

facing *the* *future* *with* confidence

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We must redesign
public services for a
networked world

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Local Authorities exist in a networked world; a world of web technology, smartphones and social media; a world where information is constantly at our fingertips, where individuals are using different tools to take control of their lives, and where people expect to play a part in shaping services to meet their personal needs.

We hear a lot about “co-designing” and “co-producing” services but what does it really mean to design and implement services *with*, rather than *for*, people? Based on discussions at the Summit, here are **seven** things for Chief Executives and senior managers in local government to consider:

What might your local authority look like in the future? Being able to describe what a local authority could do and how it might define itself in the future enables it to think through the possibilities. It opens local government to approaches that it may not otherwise consider.

How can organisations stimulate innovation? Exploring non-traditional and innovative ways of collaborating to get new ideas often meets head on with how organisations are structured and used to working. Local authorities can consider rewiring how they are organised and how they collaborate with people. Innovation is an enabler with technology helping people to work differently and break down silos.

Attempting new innovative ways of working can be difficult and there is often a cultural fear of failure. This needs to be reframed so the focus is not about what an organisation is losing but what will be gained from the new system; what opportunities might be missed if the organisation does not innovate.

Are we clear what outcomes we are able to deliver? Local Government needs tangible outcomes to describe what might be possible and to frame discussions that challenge authority and question change.

Are local authorities making best use of the internet? Council websites are usually content driven. There is little or no collaboration with people or information about what is going on beyond the boundaries of the local authority. Does this mean we are missing an opportunity?

What is the role of social media? Increasingly residents will demand that we use social media so we need to start doing it now. These tools provide a sophisticated method of listening to local people, not just telling them what councils are doing. Technology can also deliver outcomes especially in areas such as child protection and adults social care.

How may decision-making structures need to adapt? Decision making mechanisms need to allow for the inevitable wide ranging changes that will result from a networked world. Councils are considering how they enable innovation to develop from below and assist in implementing it.

What is the innovation challenge for leaders? There is a great deal of innovation at grassroots level. The leadership challenge for Chief Executives and Senior Managers is to create an environment for innovation and managing risk.

There needs to be discussions about how residents want to engage and what they want to engage about; a networked world it is not just about putting a council meeting on Twitter!

Through the effective use of new technologies and social media, councils can foster meaningful dialogue with residents and service users. Chief Executives have a key role to play in harvesting the potential of their communities and championing innovative approaches to citizen engagement.