

# **Transformational Government**

## **Enabled by Technology**

### **Comments from Staffordshire Moorlands District Council**

#### **Business Improvement Unit**

##### ***Introduction***

The comments below are based on the feedback from the Business Improvement unit, currently responsible for delivery of the E-Government agenda, efficiencies, PSOs and the transformation of Services within SMDC. The team comprises a blend of private sector and public sector experience across (private and public) service delivery, private sector customer services, ICT and project/programme management.

Two main issues arise from the strategy as follows:

- ❖ There appears to be a lack of understanding of the issues surrounding "Change Management" in the Public Sector. Change management and the ability to deliver, is the single biggest risk to the transformation agenda and is reliant on so many factors that it warrants more attention. I have attempted to clarify this later.
- ❖ The document is light in applying the very real and valid lessons already learned in the Public sector. e.g. National projects have struggled to deliver, suppliers still take advantage due to a lack of co-ordination in addressing their commercial (often contradictory) agenda.

##### ***Comments on the Document***

The following comments follow the numbering in the document.

4. "Twenty First Century government is enabled by technology - ...business change is delivered by it..."

Business change is not delivered by technology. Business change is the most complex part of the transformation agenda and is multi-faceted, often little understood or addressed. This comment shows a clear lack of understanding of change in a complex environment. Many valuable lessons have been learned in the private sector, where change has been, on the whole, successful. It requires a different set of skills, not merely project or programme management. The Business or service managers affected need to be able to cope with the transition and still manage the "Business as usual". Often these managers have been promoted from a technical base and have little real management skill or experience. This shortfall has been acknowledged under the Capacity Building programme, but that will not, in itself, be able to address all of the challenges or indeed transform the managers into skilled managers of change fit for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

Technology merely provides the catalyst for change. Until "Transformational Government" addresses the skills shortage of both ICT and Business areas, it will fail. A clear link needs to be made between Capacity Building and the Transformation agenda. Until capacity is built, change will continue to be frustratingly slow and limited. You only have to look at some of the efficiency proposals of the larger LAs to realise the limited understanding or desire to fundamentally change the way services are delivered. Relying upon a partnership deal with an ICT Service provider to facilitate efficiencies, is, in my opinion, not addressing the real needs of the transformation agenda.

9. ...."capacity and capability to innovate....."

This is already being developed in my opinion. The capability and capacity to manage change from a transformational aspect needs to be built both in ICT and the Business areas.

11. Bearing in mind how much is spent, we have done nothing to address the openness of systems. Suppliers will continue to charge each body £ ,000s for each adapter/API until Government can act as one customer. Then it can make a bulk purchase of adapters (or at worst broker a deal) and save millions for the citizens.

18. There is no reference to "Change management" either from an ICT or Business area perspective. This clearly demonstrates the lack of focus on this critical issue and also the lack of understanding when drafting the document.

19. ...."It is also about doing IT differently....."

This is only the tip of the iceberg. To effect sufficient change, save tens of billions for the citizens a paradigm shift is required.

21. (3)

There is no reference to the softer skills that are required for the change management aspects within ICT.

21. (4)

The following wording is suggested for inclusion.

"Development of capacity and capability in change management which focuses on the blueprint for success, realising efficiencies and implementing the projects/programmes. A development of capacity and capability of managers at all levels of government to embrace change and meet a level of professionalism to rival the private sector."

30. ...."focus on the practical mechanisms to deliver service transformation....."

The best practice would in my opinion be wise to include the change management elements already adopted by best performers.

31.

32. These both seem extremely light bearing in mind the E-Government agenda that Las have been working to.

32. ...."it will innovate its services to take swift advantage of new technologies as they emerge....."

55. (3)

These points contradict each other. On the one hand we are taking swift advantage, on the other sees a five year delay (from 2006 to 2011) before the time is right to rollout the newer technologies. Both have their advantages and disadvantages, but the strategy should be consistent and not contradictory.

33.(3)There is no mention of the WAI standards.

39.(3)The strategy should go further in prescribing systems.

41. There is only a reference to reliable project delivery and no reference to efficiencies/benefits or the change management and softer skills that are severely lacking.

50. Private Sector suppliers do not want to change their commercial imperatives and will continue to monopolise until Government addresses the wider issues of VFM for the citizens who have to fund APIs numerous times. The adapters Club does not really deliver.  
This point does not go far enough to address the issues with suppliers.