



The Adaptive Council – Benjamin Taylor



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TSIP | The Social Innovation Partnership

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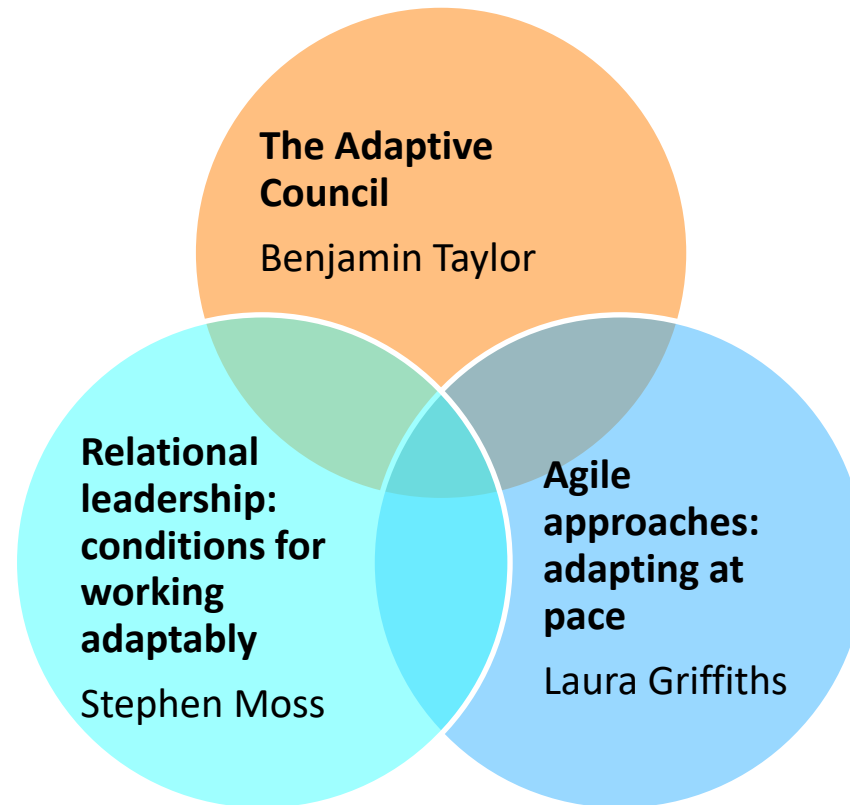
www.linkedin.com/in/antlerboy

@antlerboy on twitter

Link to these slides: <https://bit.ly/learnfestadaptivecouncil>

Being an adaptive council: three interlinked workshops

Each of the workshops also stands alone if you can't make them all!



- What does this mean for *me* and how can I build on my strengths?
- What does it mean for *my 'team'* – and how do we build on our collective strengths?
- What does this mean for how we as a council support and build the strengths of our *communities and citizens*?



IT'S JUST

TOO DAMN MUCH!

What did we learn?

- We can take a lot, as heroes – the slow crisis is harder
- We have to be the people we are waiting for
- The more we centralise, the more we lose

What can we do when it's too much?

- Double down on learning
- Play on a bigger stage
- Adaptiveness
- Ethics

How can we learn?

- Change what we do
- Change how we think about what we do
- Change our identity

Play on a bigger stage

- *From service to outcomes*
- *From deficits to strengths*
- *From being the centre to being part of it*



THE ADAPTIVE COUNCIL

Adaptive *over* technical challenges

Technical problem *programmatic/linear*

- Problem and outcome understood and agreed
- Authority, command, and experience work
- **World view and power structures not threatened**
- Existing 'worlds' do not need to change or mix

Adaptive problem *complex/wicked/messy/social*

- Goal is not clear or disputed
- Leader(ship) likely to be contributing and benefiting
- Adaptive and systemic approach needed (failure)
- 'Innovation' required
- Habits and assumptions must change

Leadership

- Expertise, answers
- Structural authority
- Power games likely
- Charisma helpful
- Extrinsic motivation

Leadership

- True leadership needed
- Real progress the only thing that counts
- *Presence* and vulnerability required

Other indicators you're dealing with complexity

- People would rather avoid/deny the issue
- Recurring problem
- It's uncomfortable work
- Failure to resolve competing priorities
- Moving forward feels risky
- There may be casualties
- **People must work across boundaries**
- Progress cannot be linear
- Work must be done by those with the problem

Adapted from Adaptive Leadership, Heifetz and Lipsky

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Adaptive public services

Demands

Deep uncertainty
– Creativity?
Despair?

Economic development in a complex and unpredictable 'glocal' world

Dynamics tensions between staff

Our 'service provision' models are inherently problematic

New expectations of employees and organisations

Need to recognise change and transition

Accelerated need to work in different ways to cope with complexity

Need to be insight-led

The future will remain turbulent, uncertain, ambiguous and novel

Systems thinking and complexity navigation

Work across boundaries

Balance deep technical skills, emergence, and collaboration

Embrace 'municipal entrepreneurial-ism'

Offer a new flexible employment approach

Intentionally shape culture and identity

Generate rich, multi-level learning from action

Act as equal citizens

Be highly engaged with adult development

Effective, open governance

Being trustworthy

Insight-led understanding

Challenges

Risk of crash-out, no-deal 'Brexit'

Local government reform and devolution

Complete overhaul of the planning system

Procurement law re-write?

Complete reshaping of estates

CCGs abolished? National care service?

Toughened rules on commercial investment

Public Health England?

Fraud, error, public inquiries

Overwhelming budget pressures

Vaccine roll-out

Future pandemic spikes

Move to fully flexible working

overview: <https://www.linkedin.com/feed/update/urn:li:activity:6739811963091722240/>
short report: <https://bit.ly/theadaptivecouncil>



OUR VISION FOR THE DAYS AFTER – ‘WE ARE ALL CITIZENS’

'We are all citizens'

- A vision about what we value
- Underpinned by the ethics that emerge through diverse interactions in good faith

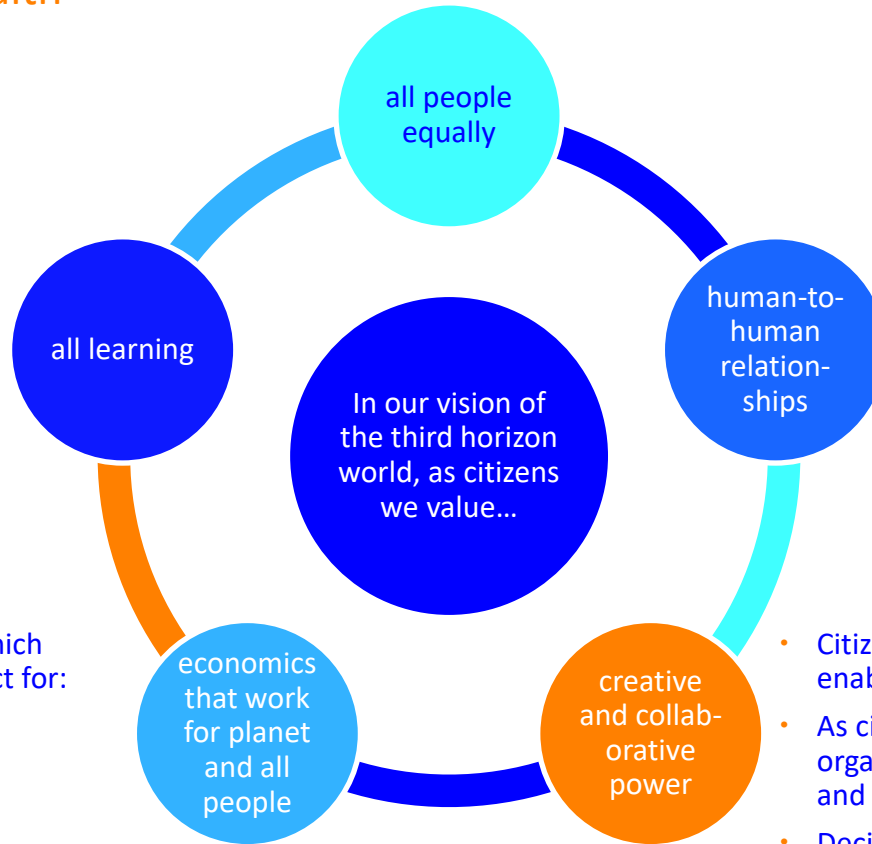


'We are all citizens'

- A vision about what we value
- Underpinned by the ethics that emerge through diverse interactions in good faith

- As people we are valued because we are people. Each of us is respected and our humanity is acknowledged
- We have agency over our own lives
- We all, as citizens, proceed on the basis of empathy and kindness
- Each of us has access to the resources and support we need to live our lives in a way that makes sense to us

- Learning is valued, supported, expected, and recognised...
- and is ongoing, productively challenging, and leads to mutual change



- I listen to others and others listen to me so that we all have a voice
- We have human to human relationships not just role to role
- A culture of seeking perspectives other than our own

A values-based economy which meets needs and has respect for:

- diversity
- interdependence
- equity
- all geographic scales (local to global)
- with the nature and role of money reframed

- Citizens have sovereignty supported and enabled by government
- As citizens we have sovereignty to organise ourselves, embracing diversity and multiple ways of knowing
- Decision-making is based on transparent process in a learning loop around values (for example as citizens we address equality and equitable distribution of wealth)

Summary

It's too much. Learn, play on a bigger stage, be adaptive... ethics.

1) How can we learn?

- Change what we do
- Change how we think about what we do
- Change our identity

2) Play on a bigger stage

- Service to outcomes
- Deficits to strengths
- Being the centre to being part

3) Be adaptive

4) Remember, we are all citizens

Over to you...

- What does this mean for *me* and how can I build on my strengths?
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Always happy to talk!

Benjamin Taylor

@antlerboy on social media

07931317230

benjamin.taylor@publicservicetransformation.org

Connect to me and many groups: www.bentaylor.com



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