



# Connected localism

A blueprint for better public services and more powerful communities, with an introduction from Jonathan Carr-West, Chief Executive of the LGiU



# Open, networked, democratic: a localist future

Anthony Zacharzewski

*“Local decision-making should be less constrained by central government, and also more accountable to local people.”* Labour Party manifesto, 1997 <sup>1</sup>

*“We will give individuals and local government much more power, [and] allow communities to take control of vital services.”*

Conservative Party manifesto, 2010<sup>2</sup>

*“The parties will promote the radical devolution of power and greater financial autonomy to local government and community groups.”*

Coalition Agreement, 2010<sup>3</sup>

Reading those manifesto commitments on their own, you might expect us to be moving towards a highly devolved political system where, as in Switzerland, local elections see higher turnouts than national ones. Services would be a patchwork of connected initiatives – often different, but always linked and well-suited to local conditions.

- 1 <http://www.labour-party.org.uk/manifestos/1997/1997-labour-manifesto.shtml>
- 2 [http://www.conservatives.com/News/News\\_stories/2010/04/Conservatives\\_launch\\_election\\_manifesto.aspx](http://www.conservatives.com/News/News_stories/2010/04/Conservatives_launch_election_manifesto.aspx)
- 3 <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/8677933.stm>

## Welcome to your new localism

That is not where we are. Many in government believe in the devolution of power to local people and organisations, but there are powerful pressures in the other direction too. Politicians may think that only by keeping their hands on the levers of power will they be able to implement the changes they have been mandated to make. Officials may fear inefficiencies caused by service variation, or a lack of democratic accountability in third sector service providers.

As a result, localism as a philosophy has been confused, and as a practice, it has been spotty. Services are delivered by the efficient outsourcing chaebols rather than the experimental social enterprise.

Some of the government's commitments to localism have been met. Councils have to report less data, they have fewer targets to meet. However, localism has often stalled where political realities intervene. Councils have been told that they ought not to have fortnightly bin collections, that they ought not to employ officers in certain roles, publish town hall newspapers or pay people more than the Prime Minister. Sometimes where national government has wanted to deregulate, for example around relaxing planning regulations, backbench MPs have opposed it.<sup>4</sup>

In planning, too, the Conservatives proposed a bottom-up referendum-driven community planning system when in opposition.<sup>5</sup>

4 Tories to revolt over backyard planning reforms, *Daily Telegraph*, 6 April 2013

5 *Open Source Planning 2010*, available at <http://www.conservatives.com/~media/Files/Green%20Papers/planning-green-paper.ashx>

In practice, neighbourhood planning has been a supplement to rather than a substitute for traditional local planning – and that local plan drafting is still undertaken in much the same way as before.<sup>6</sup>

What is more, the idea that there is a public eager to be engaged has not been borne out. Those that have tried devolving decisions have found that if you build it, people will not always come, and those that do come are not always representative.

New approaches to online and offline engagement have been tried in many good small experiments, but even taken together, they are long way from shifting bureaucratic culture.

### *A contested definition*

Given these barriers, is localism worth fighting for? I believe it is.

Flexible, personalised services can answer the discontent that people feel with the mass compromises of politics.<sup>7</sup> Living in a world where consumer interactions let them have

6 Statement of neighbourhood planning policy on Gov.uk <https://www.gov.uk/government/policies/giving-communities-more-power-in-planning-local-development/supporting-pages/neighbourhood-planning>

7 See for example *Personalisation through Participation*, Demos 2004

8 Even in Switzerland there is a demand for more direct forms of participation. Age-based analysis within the canton of Geneva showed younger voters demonstrating a preference for voting in referendums over traditional elections, See *Putting voter turnout in its context: A dynamic analysis of actual participation data*, Tawfik, Sciarini and Horber, University of Geneva seminar, 2010. Accessed at <http://www.unige.ch/ses/spo/Accueil-1/Papiers/ParticipationPascalEugenAmal.pdf>

## A LOCALIST FUTURE

things their way, people feel civic life ought to be as responsive<sup>8,9</sup> – and it is also where they feel they can make the most difference.<sup>10</sup>

As a matter of practical politics, big services cannot afford to go on spending billions of pounds in big unmodified ways – but cuts are unpopular. Localism seems to be a way of squaring the circle by using local knowledge and action to reduce costs of service delivery, support cheap community action and improve its local fit.<sup>11</sup>

More philosophically, localism comes from a political position that supports personal action, small-scale community initiatives, and scepticism about large institutions both state and corporate. This tradition is present in both the main political parties, whether Burke's little platoons<sup>12</sup> or the co-operative local action of Rochdale Pioneers<sup>13</sup>, so there is the potential for localist initiatives to gain cross-party agreement, even if the political branding is different.

Finally, the trend towards personalisation and personal action is an epochal one, and the rise of the network society

9 *What do people want, need and expect from public services?* Ipsos MORI and RSA/2020 Public Services Trust, 2010

10 CLG Neighbourhood Survey 2010, showing more than half of people feeling that they could act to make a difference in their local area, compared to only a third who felt that action would make a difference at national level.

11 For a council's view on what localism means, see Kent's *Bold Steps for Kent* strategic plan from 2010, available at [http://www.kent.gov.uk/your\\_council/priorities,\\_policies\\_and\\_plans/priorities\\_and\\_plans/bold\\_steps\\_for\\_kent.aspx](http://www.kent.gov.uk/your_council/priorities,_policies_and_plans/priorities_and_plans/bold_steps_for_kent.aspx)

12 *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, 1790, at para 75 (<http://www.bartleby.com/24/3/4.html>)

13 For the story of the Rochdale Pioneers, see chapter 3 of *Co-Op: The People's Business*, Johnnton Birchall, Manchester University Press, 1994

is not about to reverse.<sup>14</sup> In the four years from 2007 to 2011, the number of people who were “next-generation users” of the Internet – who used multiple apps and devices – more than doubled from 20 per cent to 44 per cent.<sup>15</sup> Even where localism experiments fail or underperform now, they may have the audience for success in a few years.

## **What would a democratic localism look like?**

If localism means anything, it must be shaped by local needs and desires, so there will never be one single localism. But it is easy to imagine undemocratic localism – opaque distribution of powers away from the council, the localism of the select vestry carried forward into well-meaning but unaccountable civic groups.

A democratic localism will have three central characteristics, all mutually reinforcing. It will be open, it will be networked, and it will be democratically-run. Without these three elements present, localism will be no improvement.

### *Open*

The first characteristic is openness – every decision should be taken in a way that is actively open throughout the decision-making process. This means more than public meetings to take final decisions once all of the discussions

14 For more on the Network Society, and what it means, see Manuel Castells, *The Rise of the Network Society*, 2nd Edition. Wiley-Blackwell 2009

15 OxIS 2011 survey, quoted in *The Networked Councillor*, Improvement East 2013

have happened behind closed doors. It means more than opening data.

Openness is bringing the public into the shaping of decisions at the very start, routinely sharing the information and context on which decisions are made, and involving people through the process using a participation strategy rather than a consultation document. The work that national government is doing on open policy-making, looking to widen the scope of engagement in policy, is also relevant to local government.<sup>16</sup>

Openness also means openness to ideas and proposals from outside. For example, initiatives such as CityCamps and hackdays allow people from outside government to come together and plan ways that government can do things differently.<sup>17</sup> An open organisation participates in such events as an equal partner, seeking opportunities to support new approaches.

### *Fundamentally networked*

Supporting openness requires a networked approach, which understands and works with a place as a network of overlapping and interlocked networks. Peoples' experiences and interests make them not just residents of a particular street or village, but parents of children at a particular school, relatives of someone in a care home in the next

16 The Democratic Society's space on Open Policymaking, run in association with the Cabinet Office, can be found at <http://openpolicy.demsoc.org>

17 For example CityCamps in Coventry, Brighton and London; events such as Rewired State and Young Rewired State, and Scrutiny Camp (which ran alongside the Centre for Public Scrutiny's annual conference in 2013)

town, users of a particular public service. Sometimes, a resident's most important networks are in areas where they do not live, perhaps even in countries where they are not legal citizens.

In the era of paper, managing and understanding these different interlocking networks and citizenships would have been an impossible task. Modern technology, particularly social networking, makes it possible, if difficult, and as new network visualisation tools such as the RSA's Social Mirror become more mainstream, network management will become a core role for councils.<sup>18</sup>

### *Democratic*

Finally, localism must be democratic. This means more than the representative process. It means balancing participation and representativeness so that residents feel that they can influence decisions if they want to; expanding the network of participation; and ensuring that where services are provided in the community or outsourced to others, they inherit the same democratic responsibilities.

To be more participative does not mean putting every issue or detail out to consultation or public decision. Representative-driven processes need to be balanced with participation – and participation should be sought in proportion to the scale of the decision, so that people know that their participation is worth something.

In parallel, the voice of citizens needs to be able to start the process of policy change, through scrutiny, e-petitions or

<sup>18</sup> The Social Mirror project can be found at <http://www.rsa.org.uk/action-research-centre/community-and-public-services/connected-communities/social-mirror>



other means, and the tools need to be available to allow community groups and outsourced services to support engagement. Making councils more participative does not mean aiming for universal participation. The doors to participation have to be open, but people cannot be forced through them.

Switzerland gives citizens opportunities to participate far greater than the UK. They do not participate in universal numbers, indeed election turnout in Switzerland is lower than it is in the UK, but the availability of information and the real possibility of participation makes for a different culture of involvement, as shown below.

### **Real power makes a difference: evidence from Switzerland**

Most Brits know that the Swiss political system makes extensive use of referendums, but a lesser-known feature is a very high degree of localism in political arrangements. Because processes vary so widely between the different municipalities and cantons, it is an excellent place to test what factors affect turnout and participation in politics.

Voter turnout in Swiss elections is higher for local elections than for national ones. In 2005, turnout was four percentage points higher in local elections than in national elections or cantonal elections.

The largest cantons and municipalities such as Zürich and Geneva show lower voter turnout than small ones. The voter turnout correlation familiar in Britain – richer, older people vote more – is also seen

in Switzerland, but there is joined by a strong correlation for size of municipality, and for the existence of political parties and civic movements in that area.<sup>19</sup> Smaller municipalities see higher turnouts, and civic movements in a small municipality correlate with higher turnouts still.

The scope of action of Swiss voters is wider and more local. In May this year, for example, citizens of Geneva were able to vote in a referendum on whether city bus and train fares should go up. 46.5 per cent of them turned out, and the increase was defeated 56/44. This was not just a protest against the government, though: in the same vote, a proposal to establish a Caisse de prévoyance (State provident fund) was approved by 75 per cent to 25 per cent.<sup>20</sup>

Has there ever been a referendum on a public transport fare increase in the UK? I have not seen one, but despite dealing in small matters, the Swiss system does not overburden people with participation. Not every proposal goes to referendum, only those that are of significant constitutional importance, or where a particular number of citizens have called the decision in.

Voting happens four times a year, with local votes aligned with federal elections or federal referendums, so voters are not constantly bombarded by requirements to give their opinion, and one awareness campaign can draw people to the ballot boxes.

19 *What explains electoral turnout in Swiss municipalities?* Working Paper 2.2009, Ladner A, IDHEAP Lausanne, 2009

20 <http://www.ge.ch/votations/20130303/cant.asp#aff>

## **What does this mean for local government?**

What are the organisational consequences of a democratically localist system? How would a localist council run itself?

### *More power for councillors*

A networked and democratic local public service does not mean the end for councillors – quite the reverse. The reach and deliberation of representatives and the traditional structures allow for community-wide trade-offs and are an essential part of government, for the foreseeable future.

That said, localism means that councillors will need to work more as convenors of conversations around their wards and on their favoured subject matter, than as executive management.

For some, this will be a difficult transition. There is an expectation, particularly in council cabinets and among leaders, that they are there to take decisions. So they are, but the decisions that are taken and the routes through which those decisions are reached are very different in a localised world.<sup>21</sup>

The political role of the councillor is also likely to shift, with party identity and discipline reducing and community leadership and representation increasing.

This is less the result of localism than a consequence of a general decline in the party as an institution, shown

21 See <http://networkedcouncillor.wordpress.com>

by the sharply increased number of Parliamentary rebellions, and a collapse in membership numbers.<sup>22</sup>

*A different sort of leadership internally*

The nature of leadership in a localist world will be very different from the current hierarchical models. To lead in a network means to lead without directive power – without even the appearance of directive power.<sup>23</sup>

It requires the humility to participate in a collective setting of direction, and an honest ability to understand the different elements of the network of people who will help you deliver your goals. It also requires skills in agile management, and the ability to handle different service models in different circumstances. For example, a housing service manager may have different estates that want to run their work in different ways.

Localism is not just a matter of agreeing to what they want to do, but understanding what is achievable in cost terms, keeping on top of what is working and what is not in each area, sharing best practice around different parts of his or her patch and rapidly developing away from failing approaches. This is a much more communication-driven and creative role than many service managers have now.

22 On rebellions, see the work of Philip Cowley (<http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/politics/people/philip.cowley>) and Lord Norton of Louth. On declining party membership, *Going, going, . . . gone? The decline of party membership in contemporary Europe*, van Biezen, Mair and Poguntke, *European Journal of Political Research*, 2012 is a good recent survey.

23 See also Catherine Howe, *Digital leadership or just leadership?* <http://www.curiouscatherine.info/2013/06/02/digital-leadership-or-just-leadership/>

## A LOCALIST FUTURE

### *A different sort of communication externally*

A local, open, and networked public service will require a different set of communication practices. A communications team, other than very basic central services, will be less and less needed.

All staff should have familiarity with the public, readiness to engage, and ability to respond helpfully rather than fend off queries.

Beyond responsiveness to queries, networked working requires an easy and rapid flow of information. Networked working can massively increase the flow of information compared to hierarchical models, where communication competes for the 'bandwidth' of senior managers.

To enable that, communication must be integrated into everyday work, in multiple formats that can work for the passer-by or the expert. Editing such a flow of information is almost impossible – the choice rapidly bifurcates into general openness or general secrecy. Although personally confidential matters will always need to be secret, the decision-making process has to be out in the open.

Experience in central government shows that social media campaigns such as those organised by 38 Degrees, or around the gay marriage consultation, can produce numbers of responses that overwhelm inboxes and officer capacity. In no scenario will more civil servants be hired just to read 400,000 consultation responses.

Technical tools such as textual analysis can help, but transparency and peer support get government out of being the 'man in the middle'.

*Conversation not consultation*

As communications has to move from directed hierarchies to supported networks, similarly consultation has to shift towards conversation.

Rather than undertake PDF-based consultations with fixed questions, a better approach, particularly for major issues, is to understand the goal of participation as building a conversation with the public, with a broad or narrow audience as the stage of policy development requires.

So, for example, broad principles and general ideas could be consulted on across a wide audience, but the details of implementation might require a small expert conversation, or perhaps a focus group of users.

This means creating a participation strategy for a major policy, very early in the process. This would identify the types of audience that need to be involved at each stage, and the breadth and depth of discussion at each point. If an area has a good understanding of its networks, it should have a ready set of people and organisations with which to engage.

The existence of networks of people who are already interested, as long as those networks are actively broadened and refreshed, prevents councils having to build audiences for each consultation separately.

24 More information is at <http://www.rahvakogu.ee/pages/what-is-rahvakogu>

## **Redesigning the state: Rahvakogu (People's Assembly, Estonia)**

The Estonian People's Assembly process provides a good example of a phased consultation using different methods at different times.<sup>24</sup> The People's Assembly, created in response to a corruption scandal in the Estonian parliament, began with a crowdsourcing of political reform ideas which was open to everyone. That was followed by 'smart-sourcing', grouping the ideas into themes and undertaking an expert impact assessment on each proposal.

Next, in a series of seminars, the experts who undertook the impact assessment discussed the outcomes with the people who had proposed the ideas. This brought the initial 1,500 ideas down into a set of 18 questions, which was taken to a day-long deliberative meeting of 500 randomly selected Estonian citizens. The final options were presented to the Estonian Parliament by the President of Estonia, Toomas Hendrik Ilves. Parliament is currently considering the legislative timetable for implementation.

This approach used different levels of engagement at different times in an ongoing process, fitting the input needed to the method used.

It was completely open, recorded online and undertaken by a network of 10 non-government organisations alongside communications and policy experts. It also only took 14 weeks from start to finish – and that between January and April during an unusually severe winter.

### *Thoroughly digital*

Off-line and public space events will always be important, but every council and local body should be involved in the digital space as well. Digital collapses distance, and allows busy people to time-shift their participation or catch up after the event. It also enables those who are geographically dispersed to participate without travel, and to bring in voices from around the world.

The digital and off-line approaches are complementary. Off-line events can be used as the centrepiece of a digital engagement effort,<sup>25</sup> and online networks can put faces to names at regular meet ups. Localist councils and organisations cannot be absent from these spheres.

This means that councillors and officers must be as comfortable engaging on social media tools as they would be in surgeries or other off-line situations. Understanding the digital culture, as opposed to digital tools, is something that takes time and experience. Councils and other public service providers should work to ensure that their officers and members are ready to work in this way.<sup>26</sup>

### *Conductors not directors*

Officers will need to be facilitators of change. Not that everyone would be standing at flipchart with a whiteboard marker, but that the essential role of many local officers is to bring people together, to listen and to create solutions

<sup>25</sup> see *In the Goldfish Bowl: policy dialogue in a digital age*, forthcoming from Sciencewise ERC

<sup>26</sup> Again, the Improvement East & Public-i *Networked Councillor* project is relevant here.



using all the resources available – central, local and community.<sup>27</sup>

To make that a reality requires agility. There's no point in bringing people together in creative ways, and having excellent conversations about what they want, if you are then unable to change systems for a long period of time. There are elements to this that involve multiple public services and a true localism must involve all of them.

In shaping services, localist bodies will need to be as rigorous on research and evidence as traditional bodies – even more so, since traditional structures can use the defence that they're just doing what they've always done.

Perhaps not in every council on every issue, but certainly across the sector, local government needs the research capacity to understand what the costs and benefits of different approaches are, what raise red flags about protection or efficacy, and what are the factors for success. Without this understanding, suggestions that come from the public can't be validated.

### *Accountability and flow of funding*

Localism will not be localism if it constrains all public spending to publicly-delivered services. Some services are better delivered in the community, but democratic control and accountability can fail at the boundary between deliverer and commissioner.

27 The need for central government to increase flexibilities is highlighted in the LGiU's report on the *One Norbiton* community budget pilot: <http://www.lgiu.org.uk/2013/05/24/lessons-from-the-one-norbiton-neighbourhood-community-budget-pilot/>

Transparency enhanced by modern information tools can help. Online tools such as Where Does My Money Go? show how much money is being spent on government services, where and for what purposes.<sup>28</sup> A similar transparency regime for public money when spent on delivering services in a local area would be one element of public accountability.

The other, depending on the source of the funds, would be democratic control or representation on oversight bodies. Where councils are service providers this will already exist – though the accountability conversation could be widened by co-opting wider participants onto scrutiny panels or boards. Where it does not exist, the same transparency and participation approaches that are used by councils should be used by service providers. There should be as far as possible a seamless democratic participation approach, no matter who is delivering the service, a “no wrong door” for participation.

## **Democratic direction: place management as a model**

One model for how democratic localism could work in practice derives from the place management approach proposed by Australian author John Mant and others in the late 1990s.<sup>29</sup>

Place management looks to create highly empowered place managers, with responsibility for outcome delivery in their area, often with no direct budget but power to shape provision from mainstream service blocks.

28 <http://wheredoesmymoneygo.org>

29 *Place management, fad or future?* Martin Stuart-Weeks, Institute of Public Administration Australia, NSW Division, 1998

In Australia, where it began, it has shown itself effective in creating more localised solutions, and giving impetus to service redesign. In Minto, an urban development in New South Wales, it was able to create local structures in the community that defined and responded to local need.<sup>30</sup> In Brisbane, it created stronger bonds (though not major structural realignment) between different service providers and the community.<sup>31</sup>

However, Mant himself has noted that this approach risks producing local managers who become too identified with political decisions and become 'mini-mayors' of their patch.<sup>32</sup>

In the original vision, place management was a step towards an outcome-focused organisation, structurally reoriented around place and local need.

Making that place manager accountable to the local community directly, as well as to the political level, removes the risks of mini-mayors, and strengthens accountability. The place manager becomes in addition a manager of the networks interested in public service.

### **How we get there**

The basic characteristics of localism – open, networked, democratic – have been set out above. The eventual destination will be reached only through steady progress.

30 *Working Together in Minto Review 2006*, quoted by Government of New South Wales in *Rethinking Place Management and its relevance to Social Housing Estates*, presentation to the 6th Australian Housing Researchers' Conference, 2012 available at [http://www.adelaide.edu.au/churp/ahrc12/program/sessions/Lille y.pdf](http://www.adelaide.edu.au/churp/ahrc12/program/sessions/Lille%20y.pdf)

31 *Your Place or Mine? An evaluation of the Brisbane Place Pilots*, University of Queensland, February 2003

32 *Place management as a core role in government*, John Mant. *Journal of Place Management and Development*, 2008

Structures in organisations can be reorganised quickly – although people take a while to start thinking in new structures. Community participation and a culture of openness take longer to build, and have to start with councils and communities building mutual trust.

This does not mean ‘no change yet’. There are several things councils should do now to move localism and democracy forward in their area.

### *Act on principle*

Agile and flexible working practices, even if guided by local vision, need to understand the direction that the service as a whole is taking, and the ways in which services need to develop to make them ready for the future.

This means that the setting of vision, based on evidence and on political and managerial leadership, is just as important in a localist organisation as in a hierarchy.

It is important for political leaders to set out some local principles that will guide action on both sides.

My organisation’s work on democratic conversations in Lewes, East Sussex, began with creating a set of principles for local participation, drawn up with the council as a statement of principle,<sup>33</sup> and Tessy Britton’s work for Lambeth Council on the Work Shop in West Norwood begins from a set of 10 Design Principles.<sup>34</sup>

33 *Principles of Local Participation*, The Democratic Society in association with Lewes District Council 2012. Available at <http://www.demsoc.org>

34 *The Work Shop Report no. 1*, Social Spaces, 2013.

### *Building the local Internet of citizens*

The use of open platforms and technologies for civic action is essential if we are to create a localist public service. Single proprietary providers cannot flex their products rapidly enough to meet different local demands, small local organisations cannot afford expensive licence fees.

The interests of commercial companies in retaining data for advertising all data mining purposes militate against the sharing of information that is necessary for true transparency.

Councils should be contributing to an Internet of citizens rather than a Facebook of citizens, and to that end councils should ensure that the services they are commissioning around democratic engagement, transparency, and localism are based on platforms that allow free sharing of information, are interoperable, and are based on open standards.

Bristol City Council, with a commitment to small-scale open source solutions provides an excellent model.<sup>35</sup>

### *Experimentation*

It goes without saying that the localist approach requires experimentation. But it does not need pilots in the traditional sense, devised and tested within the council structure. It needs experiments that are undertaken across sectors, as

35 For some of the history behind Bristol's open source work, see *Democratising Softwares, Bristol's Open Source Success story* at the Open Government Summit site:  
<http://opengov2013.zaizi.com/democratizing-softwares-bristol-city-councils-open-source-success-story/>

far as possible in safe spaces with good evaluation, and in such a way that when failures happen they can be identified and corrected quickly.

Tolerance of failure requires political and managerial courage. It also requires an adult-to-adult conversation between politicians and voters on what is being tried, and the bigger purpose.

There are examples of councils that are very willing to work with outside bodies. Lambeth, as well as in the Work Shop, has used a great deal of external expertise in service redesign and change.

In Philadelphia, the mayor has set up an Office of New Urban Mechanics within the organisation, operating in a very open and public way – so much so that its project management software is on the Internet, and people from anywhere in the world can apply to be added to its discussion spaces.<sup>36</sup>

### *Collaborative learning*

Alongside experimentation comes collaborative learning. This means collaborating across organisations in different geographies, as well as working together with partners at local level. Local government has often been poor at picking up innovation and applying it, something that risks getting worse as budgets shrink further.

Isolation is unnecessary in the networked world. Councils should be, like Philadelphia, encouraging people from outside the area and other disciplines to bring expertise into their product design and management. In this light, it is

<sup>36</sup> <http://www.newurbanmechanics.org/philadelphia/>

disappointing that the LGA is planning to close the Knowledge Hub which, for all its faults, did bring together people with different backgrounds and disciplines.

It is to be hoped that any successor to Knowledge Hub, whether run by the LGA or created externally, allows even better conversation and collaboration between people undertaking public service reform work.

### **A democratic conversation**

The idea of better and more democratic conversations is at the heart of this vision of localism. It is not a model of a new Athens, with universal participation or a soft-libertarian model of small organisations that have nothing to do with the state.

Instead, it is an ongoing dialogue between citizen and state, each developing the others' work and ideas, and engaged in a shared public service venture.

This will not be possible without trust, and where trust is to be built transparency and participation are needed.

Networked, democratic localism is inherently variable. Different areas will want to proceed at different speeds on different issues. However, it is also inherently connective, and work across the sector needs to be well-networked so people can share tools and experience.

The open platform requirement of the work should reduce reinvention. If councillors and officers are well-prepared for their new leadership role, they can look forward to a position that has lost none of its authority or leadership, but has shifted their focus away from organisational process and crisis management to collaborative governance and service.