

Traditional Council Approach

Service users and citizens are involved in specification of desired outcomes but decisions are ultimately made by funder/commissioner.

Service users and citizens provide feedback on the quality of service they receive.

Expect a network to build without added time and investment [note: there are may be occasions when this is appropriate, e.g. short term project delivery]

Invest in project delivery. We focus on delivery targets and can lose sight of the long term goal.

Relationships are transactional. Citizens and stakeholders are viewed as customers or providers and our interactions with them are simplistic/straightforward and linear.

Best practice matters –evidence says that there is a ‘right’ way of doing things which will produce good results in all roughly similar situations.

Create a fair marketplace/level playing field for organisations to compete to deliver desired outcomes for the lowest cost.

We appoint organisations as service providers to deliver against specifications and contract manage their performance and delivery.

Vertical accountability – providers are accountable to commissioners for meeting service specifications.

Service Providers are required to deliver contracts to meet specifications without recognition of the possibility that requirements or the market may have changed since a contract was awarded.

21st Century Council Approach

Service users and citizens are the co-creators of outcomes. We listen to what is important to citizens and aim to develop and achieve this by working with them and alongside them.

Service users and citizens are part of an ongoing dialogue with others in the system about the nature of provision. We recognise that individuals have different needs, wants and requirements and are clear about how the system might best respond to these and that this may not always involve the Council.

Build and nurture network infrastructure. We invest time in building relationships with and links between communities to provide a strong basis for sustainable growth.

Invest in quality of relationships. We recognise that to do our best work we need to build trust and demonstrate to our partners that we are in this, with them, for the long haul.

Relationships are open and honest and rich conversations are important. We actively listen to citizens and stakeholders, hear what they are saying and see things from their point of view.

Context matters – even small changes in context significantly affect what works in practice. We will value differences and use knowledge, experience and intelligence to inform shared understanding of what might be most appropriate for the specific place or situation we are working in.

Build and nurture effective relationships between elements of the system – support network infrastructure and help to create trust.

We work with people and organisations as partners to make sure that we use everyone’s skills and abilities to best effect.

Horizontal shared accountability – everyone is accountable to the other actors in the system for the quality of their delivery. Decision making is distributed around the system appropriately.

Service providers are encouraged to deliver flexibly in a way that responds to changing strengths and needs of those served. Contracts are written and administered so that they can be responsive to emerging and changing requirements.

Kirklees – Maturity Tool

Competitive procurement and commissioning.



Relational based and development approach to procurement and commissioning. We support the development of new ideas and ways of working and consider alternative delivery models.

Vertical accountability drives improvement – holding subordinates accountable for the results they produce is the mechanism for improved practice. Decision making is held at the “top levels” of the organisation and staff are not empowered to work in a results focussed way.



Learning and internal horizontal accountability drives improvement – holding structured conversations between peers is the mechanism for improved practice. There is distributed decision making within the Council which empowers staff to act quickly and appropriately to provide holistic solutions.

Success is described by outcomes and metrics and these are used to incentivise delivery and performance.



The shared purpose for a system is identified and recognised - potentially in terms of high level outcomes. The values of people and organisations is what drives them to work well and seek to achieve system wide results.

Resources are distributed (to others) on a competitive basis and our own budgets are based on service functions.



Resources are distributed to the system as a whole, and to trusted elements within it. Internal budgeting processes are focussed on addressing system needs not on service functions.

The performance of funded/contracted organisations is managed using metrics. The split between purchaser and provider provides healthy competition and providers are performance managed.



The interdependence of elements within the system is recognised and feedback loops are created to enable learning. Learning is used to improve practice and delivery.

We only value and celebrate success. People talk about what works.



We are not afraid of failure and see it as an opportunity to learn and improve. We are comfortable talking about mistakes and uncertainty. We also celebrate success and achievements.

Certainty – we know what the problem is, we know what works and how to deliver it. The task is to take it to scale.



We are open to change – we don’t have all the answers and we understand that the nature of the challenge will change rapidly. We work with everyone in the system to respond to the challenges in the best way.

Enquiry and research identifies a problems and the best-known practice in responding to it.



Enquiry and research is about systems, generates information about current practice, potential gaps, and the actors and relationships involved.

Measure and collect data for performance management – to make ourselves accountable to others and to demonstrate impact.



Measure and collect data for learning – to reflect on and improve our practice as well as demonstrating impact. We use intelligence to interpret data and understand the causes of the causes.

We provide funding and services to respond to needs.



We act as an enabler of change and create environments where system challenges can be addressed.

NOTE: This tool is to help assess organisational maturity. It won’t always be appropriate to be at one end of the scale or the other so you should assess where your current approach sits as well as where it needs to be.