

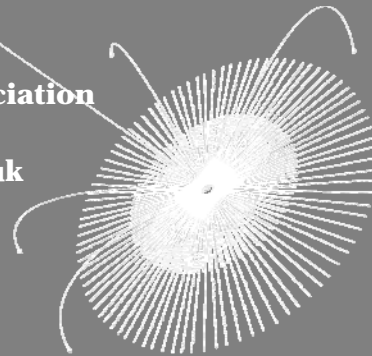
How Can Cities Make Better Use of Science?



Some Suggestions From A Public Service Perspective

Tim Allen
Local Government Association

tim.allen@lga.gov.uk

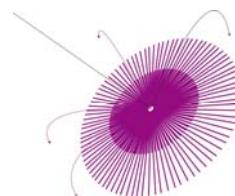


What Do I Mean By Science for This Purpose?



Broad definition that includes

- Some pure scientific endeavour; but
- Mainly 'Usable' Science;
- Technology;
- And Yes, Social Science too....
- More Joseph Chamberlain than Albert Einstein



Context

Changing State:

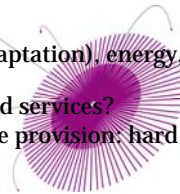
- Transition from state designed in '30s and '40s to one fit for the 21st century
- Changing role of the national state – pulled between global and local
- What can / should the state deliver – and how?

Changing Society and Need:

- Complexity: personalised cross sector services, partnerships with diverse communities.
- Demographic trends – living longer / increased diversity / pop. growth
- Generational differences.
- Geographical differences.
- Eroded public trust in political institutions – **and** science

Changing Economic – and Other - Drivers:

- Some major challenges: climate change (mitigation and adaptation), energy, food supply etc.
- Public Expenditure balancing infrastructure investment and services?
- From recession to debt: new models for funding and service provision: hard choices.

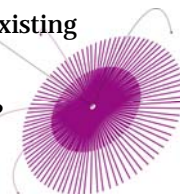


1. A changing relationship between local people, leaders and institutions

- Local people influencing serious local policy, better links between community and civil society: *'Positive postcode lottery'*?
- Accepting *'bureaucratic limits'*.
- More spontaneity / freedom to experiment.
- People doing it for themselves.
- Move from state as industrial scale provider of services, through procurer to facilitator – key role for interactive technologies?

Challenges:

- Uncertainty about how / concern about devaluing existing political arrangements.
- Not over promising.
- Will the public fill the void left by a retreating state?
- Are we sufficiently adaptive?
- A sceptical and unimpressed public.

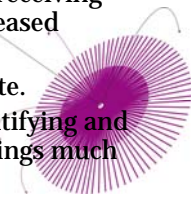


2. Effective Service Design

- Local services designed with the same attention as consumer products, technology or the best examples of architecture.
- Greater ingenuity and innovation e.g. better exploiting technology.
- Anticipation and prevention i.e. intervening in low-cost ways today to avert bigger clean-up costs tomorrow.

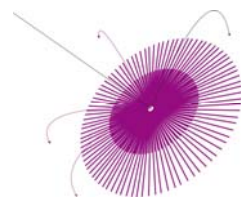
Challenges

- Risk of paralysis: decision-makers feel overwhelmed?
- Managing demand e.g. care services: fewer people receiving treatment / stricter prioritising severe cases + increased informal carer (i.e. citizen) responsibilities (6m+).
- Managing citizen expectations of the role of the state.
- Helped & hindered by managerialism: good at identifying and meeting objectives but do we manage the wrong things much better"?



Flooding: An Illustration

Map Courtesy of the BBC



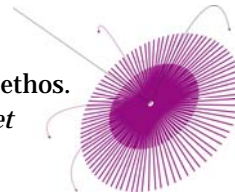
3. Successfully Engaging with 21st Century Communities



- Responding to changing behaviours and communications: informal networks, neighbourhoods .
- Behaviour change: using social marketing and other tools to influence behaviour on complex issues: healthy lifestyles / environmentally responsible behaviour / parental responsibility.
- Appealing to the public as citizens rather than as consumers.
- Learning from the front line.

Challenges

- How to make it work: (*a 'world away' ?*)
- Cultural change without losing public service ethos.
- *'Growing culture of empowering the citizen yet increasing pressure to conform'*



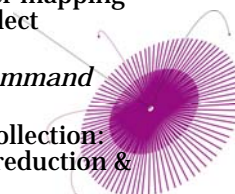
4. Solving Complex Problems: Thinking Systems not Widgets



- Tackling longer term problems / dealing with uncertainty: demographic change, employment and skills, infrastructure / environmental change.
- *Re-connecting those outside the 'society': breaking the chain*

Challenges

- Making all those complex inter-relationships such as local partnerships work.
- Allowing self-forming networks to solve problems.
- Exploiting available technologies: e.g. computer mapping software / social networking technology to collect ongoing user experiences
- *'turn your organisation from a traditional command and control into a systems thinking one'.*
- Green Systems: "21st century Rag and Bone" collection: from holes in the ground through recycling to reduction & re-use.



An Example

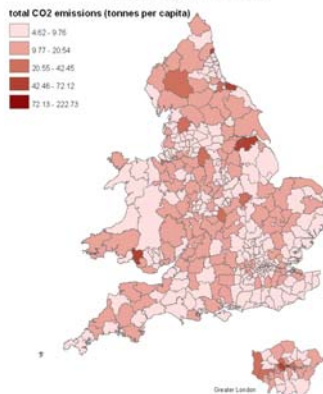
Local Government: Current Environmental Performance Indicators in the Menu of 198:

- NI 185 CO2 reduction from Local Authority operations PSA 27
- NI 186 Per capita CO2 emissions in the LA area PSA 27
- NI 187 Tackling fuel poverty – people receiving income based benefits living in homes with a low energy efficiency rating Defra DSO
- NI 188 Adapting to climate change PSA 27
- NI 189 Flood and coastal erosion risk management Defra DSO
- NI 190 Achievement in meeting standards for the control system for animal health Defra DSO
- NI 191 Residual household waste per head Defra DSO
- NI 192 Household waste recycled and composted Defra DSO
- NI 193 Municipal waste land filled Defra DSO
- NI 194 Level of air quality – reduction in NOx and primary PM10 emissions through local authority's estate and operations. PSA 28
- NI 195 Improved street and environmental cleanliness (levels of graffiti, litter, detritus and fly posting) Defra DSO
- NI 196 Improved street and environmental cleanliness – fly tipping Defra DSO
- NI 197 Improved local biodiversity – active management of local sites PSA 28
- NI 198 Children travelling to school – mode of travel usually used DfT DSO

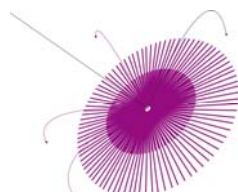


An Example Contd.

Total CO2 emissions, tonnes per capita
2005, England and Wales



Source: Defra, Local and regional CO2 emissions 2005, published 2007. Digital Map Data © Collins Bartholomew Ltd (2007)



5. Places where people live at ease with each other



- Resilient and prosperous communities that can handle change: *'Success would be crime down, skills up, education standards high, residents happy with their places and society at ease'*.
- Essentially a local issue: responding to variation and diversity to ensure wellbeing and cohesion of local areas.
- Reflecting complexity of society: individuals can belong to different communities / hold different identities.

Challenges

- Tensions develop (e.g. housing), when inequity is perceived or experienced.
- Working with those failed by the system e.g. NEETs.
- Broader **wellbeing measures** of success.
- Emphasis on global terrorism / ethnicity and faith: yet demographic shifts and socio economic factors also key – recession a threat.
- *'Bonding capital tends to be stronger than than bridging capital'*;
- Technological perversity: reinforcing not negating differences



6. Public Services: Greater Independence and Freedom to Experiment



- Innovation and forward thinking: a more entrepreneurial mindset.
- More responsive organisations, open to horizon scanning and forward strategy as early warning systems.
- Central government loosens the reins.
- Enabling local people to find solutions.
- Building resilience: *'Our area is at risk of coastal flooding ... we are rethinking our approach to contingency planning so that public services and communities are better prepared'*

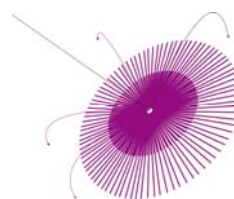
Challenges

- *'Default position can be passive towards the future'*.
- Performance management: constraint or force for good: *'... getting away with being slow and unresponsive'*.
- *'Middle management permafrost'*
- Improvement from learning, fostering R&D and innovation.
- Crisis-management and “repair” not anticipation / early intervention / prevention: *'Policing, healthcare ... mop up after the event, ... not preventing problems'*.



Another Example

Transforming lives through kerb stones.....

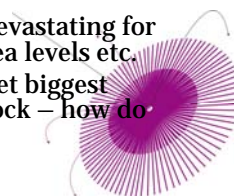


7. Growing but Green Economies: Sustainable Development Revisited

- Finding 'green' business models: energy efficiency, CO2 and waste, reducing pollution, and sustainable housing.
- Finding opportunity in economic adversity: e.g. influencing / changing behaviour.

Challenges

- Climate change most pervasive concern including secondary impacts: e.g. on health
- *Waste: costs, penalties and getting agreement to solutions no one wants in their back yard.*
- *Food and water security*
- Potential shocks and events that could prove devastating for localities – extreme weather, flooding, rising sea levels etc.
- Housing: new homes carbon neutral by 2016 yet biggest source of carbon emissions is from existing stock – how do we achieve a result?
- Getting residents to play their part.



8. Better Co-operation and Knowledge Sharing

- Communication / collaboration across localities and sectors.
- Sharing ideas and learning: including internationally.
- Reduced duplication and effort.
- Involved local public: people able to deliberate and feedback to local decision-makers: less formal consultation?

Challenges

- Lack of incentives to share information across organisational boundaries.
- Creating space for self-organisation around common objectives.
- Attracting funding and investment / developing expertise.
- Unlocking talent and creativity where ever it is.
- Changing cultures and structures
- Pressures of short term delivery.
- Compatibility, cost and suitability of technology.



In Conclusion

- **An already challenged public sector will now need to be more effective yet have less resource.**
- **So we are seeking new solutions.**
- **Bridging traditional governance / performance tools with science and technology.**
- **Getting on the front foot with technology and innovation**
- **A new partnership between science / technology (and research), and local public sector (and the citizen too?).**
- **Co-production / active partnership in defining problem and then working up solutions**
- **Making new connections not relying on usual suspects or solutions.**
- **Science and technology as a central enabler in triangulating action, society and economy.**
- **Recognising the economic value of science and technology as well as the public good – back to Joseph Chamberlain**

