarily 'doing the right things'. Social care really only involved one choice, and an expensive and often inappropriate one at that, over which the services user had no control. Without facilitating the involvement of the end user and differentiating the services according to need and want the public bureaucracy drives services towards ever increasing standardisations and homogeneity. In this case it took more than a decade to reform the care system so that community based care packages could be made possible. Also massive progress has been made in the integration of people with disabilities or mental health problems into mainstream public and community life. This has been due to strong and articulate social movements and a vigorous third sector that have challenged the status quo and fought hard for better solutions.

The public domain now requires substantial change in approach if it is to achieve better outcomes for people and do this more efficiently as well as win over a sceptical public. Part of a better alternative is a facilitative 'people first' approach to the public sector that involves citizens and services users in the design, delivery, appraisal and development of public services. The ever dominant public bureaucracy and accountancy-led approach to the public sphere has characteristics to it that act against change as the comparative analysis below demonstrates.

The collaborative challenge

There is a consensus that the new challenge of public sector management is collaboration - building partnerships between public bodies, third sector organisations, citizens and communities. Experience from around the world tells us that 'innovation and greater productivity in the next few years is likely to come from services forging stronger relationships with citizens'⁵. There is also debate about a different emphasis on the public body role shifting from 'provider' to 'enabler' aiming at higher order goals such as 'place making' and 'lifestyles offerings'⁶, over and above providing services. Together these changes point to a new facilitative and empowering role for the public sector that requires changing its processes and its ways of doing business. Management behaviours, front-line activities and relationships need to shift to engage wider expertise and capacity in ways that promote innovation and development. Services need to match people's highly variable needs and wants with a variable patchwork of services provision in order that people have their needs met and the public purse gets good value.

New model, 'Facilitative Public Management' – a different role for the public service professional, manager and leader

The table below draws together the essence of two contrasting models of managing public services organisations. The old style public services model has been and continues to be the principle model for managing public services in western democracies. The machine

⁵ *Power in People's Hands: Learning From the World's Best Public Services* Cabinet Office Strategy Unit 2009

⁶ *Social Impact Lab* Kent County Council policy paper, 2008 Here Kent policy makers looked at how the Council can facilitate the making of better communities – socially, economically and environmentally and how to support the whole lives of their citizens rather than design all their activities into homogeneous services

bureaucracies that run public services are mechanistic⁷, rule-bound and hierarchically designed on the basis of a mid-twentieth century public sector settlement. They are designed on the idea of 1920s bureaucracy (before bureaucracy became a pejorative term). With age comes wisdom in some respects and the UK public sector manages massive services machines delivering millions of public benefits every day. The NHS for instance carries out tens of millions of medical procedures each year and millions more than it used to. It is in many respects a successful and mature public bureaucracy that has grown enormous capability with age. It is able to manage a machine bureaucracy of over a million staff. Yet there are many things it needs to do, or more to the point it needs to make sure are done, that it cannot do so well itself. Medical and sickness services are, on the whole, delivered well – it ‘does things right’. However it certainly does not do all the right things. It is poor at preventing ill-health and differentiating health services on the basis of choice or need, and worse still at supporting people and communities to provide their own health solutions in ways that suit them. To expect a mechanistic, machine organisation to act ‘organically’⁸; nurture innovation and change; organically create new services and activities; and seek out different participants in solving problems is a difficult expectation that can only be realised with a change of process and mission.

A health minister once said to me some that if she was to have the choice she would put massive public health funding into public housing as this would have better health outcomes ‘but the medical establishment would not allow any of this to happen’. This illustrates another disadvantage with older style public bureaucracy. That is its tendency to do what professionals want and the solutions that they determine and not necessarily what is best for people.

Contrasting the models:

New model facilitative public management is contrasted with the dominant ‘public service’ model in the table below. This is followed by some explanation and discussion of the ideas and terms. Most UK public services display features of both models and try to get the best of both worlds, yet this can lead to contradiction and incoherence as the comparative features below demonstrate.

⁷ *The Theory of Mechanistic and Organic systems*. 1961, Burns and Stalker

⁸ *Ibid* 7

New Model Public Management	
The new 'Facilitative Public Management' model	Traditional 'Public Service' model
Co-produces what people need	Mass produces what it (the public services body) wants
Empowers others participatively	Deploys its power directly
Nurtures and develops relationships	Regulates relationships
'Citizenship' is the key identity and role of people Citizen is participant and active as far as they want to be and has choice	'Client-hood' is the key identity and role of people Client is recipient and passive with little or no choice
Citizen led by need and want	Expert led by professional opinion and interest
Democratically defined - Social movements can drive change and improvement	Professionally defined – Standardisation and resource allocation drives change
Facilitates independence and interdependence	Creates (learned) dependency
Provides 'with' people or enables people to provide themselves	Provides 'for' people
Capacity building	Cash limited
Grows resources using social capital and partnership	Self-limited by financial resources
Opportunity driven	Problem focussed
Innovative culture – seeks to improve beyond self-limiting boundaries	Compliant culture – compliant to homogenous rules and expectations
Reflective on practice and manages change	Reactive to circumstances and responds to change
Driven by citizen interests	Driven by professional interests
Fraternal	Patrician

'Empowerment', 'co-design' and 'co-production':

These public sector buzzwords are now in vogue. Public sector leaders see the need to involve service users and communities in reviewing and designing services to make them relevant, targeted, trusted and purposeful. Co-delivery acknowledges the vital role people play in achieving desired outcomes - for instance the parent in children's education; the carer and family in looking after people with higher needs; or the many players who (can) bring about a healthy population. Involving these many players in public services is no longer an option. Yet resources have historically been invested in many cadres of professional staff. This has left little resource to invest in others in the co-production bargain, namely people - clients, service-users or residents. Engagement does not come free, it costs. This cost is an investment however – enabling far better designed and

delivered services and outcomes and reduction in the huge waste of failing services or expensive services with few positive outcomes.

Also many public services are barely off first base in the process of involving people in public services⁹ and moving beyond rudimentary consultation and conversation with their services users.

Relationships matter!

Achieving better outcomes for people depends upon relationships between services providers and citizens. Bureaucracy tends to regulate relationships and limit how people work together in fact it is partly designed to do this. Facilitative public management nurtures relationships between people, organisations, communities and providers in order to negotiate the best ways of achieving outcomes. Providing services *with* people will deliver better outcomes than always providing *for*. It recognises the shared responsibility that there usually is between different actors. Power needs to be negotiated and put on the table to make partnerships in the public sphere more equal.

A 'facilitative state' builds equal and fraternal relationships with its citizenry and between actors and players rather than being the patrician figure of the authoritative bureaucracy that decides everything.

Citizenship and 'clienthood'

The facilitative approach assumes people have their own abilities, networks, family and friendships that contribute to things in their lives that matter. These relationships and networks contribute positively or negatively to the achievement of typical public sector targeted outcomes such as crime reduction, employment or educational attainment. It also assumes that people want public services to help them achieve what they want to achieve.

Part of a better relationship between public service provider (the state, the third sector or the private sector) is a necessary shift in the direction of defining people more as citizens and less as clients or patients. 'Clienthood' is a passive state involving the person as a passive recipient of services and interventions that are designed by someone else. This is in contrast to a positive model of citizenship where the citizen is seen as part of the process of achieving the given outcome. This seems so logical and convincing yet people participate little either in the design of public service interventions or as part of the process of achieving goals – that is their goals, for them or for their communities. The state discourages active participation and empowerment preferring to heap un-achievable expectations on an ever growing set of public service of voluntary service professional staff.

Also citizens continue to lose out on any resources, money or power in favour of professional power and interests. The facilitative approach re-designates the relationship between the service provider and the citizen or services user. The citizen is actively

⁹ *Every Voice Counts – Community Empowerment Research Project* – Jim Simpson et al 2008. This study involved over 80 different community empowerment 'practitioners' in the public and third sectors. On the hierarchy of consulting, involving and empowering local citizens and services users most public service organisations had not progressed beyond rudimentary consultation despite commitments from public sector leaders to involve citizens and services users in services development, design, delivery and improvement.

engaged in the process. Citizens and communities actively make and shape services. People's participation makes and shapes the outcome of that service. For instance the child and their parent or carer is part of the process of education; the resident is part of the goal of having a safe and flourishing neighbourhood; and the patient is part of the goal of health and well-being.

Though these things seem obvious the ways in which public services are managed and controlled rarely supports the involvement of people in shared goals. Service providers need to engage and involve the citizen in making and shaping services and not merely as being the passive recipients of what services providers deem to be good for people. This citizen-based or democratic approach can contradict a consumerist approach. Consumerism clearly delineates the citizen as an inactive recipient of services not as an active participant.

Dependency

The way that so much of the public sector is organised promotes and induces passive dependency. Doctors are the experts on health, teachers are the experts on education, and police officers are the experts on public safety. We are asked to be dependent on these services providers, on their actions, their expertise and their responsibility for improving society. This state of affairs creates an endless wave of demand, un-achievable expectations and intolerable pressure on public sector staff. Instead these great riches of professional skill and expertise need to be deployed in the service of shared goals and partnerships between people, communities and services providers.

Public investments in activities that promote inter-dependent and independent goals are few and far between. Facilitating positive inter-dependence and the ability for people to independently flourish needs to become a core mission for public services and it will require a shift in resources towards the citizen as well as change in the things that public sector workers do. This is absolutely not about public services withdrawing. Instead it is about the mission of public services shifting to a partnership with its many 'publics' such that they are involved with leading the design and delivery of services and activities. Public services workers, managers and leaders need to deploy processes that engage people, open up and extend social capital, and provide better participative and democratic 'spaces'. These changes require putting a premium on getting more engagement, involvement, partnership and participation skills into public service agencies and their staff.

Cash limits, early intervention and innovation

Old style public sector management seeks cash from the public purse to pay for the commodity of workforce professionals. It sees this as the only resources available. Cash is the only currency of change in the public sector world. Yet we know more cash does not always mean better outcomes, though less cash usually does makes for worse outcomes. For instance a Treasury Study of elderly care¹⁰ in the UK found care homes were poor at 'producing the outcomes that people said mattered to them most, such as having control over their own lives' whilst providers were 'best at performing basic services such as keeping residents clean and presentable'.

¹⁰ *Measuring Outcomes for Public Service Users* featured in Public Finance and Accountancy June 2010.

Huge public expenditures such as the millions spent on some regeneration schemes have often led to little change in social, health or economic outcomes. The current public service model naturally favours funding the most tricky things such as cutting crime, hospital care or looking after children in need. Here when problems or crises have already struck, the needs and costs are at their highest and the opportunities for better outcomes are more limited as damage has already been done. Investing 'upstream' in early intervention has more likelihood of better outcomes for people and society and investing upstream means providing 'with people' rather than only providing 'for them' once the problem is sufficiently basic and deteriorated to warrant an intervention.

Facilitative public management aims to engage and harness the resources of people, organisations, networks and communities in achieving shared outcomes. Agile public management can build capacity to make this happen. In tough economic times this is even more of an imperative.

The facilitative professional model asks the public sector professional to be engaging the individual and communities in building solutions to social and economic problems - building the capacity of people and institutions to get things done.

Performance and outcomes -

Facilitative public management is more likely to produce what people want and need, and to do so more effectively and efficiently. This is because people are involved with the process of reaching their own goals - and those of the families, neighbours, friends or colleagues - and engaged with deciding where the public sector can best deploy resources to help them and their communities. Better participation, helped through effective facilitation, can make a huge difference. For instance the much celebrated 'Participative Budgeting' model originating in Porto Alegre Brazil¹¹ put major decisions in the hands of local people and improved the environment, basic water and sewage services and local education amongst other things.

People-managed public services are more likely to deliver services and activities that are congruent with people's needs and wants. Also, as the example above shows, they are more able to deliver transparency and accountability.

CONCLUSIONS

If people are to get the most from public services and the state then the public sector needs to re-cast how it engages with citizens and services users. Citizens need to be facilitated at every level to become the *makers and shapers* of the public sphere rather than only passive consumers. The expertise of all people needs to be focussed on shared goals. New style facilitative public management requires front-line workers, managers and leaders to make

¹¹ *The Experience of the Participative Budget in Porto Alegre, Brazil*, Best Practice database, UNESCO-MOST Clearing House. The Participative Budget has had millions of people participating in its meetings, regional conventions and specific, thematic assemblies. In Porto Alegre, over several years, the focus of the participative budget brought transparency to city dealings and, with it, greater efficiency and re-prioritisation. It also brought new models of public services. Extremely poor areas had new sewage and water system and paved streets. The process also saw a doubling in educational participation. However the review paper states that: 'as important as the actual results of the Participative Budget, we must add the redemption of the citizenship of Porto Alegre and its awakening for an active participation in public affairs'.

the change and enable others to participate in change. This requires at least these changes:

- Redesign the places and spaces where people participate, influence and control public services and assets.
- Invest in people (citizens, services users, local residents, community activists) and community organisations as well as new models of management and governance
- Shift the focus of public debate onto outcomes, change and improvement rather than the stale debate about outputs. For instance public health is not about how many operations the NHS performs, much as this is important, it is about how healthy we are and what we can do to get healthy, stay healthy and achieve well-being. The focus on outputs obscures debate and understanding about outcomes and about how to innovate new or better ways of addressing problems
- Enable the identification of new services models that meet outcomes more effectively by involving all the players in reviewing what is provided and imagining what can be made better
- Create opportunities for co-designing and co-delivery of public services and public facilities whether through state-run services providers, through third sector organisations or through companies with public service contracts
- Identify and proselytise a suite of facilitation and empowerment skills as well as putting in place tools such as deliberative conferences, participative budgeting, or on-line polling. This needs to happen across the range of public sector providers to include frontline workers, managers, councillors/board members and policy makers.

The natural capacity, ability, ingenuity and social capital of people and communities need to be brought into play in improving our vital public services.

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