

Removing Barriers to Social Inclusion in North Yorkshire

North Yorkshire CC Wider Partnership Conference – 25th October 2019

Stop. Look. Listen. – Creating a culture of community collaboration – David Warner

Good morning

Thank you for that introduction and for the opportunity to talk to you today

Over the next 20 minutes I want to encourage you to think about how we all - **both individually and collectively** – need to work together in *creating a culture of community collaboration to support us all in Removing barriers to social inclusion in North Yorkshire.*

So my provocation to you all is STOP. LOOK. LISTEN?

- To STOP doing what you do and the way that you currently do it:
- To LOOK around you for the people and institutions who are doing things differently and start thinking about what you might learn from them

and

- To LISTEN to the voices of the communities that we are all part of and that the organisations and institutions represented here today exist to support.

The theme for today is ***Removing barriers to social inclusion in North Yorkshire*** and it's my very strong contention that the way, *the only way*, that this will be achieved is by ***Creating a culture of community collaboration*** that enables a fundamental shift in power away from institutions (that traditionally hoard power) and into the hands of communities.

In highlighting the importance and urgency of us all working together to ***create this culture of community collaboration*** I will mostly be drawing on the work of Civil Society Futures the independent inquiry into the future for civil society led by Julia Unwin.

At the end of last year we launched our first report [The Story of Our Times: shifting power, bridging divides, transforming society](#)

The product of two years' work.

We wrote then about the deep divisions that we had witnessed, the feeling many people have that their voices are being ignored, and a growing sense that the old ways of doing things are no longer working.

Two years ago our starting point was:

- That if we care about reviving our dented democracy and rebuilding our social fabric,
- if we want to bring our increasingly divided communities together and talk about and confront racism
- and if we want to address the great challenges of climate change and environmental degradation;

then Civil Society Futures was about providing the evidence base.

The intellectual underpinning and foundations for how we all - as individual citizens who live, work and play in places and communities (and who are also participants in organisations and institutions) need to behave.

Crucially Civil Society Futures **was not**, as it is sometimes described, an inquiry into the “***the future for civil society***”. It was established as an inquiry into: “***the future of civil society***”. It was about investigating, questioning and understanding the major forces at play in driving changes in the eco-system of which civil society is a part.

It was about listening and reflecting, about analysing and futuring, doing so at a time when the tectonic plates of the eco-system are shifting at a pace never seen before.

It was about shining a light onto the depth, intensity, vitality and the cruciality of civil society to the wider eco-system that we, along with the state and the markets, are part of.

In grappling with why & how we create this culture of community collaboration it is helpful to review what are forces of change our communities are facing.

Both the large global and structural forces that are driving fundamental change over the next 10 to 20 years and then the impacts created that will directly influence the local eco-system that we are all working within.

The impact of these when combined will not be uniform and it's important to remember that trends are just patterns we're seeing in the present - ***they don't tell us what will definitely happen.***

The future is complex and unpredictable, and it is up to us to develop appropriate responses to enable us to get to the future we want.

So, what are these structural forces of change?

Civil Society Futures identifies 4,

- an increasingly [ageing population](#),
- an acceleration of [climate change](#),
- a rise in [urbanisation](#),
- and a growing [global middle class](#).

To which, I would add a fifth:

the relentless reduction in public trust of institutions, starkly evidenced by the [Edelman Trust Barometer](#) .

In 2017 for the first time they found a decline in trust across all four of these institutions – government, business, the media and civil society - and that the general population did not trust the four institutions to “do what is right”

Civil Society Futures also identified 7 impacts, shaped by these global forces, that are now driving changes in civil society.

Whilst all of these are important, inter-connected & made up of a range of elements, **there are four** that I think are particularly significant when we consider how we remove barriers to social inclusion in North Yorkshire.

These being:

- Personal Precarity with social safety nets being in crisis –*rising personal debt; increasing poverty (esp. in-work poverty); growing mental health crisis;*
- Changing Places: localism and division? *marginalisation of 2nd tier cities and coasts; growing geographical divides between urban and rural; the decline of the high street*
- Economic restructuring: the human cost of economic efficiency *The gig economy; AI as a general-purpose technology; the retreat of the state*
- Social Fracturing: *(The popular debate shift from ‘we’ to ‘me’ rise in populism and loneliness, changing role of religion; decline of the press in a shifting media landscape)*

The remaining three impacts focus on

- Structural Changes in organisations and governance
- Global volatility
- and
- Environmental pressures

Having done the analysis, we then asked

Where is change most needed & how do we make it happen?

The major change that we identified is the need ***for a radical redistribution of Power and how can it be put in the hands of people and communities?***

We found 4 big and overlapping areas where people said they want change to happen:

- In Places that matter to them – their communities
- In their sense of Belonging and their identity
- In how work is being reimagined and how we find purpose in our lives
- And in How we organise and rebuild trust

And we identify 4 Key Enablers of Change:

- Power
- Accountability
- Connection
- Trust

Together: Power, Accountability, Connection and Trust make up the PACT

Our Call to Action was deliberately framed as a challenge to all of us

“Civil society cannot stand still as society shifts

We have never just stood on the side-lines and watched. Through previous decades and centuries, we have responded to change, reshaped and reinvented.

We combatted the squalor and chaos of the Industrial Revolution, supported displaced people, refugees and traumatised veterans after world wars, organised on homelessness and domestic violence in the 1960s and 1970s, mobilised around AIDS in the 1980s, and in the last decade have welcomed refugees and opened food banks.

A strong, renewed, re-energised civil society is urgently needed to shape the future now.

The big role for civil society in the coming years is to generate a radical and creative shift that puts power in the hands of people and communities, preventing an ‘us and them’ future, connecting us better and humanising the way we do things.

We are putting forward a PACT for civil society, by civil society – shared aspirations for us all to commit to, for the decade ahead and beyond.

The PACT is a map to guide us all in the future: a set of principles, practices and questions that are designed to help each of us forge our own future.

Each person, each group, each organisation, each movement will use it differently.

There are no easy one-size-fits-all solutions. This is about getting ready for uncertain futures and thriving in them.

Whoever we are, whatever we do, whatever happens in the years ahead, shifting power and fostering deep connections can help us be more relevant to the people and communities around us, and an even greater force for good.

Our second report [What next for civil society futures](#) was published in September and looks at what has changed and developed in the last 10 months.

Spoiler alert.....quite a lot but not enough!

Over the last year we have witnessed a shift both in public opinion and government pronouncements (if not priorities) about the climate emergency.

The crisis of division that threatens our communities is now widely acknowledged and we can identify a real and well-founded fear of the intensity of that division.

And we are hearing increasing voices arguing that we need a new approach to developing understanding, a more deliberative and more participatory democracy.

We have also seen the growing recognition of the greatest public policy challenges of our time. Rebuilding public trust and confidence in our institutions. This demands an approach that is far more centred on relationships and human connection.

An approach that is based on the concept of Kindness in the development of public policy.

A concept is sparking much interest – and, it has to be said, a few raised eyebrows. When we think about the role and responses of government – not just what governments should do, but how they should do it – where does kindness feature?

And this demands new approaches, skills and mind-sets from public servants. Of course, public servants will still need their professional code, with its values of objectivity, impartiality, honesty and integrity, and the skills of their craft, such as analysis, evidence, and consultation. But they will also need tenacity, humility, self-reflection, and a commitment to work with – and invest in – long-term partnerships.

Heroic leadership simply isn't going to cut it here – we need distributed, open and empowered collaborative leadership. This means recruiting leaders who can see beyond their own immediate and institutional interests to the wider cause.

And it means delivering government in a highly accessible way – sticking closer to people and communities, and listening to what they are telling us, especially the voices of those who are not traditionally heard.

So, if ever there was a time for a renewed and reenergised civil society it is now.

Almost a year on from the launch of Civil Society Futures there are some great things happening, as our second report published last month found.

The building blocks that are starting to create the change needed for a culture of community collaboration.

The culture change that is essential if we are going to remove barriers to social inclusion in North Yorkshire.

Barriers which mean that across North Yorkshire there is a similar proportion of people today relying on support from food banks as those who relied on workhouses in the 19th century!

So the first building block is creating a movement for change?

A movement that builds on and connect the networks, collations and collaborations (the social infrastructure) necessary to create a great Power shift; enable an Accountability revolution; build deeper closer Connections; and re-establish meaningful and lasting Trust.

Building a connected movement between civil society change-makers, local authority “radicals” and enterprise disruptors, who together can both mutually reinforce each other but can also be considerably greater as a collective than the sum of the individual parts.

We found that this growing movement of people who seek change are operating in a complicated and messy space whilst forming an emergent new social infrastructure.

So our second building block for a culture of community collaboration is the importance of nurturing this emergent new social infrastructure.

We have identified four elements of this new social infrastructure:

- enabling people to do things which they enjoy together with others
- enabling people to co-produce services and shape decisions about how resources are allocated to improve communities
- enabling civil society and cross-sector collaborative working and sharing
- enabling funders to understand their place in the funding ecology and how their funding can align and enable leverage of other resources (including the shift towards funding platforms and social movements rather than focusing on service delivery)

It is essential, as this new social infrastructure develops and grows, that the work needed to support can be taken forwards in complementary ways rather than in glorious siloed isolation.

Across the country our communities want change, they know that the ***“system is broken”***, they want to take back control and gain power and control over their futures.

So, the third building block, for a culture of community collaboration, is allowing communities to take back control.

Here we found that some great stuff is happening.

Civil society is starting to renew itself; the ecosystem is starting to change and the values and behaviours explicit in our PACT are starting to be seen in the changes that are happening. We know that what the PACT is seeking to do is to change personal and institutional values, beliefs and behaviours that have formed over decades.

We know that this change is both essential, urgent and not easy. And it needs to be nurtured, supported and protected.

We know that across the country, within our communities, there are entrepreneurial people that are stepping up to these challenges.

People, sometimes part of bigger global movements, are starting to take power and bypass traditional forms of charitable organisation to effect the change they want to see.

However, there is also a growing realisation that civil society and the ecosystem that surrounds it will have to think and work differently to nurture and harness these seeds of change.

Our future success – the future impact and sustainability of civil society - depends upon our ability to support each other.

It depends upon our ability to connect civil society across the country in ways that address inequality and the postcode lottery, that tackles poverty and removes the barriers to inclusion that many experience and will continue to for many years as our country faces possible recession and political turmoil.

It depends upon our ability to recognise the leadership potential of others (who are not like us) from across our diverse society. We need to invest in relationships and connection across civil society now. But the types of leadership that are supported, the ways that we organise and the types of values that drive the sector's behaviour can run contrary to this vision.

This is where the change is needed and crucially, we found evidence that the Civil Society Futures Inquiry's recommendations are speaking to the way different actors within the system are changing:

- In Central Government the recent Communities Framework document ***By deeds and their results– the government's vision for stronger communities*** –recognises that more needs to be done to ensure that people feel their voices are heard in decisions about their area, and to help places build up their 'civic infrastructure' - the mix of local spaces, services, networks and skills that enables communities to come together, shape their local area, and thrive.
- We found some great examples within Regional and Local Government of change being made. The work of New Local Government Network on the Community Paradigm sets out a compelling case for a deep shift in public services based on a completely new relationship between citizen and state. One which fosters collaboration between the public servant and the citizen, sharing power and resources more directly with people, to embed prevention and ensure future sustainability.

- And their follow-up work with Local Trust on the power of Community Commissioning which enables individuals and their networks to take on more responsibility for their health, well-being and happiness. It recognises that for this to happen they must be given the power and resource to do so and public services must challenge their tendency to hoard power and instead find ways of sharing it with communities.
- In the world of The Markets we are seeing the Bank of England recognising the importance of the role of civil society will play in shaping the fourth industrial revolution and the significance of the economic and social contribution that it brings. As Andy Haldane (the Bank's Chief Economist) said recently "The reason we have the triple threats of disconnection of people from society, mistrust of institutions, and the rising tide of populism is because we have structurally underinvested in [civil society],"

But despite a wealth of initiatives, overall progress remains piecemeal and frustratingly slow. The Carnegie UK Trust 2019 Enabling State progress review indicates that England is falling behind the other UK nations in important areas such as bringing about a shift from silos to working together, and from targets to outcomes.

Change is required across the 'system' if we are to create an environment in which civil society can position itself to respond effectively to the future challenges identified. Indeed, these are challenges that civil society will not be able to respond to on its own.

If we want change across the system, we all need to change. So I'll finish where I started – with a provocation:

What are you prepared to do differently in ***Creating a culture of community collaboration*** that enables a fundamental shift in power away from institutions and into the hands of communities?

Thank You