



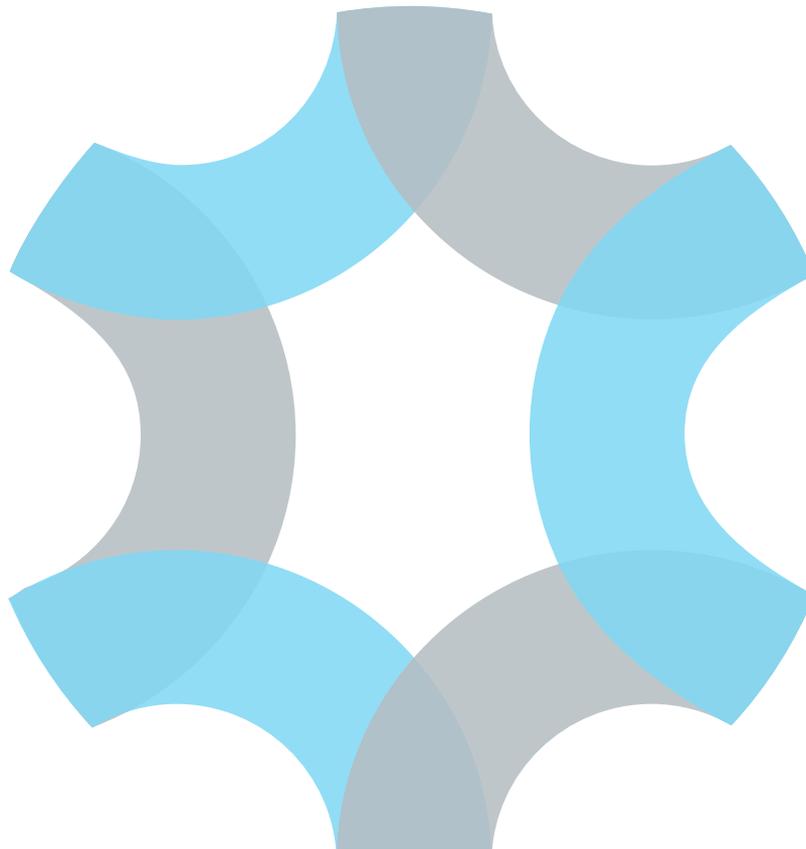
NS6

A New Synthesis of Public Administration

A Public Service Renewal Agenda for the 21st Century The New Synthesis Project

United Kingdom Roundtable Report
London, November 16 to 18, 2010

Edited by the Honourable Jocelyne Bourgon, P.C., O.C.



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A MESSAGE FROM THE PROJECT LEADER

The *New Synthesis Project* is dedicated to supporting practitioners, both elected and professional, who are called upon to face the challenge of serving in the 21st century. The project is supported by a collaborative international research network – the NS6 – that draws on the collective knowledge and experience of senior public officials, researchers and scholars from six countries and 26 organizations.

Over the course of 2010, the NS6 has explored the frontiers of public administration, aiming to develop a new synthesis of public administration that will integrate past principles of enduring value into the new reality of practice.

The roundtables have been focal points for the research process. They have provided opportunities to explore and refine the elements of the New Synthesis framework. At the first roundtable in the Netherlands in March, participants discussed the role of government in building the resilience of society and explored how public institutions that contribute to stability and predictability may also be used to encourage exploration, experimentation and innovation.

The journey of discovery continued in Ottawa in May. The roundtable focussed on the core business of government: Achieving public results. There was a recognition that achieving most public results exceeds the capacity of any one agency working alone and requires the active contribution of multiple sectors and multiple agents. Moreover, government must pursue public policy results in a manner that builds social capital, civic spirit and the collective capacity to achieve better public results over time.

The next stop on the journey of exploration was in Rio de Janeiro in July. This roundtable focussed on the use of government authority and collective power to achieve public results. Through their voices and actions, diverse actors in society give shape to a collective expression of interest that informs the use of state authority and resources. Based on current research, experience and practice in modern governance, this roundtable explored the ramifications of using state authority and resources to leverage collective power, how this can best be done and the implications for governance, public organizations and public servants.

The fourth roundtable, in Singapore in September focussed on preparing government to serve beyond the predictable. Governments work in an increasingly turbulent context out of which complex issues emerge that have uncertain outcomes. As a result, they need to improve their ability to anticipate emerging trends, risks and opportunities and to initiate proactive interventions. They also need to build their capacity and the capacity of society to innovate and adapt to increase the likelihood of favourable outcomes. Building on the findings from the previous roundtables, this one was the first attempt to begin integrating the results.

The fifth and final roundtable took place in London from November 16 to 18, 2010. Building on and integrating the findings from the previous events, this one sought to unpack some of the key elements of the New Synthesis, including co-production, social enterprise and community involvement in public service, transparency, accountability systems for distributed governance arrangements, and leadership for the 21st century. It also sought to define institutional reforms that could help government and society to achieve better collective results.

The series of roundtable discussions have been a rewarding and humbling experience because of the wealth of knowledge and experience that participants have brought to the table. They have produced a robust set of ideas that can be used to prepare public servants to serve *in the 21st century*.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J Bourgon', with a large, stylized flourish extending to the right.

The Honourable Jocelyne Bourgon, P.C., O.C.
President of Public Governance International,
President Emeritus of the Canada School of Public Service,
and NS6 Project Leader

A MESSAGE FROM THE HOST OF THE ROUNDTABLE

I am very pleased to offer this introduction to the report on the New Synthesis Round Table held in London in November 2010 at the Institute for Government. Hosting the event was a contribution we were glad to make as it fell squarely within the remit of our activities.

At the Institute, we act as a catalyst for inspiring the best in government. We spark ideas, generate debate, challenge preconceptions, bring experience to bear and make new connections that work to improve government for the benefit of society. Our activities represent our core values. We seek to be innovative, rigorous, impartial and trusted.

The integration of our research and learning programmes is central to our approach. Our research focuses on the big governance challenges of the day and helping government improve, rethink and see things differently. Our learning programme provides a range of opportunities to help ministers, senior civil servants and their teams to govern and lead more effectively. Our events provide platforms for leading international experts and people working inside government to exchange ideas and share new thinking on best practice.

The London round table occurred at a time of rapid change in UK Government. Following the general election in May 2010, the UK has its first coalition government in a very long time. In light of this and a fiscal consolidation crisis, the UK seems to be at a watershed in terms of developing new modes of governance. It was therefore an opportune time to bring together the New Synthesis family from the six contributing countries with leading experts and practitioners from the UK who are grappling with how government should respond to the challenges of the 21st century.

We were honoured by the active support of Sir Gus O'Donnell, the UK's Cabinet Secretary, who shared the chairing of the event with the new Director of the Institute, former Cabinet Minister, Andrew Adonis. They, with Mme Jocelyne Bourgon, held the ring for exchanges of practice examples, case studies and frameworks for action.

The key challenges we picked out for exploration at the event were the need for those in government to develop a more engaged relationship with citizens, the need to find better ways of dealing with complex problems, and the significance of radical transparency in the use of public data. Given these challenges, how should the institutions of government adapt and what form should this adaptation take?

The view that emerged was that the power to act and exercise the authority of the state needs to be co-located with the knowledge essential to solving the problem. Increasingly, this knowledge is likely to be distributed across levels of government, and across state, market and civil society. The key leadership capability going forward seems to lie in creating the conditions within which cross-boundary partnerships can be effective.

There is no single answer to achieving this capability, but as we jointly explored the issues and shared perspectives over the three days of the London Round Table, the sparks of new connections and emergent new perspectives were very much in evidence.

Prof Sue Richards
Senior Fellow, Institute for Government
UK Co-ordinator, New Synthesis Project
December 2010

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This roundtable report would not have been possible without the involvement of many individuals. The following people contributed to the United Kingdom Roundtable, 16-18 November, and ultimately made this report possible.

The Chairs and Co-Chairs

- Sir Gus O'Donnell
- Lord Andrew Adonis
- The Honourable Jocelyne Bourgon

The Roundtable Delegates

- Roel Bekker
- Lord Michael Bichard
- Rod Clark
- Sarah Deeks
- Jenifer Graves
- Merel de Groot
- Zoe Gruhn
- Tim Hughes
- Andrew Johnstone-Burt
- Philip Karré
- Eve Mitleton-Kelly
- Helena Kerr
- Natalia Koga
- Tobias Kwakkelstein
- Lena Leong
- Donald Low
- Carmel McGregor
- James Meddings
- Laura Ibiapina Parante
- Susan Phillips
- Sue Richards
- Tan Li San
- Rômulo Paes de Sousa
- Allan Tupper
- Martijn van der Steen

The Presenters/ Speakers

- Victor Adebowale
- Helen Bailey
- Dominic Campbell
- Hillary Cottam
- Carys Evans
- Greg Clark
- Mathew Horne
- Amyas Morse
- Geoff Mulgan
- William Perrin
- Lynne Sedgemore
- Nigel Shadbolt
- Adam Sharples
- Ian Watmore
- Julian Wood
- Tony Wright

The Rapporteurs

- Adrian Brown
- Brian Johnson
- Peter Milley

Technical Support

- Loren Austin
- Mike Brass
- Jocelyne Comeau
- Alice le Gros
- Hana Maitland

Event Sponsors

- Institute for Government
- National School of Government
- Booz & Company

THE NS6 PROJECT

The *New Synthesis Project* is dedicated to advancing the study and practice of public administration. It is supported by a collaborative network from six countries – Australia, Brazil, Canada, the Netherlands, Singapore and the United Kingdom.

The Project is exploring what *is* different about serving in the 21st century; what is new and what is of enduring value; how does this transform the role of government going forward? What new systems, skills and capacities will governments need to live up to citizens' expectations and face the challenges of their time?

This work is dedicated to *public administration practitioners* who are called upon to make decisions and take actions in an era that is more difficult and demanding than ever. The purpose is to provide them with a *narrative* supported by *powerful examples* that will help them face the challenges of serving in the 21st century.

While the task is daunting, a range of important new ideas and concepts exists that are relevant to the role of government in the future. Some of them can be found within fields traditionally associated with public administration, such as political science, law, administrative and management sciences, and organizational behaviour. However, many new ideas about complexity, networks, resilience, adaptive systems and collective intelligence from other domains are opening up promising new avenues.

While the goals of the *New Synthesis Project* may be ambitious, the partner countries and their research associates are united in the belief that the potential value of the project is well worth the effort.

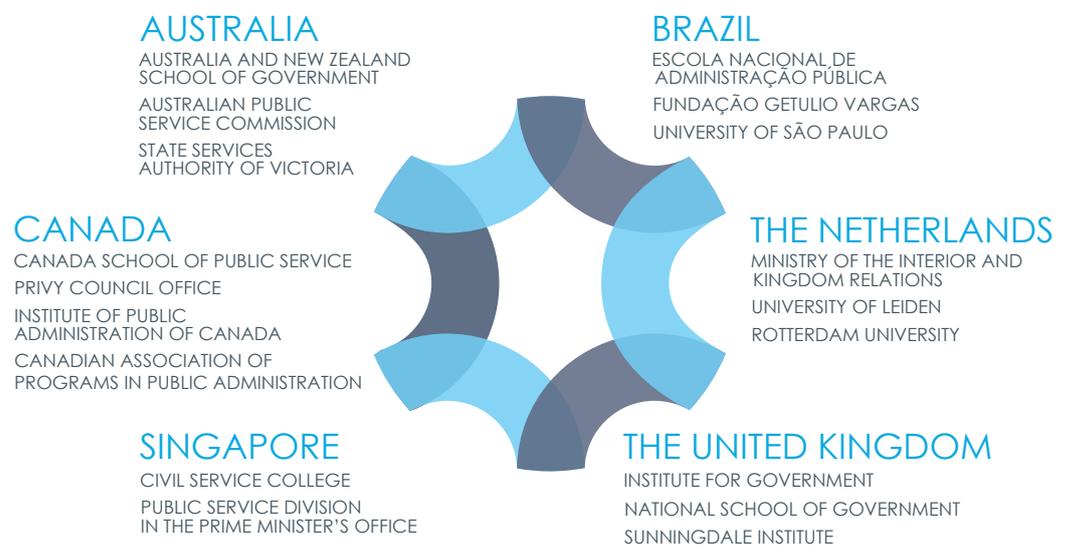
THE NS6 NETWORK

In an effort to bridge the gap between academics and practitioners, the *New Synthesis Project* draws on the collective knowledge and experience of senior public officials, researchers and scholars through a collaborative network of 24 organizations from six countries, known as the NS6 Network.

The NS6 Network was created by a group of volunteers from the world of practice and academe who were willing to dedicate time and effort to develop a strong narrative supported by powerful examples to help public administration practitioners face the challenges of serving in the 21st century.

While the institutions and individuals forming the Network hail from different countries, different political systems and different historical, economic and cultural contexts, all share the view that public administration as a practice and discipline is not yet aligned with the challenges of serving in the 21st century. They also share a common understanding of the importance of the role of public institutions for society to prosper and adapt in the context of our global economy, networked society and fragile biosphere.

The NS6 Network



A project led by JOCELYNE BOURGON with the support of

GOVERNMENT OF CANADA CENTER FOR INTERNATIONAL GOVERNANCE INNOVATION (CIGI)
 CISCO SYSTEMS UNIVERSITY OF WATERLOO PGI (PUBLIC GOVERNANCE INTERNATIONAL)

THE INTERNATIONAL ROUNDTABLE SERIES

Throughout 2010, the focus of the partners in the NS6 network is on deepening, enriching and continuing to debate the “new synthesis”. This will be pursued through three main strategies:

- A program of research, including case studies;
- A series of international roundtables; and
- Ongoing dialogue and deliberation.

The roundtables were a place for the full expression of international collaboration. They are designed to give substantive and practical shape to a new synthesis of public administration.

Five of the participating countries hosted one of these events. Through the roundtables, renowned experts and leading senior practitioners from different parts of the world came together in a “safe space” that fosters free exchange. Their central task was to explore, debate, and validate the main themes, propositions and ideas in a “new synthesis” of public administration. In doing so, they are expected to draw on their own expertise and experiences, and on the research findings and case studies that have been developed in the NS6 project. Ultimately, the goal was for roundtable participants to give substantive, practical shape to an up-to-date frame of reference for public administrators in the 21st century.

The roundtables were a disciplined journey of discovery and co-creation. They have been sequenced thematically so the knowledge stemming from them is cumulative. A report, such as this one, was produced from each event and made available in time for participants to prepare for the next one. As a result, they examined in a systematic way the key issues and questions that are central to the *New Synthesis Project*.

SCHEDULE OF ROUNDTABLES

Subject	Location	Date
An Expanded Public Space: Emergence and Resilience	The Hague	March 24-26, 2010
Achieving Public Results: Societal and Civic	Ottawa	May 4-5, 2010
Governance in the 21st Century: A Collective Enterprise	Rio de Janeiro	July 13-14, 2010
Serving Beyond the Predictable	Singapore	September 21-22, 2010
A Public Sector Reform and Renewal Agenda for the 21st Century	London	November 16-18, 2010

FOCUS OF THE UK ROUNDTABLE

The fifth in a series of five international roundtables took place on November 16 - 18, 2010, in London. Building on and integrating the findings of the previous international roundtables in the Netherlands, Canada, Brazil and Singapore, this roundtable focussed on:

1. Delving into some key elements of the New Synthesis, including: enabling social enterprise and co-creation through community involvement in public service; increasing transparency—making public data available as a civic responsibility and a public good; using modern technology to assist this process; and the accountability systems for distributed governance arrangements.
2. Defining and deriving institutional reforms that will help government and society achieve better collective results going forward, including developing commissioning practice which sustains the character of social enterprise; sharing knowledge with citizens; changing the default system of centralized accountability and control to allow power to be distributed across complex systems; and developing new modes of leadership for a more effective system.

IN SUMMARY

The past thirty years have seen significant public sector reform initiatives around the world that have largely been mechanistic and efficiency-focused. Despite this, public sector institutions and organizations still fail to adequately address many of today's challenges.

For any particular issue, we can ask whether government has the knowledge and the capacity to achieve the desired outcome. The mechanistic paradigm is built on the assumption that both these elements are in place. This assumption still holds true for a number of issues. However, public sector institutions and organizations are being increasingly asked to respond to problems beyond their reach. When faced with complex problems the mechanistic paradigm fails. New approaches are required.

Public sector institutions and organizations need to be more inclusive, open, dynamic and adaptive. This means not assuming a "right" answer exists or that one actor or organization can enact change alone. It signals a shift from:

- *Top down to bottom up*: starting with the assumption that the knowledge and power are distributed rather than held at the top;
- *Inward looking to outward looking*: recognizing that solutions are at least as likely to come from outside public sector institutions and organizations as within them;
- *Treating symptoms to addressing root causes*: focusing on prevention to develop sustainable solutions;
- *Skilled at processes to skilled at relationships*: acknowledging the importance of understanding problems at the human level;
- *Change resistant to change accepting*: understanding that value is created through experimentation and adaptation rather than stasis;
- *Siloed to networked*: "joining the dots" across public sector institutions and organizations as well as to organizations outside the public sector and wider civil society;
- *Impersonal to personal*: recognizing that a "one size fits all" approach will often fail to address an individual's needs;
- *Government doing to government enabling and co-producing*: shifting the emphasis from government as a source of value to government helping others to unlock value held elsewhere.

There is no simple checklist of actions that public sector institutions and organizations should follow to respond to complex challenges. The aforementioned shifts require a change of mindset as much as a change in behaviors and approaches. However, there is an emerging set of characteristics that public organizations should focus on developing if they are to begin meeting many of the complex challenges they face. They will need to be more:

- *Agile*: Working at multiple scales and multiple speeds; creating “liquid” networks for innovation; being risk aware rather than risk averse; able to distinguish between systemic failure, failure that results from wrong doing and failure that results from trying new things; encouraging (not punishing) experimentation and drawing lessons from failures.
- *Open*: Getting reconnected with citizens; transparent and connected, at the cutting edge in the use of public information to serve citizens; enabling people to help themselves.
- *Evidence-based*: Working from broader measures of success (e.g. wellbeing); rigorous in their assessment of what works; able to scan the world for emerging trends; learning from others and adapting solutions to their own context and circumstances.
- *Collaborative*: Becoming platforms for collaboration; skilled at managing multiple relationships and capable of co-creation and co-production;
- *Devolved and accountable*: Moving from centralized institutions to distributed networks, promoting distributed leadership; reconciling vertical accountability with the need to work in vast networks to achieve shared results.

This represents a challenging agenda for the leaders of public sector institutions and organizations. Many of the old leadership approaches, such as a relentless focus on measurement and efficiency, will need to be adapted in favor of new skills such as creativity and being comfortable with ambiguity. Leaders will be expected to sustain innovation and adaptation by encouraging appropriate risk taking behaviors. They must be skilled at building relationships and communicating across boundaries.

To some extent, this will require leaders to dismantle the old in order to build the new. This will not be an easy path and will require creating and communicating a compelling vision of the future that people can relate to and can help them understand how they will need to adapt their own mindsets and behaviors.

All these capacities cannot reside in any one leader, but leaders have a responsibility to ensure that the organization has the capacities it needs. The challenge is to align leadership abilities and tasks. Public service leaders will need a broad exposure to the international environment, working on the front line, experience with community groups and in working with politicians.

1. INTRODUCTION

The London Roundtable brought together senior policy makers, practitioners, researchers and scholars to discuss the theme of aligning public sector institutions and organizations to serve in the 21st century. (See Annex A for names and affiliations of participants).

The meeting was chaired by Gus O'Donnell, Cabinet Secretary and Andrew Adonis, Director of the Institute of Government and co-chaired by the project leader, Jocelyne Bourgon.

The event was organized as follows:

- Participants were given background materials to review in advance;
- The first day was dedicated to looking at citizen-focused public service, while the afternoon focused on strategic commissioning for social resilience, including case studies.
- The second day was dedicated to transparency and decentralization, while the afternoon focused on public accountability and governance.
- The third day looked at leadership in the context of the new synthesis framework, including political leadership.
- The conversation continued over lunches and dinners in a less structured format.

2. GETTING STARTED

In opening the fifth NS6 roundtable, the Chair, Andrew Adonis, welcomed delegates and guests to London, including the co-chair, Jocelyne Bourgon, whom he noted is a governor of the Institute for Government (IfG).

He provided a brief overview of the IfG, which is an independent think-tank that has been in existence for two years. Because it is not government funded, it enjoys a high level of independence. The work of the New Synthesis project is of interest to the IfG in the context of the current reform, restructuring and deficit reduction challenges facing the U.K.

He thanked the roundtable sponsors – the National School of Government and Booz & Company, Sue Richards (the NS6 Coordinator for the U.K.) and her team who made the event possible.

Sue Richards, NS6 Coordinator for the U.K. added her welcome to the participants and thanked them for attending. She noted that the history of previous roundtables has been a good exchange of views leading to interesting and sometimes unexpected findings. She noted the relevance of the work of the NS6 network to the challenges of governing in the 21st century, reiterating its significance to the current U.K. context.

She provided a brief overview of the themes and agenda for the roundtable, noting that the focus was on preserving what is valuable from the past and grafting on what is needed to serve in the future.

Jocelyne Bourgon, the Project Leader, thanked the Institute for Government, Sue Richards and the London team for organizing the event and thanked participants for attending. She noted that it was the final roundtable for 2010, saying that, while it was sad to see them come to an end, a lot of ground had been covered and it was time to take some distance in order to integrate all the findings.

She then provided an update on the New Synthesis Project, in order to help those who were joining the discussion for the first time. She noted that public sector reform has dominated the agenda for the past 30 years. In spite of this, public sector organizations and institutions are not yet aligned and prepared for the challenges of the 21st century. So, the reforms to date represent an incomplete journey. The New Synthesis Project is about serving in the 21st century. It is about exploring the “new frontiers” of public administration – what is new, what is changing and what is of enduring value.

The five roundtables have each had a specific focus:

- In the Netherlands, it focused on emergence and resilience;
- In Canada, it focused on public policy results and civic results;
- In Brazil, it looked at the use of government authority to leverage collective power;
- In Singapore, it looked at serving beyond the predictable; and

- In London, it focused on how it all comes together to transform public organizations and institutions.

The New Synthesis Project starts from the proposition that there are substantial differences about serving in the 21st century compared to previous times. Four important differences include:

- **Increasing complexity:** Governments are dealing with an increasing number of complex issues in an increasingly unpredictable environment. Complex issues need to be addressed in a holistic way. They require a participative approach involving the contribution of multiple players from multiple sectors. They are multi-dimensional and intertwined. They are characterized by high degrees of uncertainty and are prone to cascading failures.
- **Citizens as value creators:** An increasing number of public policy issues are beyond the reach of government working alone. Citizens are the main contributors to an increasing number of public policy issues. Government is no substitute for what people can do on their own. Government may inadvertently crowd out what can be accomplished by citizens themselves.
- **An expanded public space:** Many issues are beyond the reach of traditional instruments of the state. They are a collective enterprise where the role of government is to give voice to collective aspirations and lever collective capacity to achieve better results.
- **No “one model for all seasons”:** There will never be one model for all circumstances. There are multiple pathways leading to better social results. Decisions will be context, culture, circumstance and mission specific.

The public sector must work from:

- A broader definition of public results that recognizes the contribution of citizens and society;
- An expanded view of the role of government to serve in predictable and unpredictable circumstances;
- A better understanding of the expanding public space of our modern networked society;
- A broader concept of citizens as actors and value creators;
- A modern system of accountability and collective responsibility for collective results.

Governing in the 21st century is a dynamic and co-evolving system where government transforms society and society transforms government in a dynamic process of co-evolution.

Case studies have played a key role in roundtable discussions. They help to test the robustness of the ideas and serve to illustrate aspects of the framework.

- The Australia bushfires case study showed that government must work at multiple scales, at different speeds and at all levels.
- The Singapore prison system case study demonstrated the difference between agency results and societal results and that the path to better

societal results requires political and professional leadership.

- The Brazilian Bolsa Familia case study showed how departmental controls can get in the way of societal results. The path to better results was to empower families to make decisions that they were best-positioned to make.
- The Canadian Homelessness case study showed how systems designed for traditional service delivery can get in the way of collective efforts. Bringing everyone together to address homelessness ultimately failed due to departmental stovepipe reporting requirements and control.
- The UK Criminal Justice case study demonstrates that top-down silo-based structures have led to poor rates of rehabilitation, and that the challenges of achieving a “rehabilitation revolution” require a fundamental reorientation of practice.
- The Netherlands’ Public Safety Centres demonstrated the importance of interagency collaboration to share knowledge and improve agency results.
- The Brazilian National Health Conferences case study demonstrated that not all initiatives start with government. The impetus for national health conferences emerged at the community level, which ultimately led to a hybrid health system.
- The Singapore workfare case study looked at co-production to deliver better results.

The focus of the Singapore and London roundtables was on capacity building. Singapore looked at how to improve the anticipative, innovative and adaptive capacity of government and society; how to encourage exploration, experimentation and learn by doing; and how to serve beyond the predictable.

The focus of the London roundtable was on how the findings to date transform the role and functioning of public institutions and organizations. It focused on institutional and organizational capacity.

- Institutions matter. Public institutions provide the values, norms and constitutional conventions that evolve over time and are designed to reduce uncertainty. They give shape to collective aspirations, ensure that society is governed by the rule of law, guarantee due process and provide legitimacy for the exercise of authority and use of public funds. When they work well, they build trust. They evolve slowly and so they should.
- Organizations matter. Organizations transform public purpose into concrete actions. They are instruments through which governments achieve results. But to fulfill their mission they must do more. They must facilitate boundary crossing, be platforms for collaboration and reconcile vertical accountability with the need to operate in vast networks to achieve shared results.

The challenge is to discover how public institutions and organizations, which are resistant to change, can be helped to adapt and evolve with society and be better aligned with the complex and unpredictable environment in which they must exist.

The difficulty of the transformation that is required cannot be underestimated. It involves a shift from:

- A closed system of government to an open and dynamic system of governance able to co-evolve with society;
- Low adaptive capacity to high adaptive capacity.

So, the challenge is to overcome what has been witnessed from the past 30 years of reform, in which the dominant model has absorbed new initiatives and re-instated the traditional order. This has led to frustration by elected officials, fatigue in the public service and cynicism in the public. It has raised questions as to whether government is able to learn and adapt.

While the roundtables have begun to identify some of the reforms that are needed, there is still a lot of work to do.

3. CITIZEN-FOCUSED PUBLIC SERVICE

Andrew Adonis noted that this section would look at what it means to be a *citizen-focused public service*. It would focus on how the design of new public services could move from top-down to bottom-up and how the needs, priorities and desires of citizens could replace the needs, priorities and prejudices of public servants.

Geoff Mulgan spoke about the rise of the *relational state*. In his introduction, he suggested governments seek to create public value as a means of achieving legitimacy. He noted that 30 years of public sector reform have focused on improving efficiency and becoming more business-like. It was thought that showing value for money would strengthen legitimacy. But, the public remained sceptical. There is no correlation between these reforms and the objective rankings of governments. Efficient governments were not necessarily trusted or "loved".

A contemporary solution to solving legitimacy problems lies in creating a *relational state* that focuses on the quality of its relationships with citizens. This can be achieved by working directly with citizens through engagement, feedback, co-design, co-production and continuous improvement and innovation processes.

Some key principles can guide the work of governments in pursuing this agenda:

- Automate where possible (e.g. taxation, licensing, fines, applications, self-diagnosis, border controls, utilities, policing, etc.);
- Have a stronger one-to-one relationship where necessary (e.g., personal advisors, teachers, coaches with higher skills and more time providing more personalized services);
- Be transparent (e.g., put information out as the default);
- Approach public service as a platform rather than a deliverer (e.g., promote self-management, allow people to exchange in real time, etc.);
- Promote a collaborative public service (e.g., open to society and business);
- Be ultra local (as well as global);
- Be skilled at relationships;
- Embed innovation;
- Treat employees and the public as participants not as bystanders;
- Use more rigorous assessment of what works and for whom;
- Adopt new measures of success (e.g. patient satisfaction as well as health outcomes, fear of crime as well as crime, wellbeing as well as GDP, social wealth as well as economic wealth); and
- Be able to act fast (and slow) to sustain relationships (e.g. speed in a crisis and slow at culture change/systems change).

The relational state addresses the quality of relationships with citizens directly. It manages relationships alongside of delivery, strategic goals and performance.

Hillary Cottam spoke about the practical importance of *creating public services with citizens*. This allows government to reconnect with citizens, creates better relationships between government and citizens, improves public services and increases public value.

She noted that Sir William Beveridge, an architect of the British welfare state, worried at the end of his life that a state built on needs makes people needy. He felt that, in his original model, he had missed and limited the potential power of the citizen. The current move to involve citizens in the co-delivery of services would not come as a surprise to him.

She then provided an overview of the work being undertaken by Participle, a social enterprise focused on working with the public to create new types of public services. They are developing a radical new vision for public services called Beveridge 4.0. This new approach is not about re-defining Beveridge's "five giants" of want, disease, ignorance, squalor and idleness. It is about a new lens to look at the issues based on two principles: motivating deep participation and encouraging social connections and contributions.

Participle's vision knits together the economic, social and emotional dimensions of life. It is based on five shifts in the approach to public services:

- Moving from a system focused on needs to one more concerned with capabilities;
- Moving away from a system focused on financial resources to one focused on the full range of resources;
- Avoiding centralized institutions in favour of distributed networks; and
- Relaxing the absolute focus on individuals to include social networks.

Participle's process is based on rethinking what the problem is by working directly with those who have the problem, bringing to bear a range of knowledge and skills from different professions, disciplines and walks of life, and scaling success through social enterprise.

Two successful examples of how this approach has been used include: Southwark Circle, which is designing services with older people to support them in improving their quality of life and wellbeing; and the LIFE Programme, which is a framework to support families in chronic crisis to build new lives by designing their own solutions.

Plenary Discussion

Some ideas and open questions emerged from the group discussion:

- There were two views of the state presented – one that the state can be reformed and second, that it is beyond redemption.
- In the U.K., two significant areas of state failure have been in the areas of families and criminal justice. Both are broken and need fundamental rethinking. Sometimes you need to take things out of the state to reform them

and then build them back in. For example, the role of local government in supporting social enterprises, like Southwark Circle and LIFE, was not to provide hands on service, rather it was to take on the risk and provide the leadership needed to make change happen.

- It is not a state or no-state proposition; rather it is about creating something together. It is about creating with, and having multiple relationships. The state might be able to be more relational when it is more local. The vision of the future role of the state is neither laissez faire (everyone for himself) nor the state does it all (no individual responsibility). The question is: what can a reasonable government do that is neither purely one nor the other?
- Governments do things to, for, against and with people. The natural reaction to uncertainty and complexity is to increase controls when, in fact, the solutions often lie in greater collaboration. This will require new approaches (e.g., crowd sourcing, open data), new skills (e.g., convenor, collaborator, co-producer), different measures of success (e.g., networks and relationships), and different training.
- We know how the current models work, but we don't know enough about new models. What are their underlying mechanisms? How can systems be designed to tap into collaborative problem-solving capacity? We seem to be missing an understanding of some instrumental features of these new models: What are the accountability and financing mechanisms? How do you push evaluation and self-assessment out into civil society organizations as a management tool? How do you build leadership capacity in government and society?
- The need for new ways of working will require a major change of mindset. Participation and teams underpin this approach.
- Scaling up can be a challenge. Some experiments are easier to codify and scale than others. Starting on a larger scale and experimenting in a variety of places and circumstances can help with scaling. Scaling up to a national level requires political leadership and investment.
- Attempts to copy successful experiments often do not work because they are context and circumstance specific. What is important is to understand why an experiment worked in a particular context and what would have prevented it from working. The key challenge is to extract the conditions for success and failure that could transcend various contexts and circumstances, and identify the conditions that prevent successes from dissipating.

4. STRATEGIC COMMISSIONING FOR SOCIAL RESILIENCE

Jocelyne Bourgon opened this session by providing a bridge between the morning and afternoon sessions. The purpose of this roundtable was to look at what is different about serving in the 21st century and how it will transform public sector organizations and institutions. The dominant theme of the morning discussion was around *achieving public results with others*. The afternoon session focused on building social resilience. The goal of both sessions was to go beyond the story to extract meaning: what systems, what reforms and what mechanisms will be needed and how can it be made sustainable.

She then introduced Gus O'Donnell, the chair for the afternoon session.

Gus O'Donnell introduced this session by noting that the U.K. is living with its first peacetime coalition government in 80 years and that he was learning every day what it meant and discovering the opportunities that it creates. On deficit reduction, he commented that nothing makes you more innovative than losing a third of your budget.

The coalition government wants to undertake a significant number of reforms, including localization, devolution and commissioning which will all be brought together in a white paper. The extent of the reform proposals makes the issue of social resilience particularly relevant.

Victor Adebowale provided an overview of "Turning Point", a leading U.K. healthcare and social services charity. He spoke about the things government needs to change in order to work more effectively with civil society organizations and social enterprises in creating public goods and delivering public services.

The current fiscal crisis in the U.K. is stimulating innovative ideas about these topics. There are some challenges in the working relationships between government and community-based organizations.

Commissioning is poorly defined in government and is confused with purchasing and contracting. This leads to a transactional and legalistic view of the process. But if commissioning is defined as "understanding the needs of people in order to build better platforms to help them," then a different vista of opportunities and working relationships appears.

Systems tend to hang on to what assures their survival. The first response of the public service to address funding issues is to increase the criteria to access the service, then to cut costs, then to transfer services. In the private sector, the response is to go back to the customer's requirements and transform the business. The latter is a more promising approach than the former.

Adam Sharples observed commissioning as an important contemporary model for delivering public services. Traditionally, government bodies deliver services to citizens, but with commissioning, the public body contracts with an outside organization to deliver those services.

Commissioning works best when the outcome matters at least as much to the public body as it does to the user of the service, when the market won't work without contracts and when the results are measurable. It can result in a number of benefits, including creating room for incentives and hence for more creative, innovative and flexible solutions, a greater focus on what works, and cost savings.

In the case of the U.K.'s welfare-to-work program, there has been an evolution of commissioning processes. It began with payment for results, with the latter measured as sustained job outcomes. Then it went to “black box” contracts, which used minimum specifications of activities in order to give providers the space needed to innovate service delivery processes to achieve better results. Then it went to “prime” contracts, which were large contracts to a main contractor who then managed their own supply chain. Each approach had strengths and limitations. The newest approach will be a single, unified welfare-to-work programme which pays providers out of the benefit savings, avoids paying for “deadweight” outcomes that would happen without intervention, and offers the prospect of real payment for real results for the first time.

Comments from Discussant

Rômulo Paes de Sousa, as discussant, made a number of observations concerning the transformation from a traditional model to newer models implied by the move towards a more citizen-focused approach that involves government working with citizens and other actors.

First, *size matters*. In the case of large scale change, in most cases you will end up with a mixed model which talks to both the past and the future. In health, education and social services, Brazil got a mixed system. In mixed systems, the state as a contractor raises issues as to whether the state is complementary or supplementary.

Second, *time matters*. People are not willing to wait a long time for action.

Third, *state capacity matters*. In the case of decentralization, the depth of the power of local government is important.

Finally, it is important to have a balanced, *rigorous method for evaluating* state provided services and state commissioned services.

Plenary Discussion

A number of points emerged from the group discussion:

- Two definitions of commissioning were offered in the presentations. One focused on understanding the community's needs; the other focussed on contracting the provision of services. Another definition of commissioning is “using resources beyond the resources of the state to create public value”. Each definition has different implications for practice. It is important to agree on a government-wide definition.
- Contracting has focused on reducing risks rather than addressing the needs of citizens.
- It is important to understand why a service is provided in order to address how it could best be provided. The time period over which outcomes will be judged is a key factor in evaluating results. Change takes time, so a long term relationship is essential. Contracting tends to work on short timeframes, which negatively affects results.

- There are risks of “gaming” in the commissioning model, leading to questions such as how to create the right incentives and how to prevent “creaming” (i.e., picking the easiest clients).
- The public will accept commissioning until something goes wrong. How to address failures and breakdowns?
- Commissioning creates distance between the civil service and citizens. This has implications for the skills required by public servants. There is a risk that public servants will become contract auditors rather than relationship builders. Part of public value is the process, not just the outputs or outcomes.

5. PRESENTATION OF CASE STUDIES

Tim Hughes presented two examples of the reorientation of public services at the local level in the U.K. Both emphasize the importance of:

- Developing a new relationship between the public service and citizens, where services are designed with citizens from their perspective (from passive customers to knowledgeable and resourceful activists); and
- Changing the focus of public services from coping with symptoms to dealing with underlying causes and building social resilience.

The two examples were:

- The family LIFE programme in Swindon which focused on families in chronic crisis; and
- An early life support initiative for children and parents in Croydon, one of 13 “Total Place” pilot sites.

Both Swindon and Croydon took a design methodology approach, beginning by understanding the lives of the people they sought to support and using that to reconsider the issues and services. They discovered that public services did not make a lot of sense to people whose lives cut across multiple public service silos. There was little chance for a relationship to develop between professionals and families. The system was creating barriers to change for families. Services that were not designed from the perspective of people who use them were ineffective.

They both asked how they could design services that could shift the focus from dealing with the consequences of a “chaotic family” to dealing with the underlying causes in order to promote a better outcome. For both, the answer lay in involving the families themselves in designing the programs and services.

One important lesson highlighted by these examples is that public service institutions should consider adopting a “do yourself out of business approach.” This means working with citizens, families and communities to build their capabilities, networks and resilience and unlocking their resources, and ingenuity to tackle complex problems. The Swindon and Croydon projects offer clues about how this can be done.

Ongoing challenges include: maintaining momentum and a radical edge in the face of budget cuts; staff turnover and restructuring in government; breaking down professional and institutional boundaries; and spreading the culture beyond the early adopters.

Donald Low presented a case study on workfare in Singapore. The government of Singapore had traditionally resisted public assistance payments because of its potential impact on economic growth and work ethic. The rationale for workfare was, therefore, not for welfare, but to address the stagnation of low and median wages that ensued from the Asian financial crisis in the late 1990s.

Workfare in Singapore consists of six strategies:

- Increasing the individual incentive through workfare bonuses and housing grants to find and continue employment;
- Supporting low wage workers who need to look after their families through enhanced childcare and training grants;
- Providing access to training to raise the skill level of workers;
- Expanding job opportunities by generating demand for low wage workers;
- Helping children to succeed in school; and
- Sharing budget surpluses through special transfers.

The program provides higher payouts for older workers and creates incentives for informal workers to join the national social security system. The objectives of the programme are to “make work pay” through stronger economic incentives and strengthen norms of inclusion and fairness (e.g. work for reward, not reward for work).

The workfare program was carefully developed through a rigorous process that included:

- Active scanning for the best ideas and practices from around the world;
- The use of “liquid networks” (self-organizing groups) to co-create and innovate;
- The use of “exaptation” – recombining and adapting ideas from other countries to Singapore’s own needs and challenges; and
- Innovating through incremental steps and by continually exploring the “adjacent possible.”

Plenary Discussion

The conversation that ensued focused on the expenditure reduction underway in a number of the NS6 countries.

These can provide an impetus for innovation. But they can also cause retrenchment as people retreat into silos as a tactic for competing for scarce funds.

The possibility of innovation “leaking away” during budget cutting is a real risk. It is important to step back from that pressure and look at how services can be rethought from the perspectives of citizens and of increasing public value.

6. WRAP UP OF DAY ONE

In the wrap-up discussion, two main themes emerged. The first was innovation. The second was on how to get better knowledge about the unique behaviours, resources, and capabilities of specific communities.

One of the main obstacles to innovation in the public sector is risk aversion; it is an ongoing challenge to figure out how to create a more enabling environment for responsible risk-taking, experimentation and innovation.

A starting point is to distinguish between systemic failure, failure that results from improper behaviour or wrong doing and failure that results from exploring the space of the possible and trying new ideas (i.e., responsible risk-taking); the latter needs to be encouraged and lessons drawn from failures.

Innovation needs both bottom-up and top-down approaches. The top has to create the enabling environment and support infrastructure to allow experimentation and new ideas to emerge from the bottom-up.

The case studies demonstrate that innovation exists in the public sector. The question is how to develop strategies to move them from cases to routines. There is a question as to whether an organization can be simultaneously good at experimentation and innovation and routine; can the same people do both or does it require different organizations and different funding models?

Routine is important for some tasks. Routines are created through practice. Codifying routines can improve the efficiency of delivery and avoid "reinventing the wheel". Routines that help people and organizations to be more efficient and agile are different from compliance mechanisms and controls that are the price you are prepared to pay to reduce the risk of mismanagement and wrong doing. At issue is how to create space for experimenting and innovating when it is clear that using routines will not work.

7. INTRODUCTION TO DAY TWO

Jocelyne Bourgon introduced day two, beginning with an overview of some of the main themes emerging from day one.

The past thirty years have seen significant public sector reforms. It has been based on industrial age ideas, mechanistic and focused on efficiency. It has not solved some fundamental problems that stem from living in a post-industrial era.

There is a need to move from a closed system of government to an open system – one that is open to society and people.

Public organizations must become collaborative platforms, skilled for multiple relationships and able to work at multiple scales and speeds.

The case studies provided examples of co-designing and co-producing public services with citizens to build capacity and create public value. The Singapore case also revealed the importance of scanning the world for emerging trends, creating liquid networks for innovation and designing programmes adapted to your purpose and context.

It is important to distinguish between failure resulting from experimentation, failure resulting from wrong doing and system failure. They are not the same thing. The former should be supported better. It is also important to distinguish between routine (codifying existing knowledge) and controls (the price you will pay to reduce the risk of mismanagement).

8. RADICAL TRANSPARENCY AND DECENTRALIZATION

Andrew Adonis provided an overview of this section which looked at issues of transparency and decentralization. He then introduced the speakers.

Nigel Shadbolt spoke about the benefits of open government—that is, making public data more available to the public. This area of reform is taking hold as it is increasingly seen as a way for government and citizens to create value.

Public data was defined as objective, factual, non-personal data on which public services are run and are assessed, on which policy decisions are based, and which is collected or generated in the course of delivering public services.

Concerted efforts are being made in a number of countries to ensure public bodies maintain and publish inventories of their data, have a presumption to publish unless there is a good reason not to, and release fine grained, reusable, machine-readable data in a timely manner.

Some anticipated benefits of open government initiatives include:

- Increased citizen engagement and participation;
- Increased transparency and accountability;
- Increased economic and social value;
- Improved public services; and
- Improved e-government effectiveness and interoperation, and reduced costs for managing data.

Some challenges and workable responses to them are being discovered as governments make public data more publicly available:

- Data might not be of high quality, but it can be improved through “crowd-sourced” means (e.g., transit users fixing data about location of bus stops);
- Data could be misinterpreted or contested, but this can be mitigated by releasing information on how the data was collected and any caveats or underlying assumptions associated with it;
- Security and privacy concerns will require judgment as to whether the benefits outweigh any downsides to the release of the information and signal the need to for new social conventions, and regulatory and legal agility; and
- Government departments often do not have lists of their data banks. They may also have quality control issues with their data.

The “five star quality guide” to an open government initiative can be conceived as follows:

- One star for putting public data on the web in any format;
- Two stars for making public data available in a structured format;

- Three stars for using open, standard formats;
- Four stars for using URLs to identify data sets;
- Five stars for linking public data to other data.

Dominic Campbell spoke about the need for more open government that takes full advantage of modern information and communication technologies. He noted the latter are tools for achieving greater openness and better relationships with citizens, not ends in themselves.

Open data and the use of digital technologies do not constitute an open government strategy. Rather, government has to be open, networked, inclusive, participative and engaging. There needs to be a porous membrane to government. This can be achieved through public services that include co-design and cross-organizational collaboration. Public organizations should be incubators for social innovation, but must support capacity building as well.

When thinking about open government, we need to think of it as “government is us.” It is more than just technology but also the rules around it that matter.

He offered three tips for government leaders:

- Lay the foundations;
- Foster culture change; and
- Catalyze and nurture innovation.

William Perrin, using a variety of examples of data use in practice, demonstrated what open data can do for local government in the U.K. These examples emphasized the ability of citizens to hold public officials to account and the ability of citizens to program or inform the service delivery agenda and specific tasks.

Plenary Discussion

The themes that emerged from the group discussion included the benefits and challenges of open government initiatives, implications for public organizations and public servants, and privacy concerns. There was also an unresolved debate on how open government should be conceived and pursued.

Opening up public data can be a helpful tool for co-creating, co-designing and co-producing public goods and services. It may also contribute to public accountability and help to identify potential risks of corruption. But it remains an open question as to whether it will lead to increased trust.

Open data is about enabling people to help themselves. By putting data out, people may find ingenious ways to help themselves. The use of common standards and platforms more readily allows citizens to engage in these areas that most interest them.

It was noted that releasing data may end up giving new tools to the already engaged and may not necessarily lead to a greater number of engaged citizens.

There are a number of challenges with open data that need to be addressed, including how departments manage knowledge and information and how they ensure data accuracy. Opening data among agencies would be a good start in some cases. Incentives should be provided for making data and information more readily available.

It was observed that there is discomfort in allowing public servants to engage with citizens and others using Web 2.0 tools. But change is occurring in society that cannot be ignored. It will impact the way public servants work. They will need to be trained to adapt to these changes.

It was also observed that technology is eroding the separation between politics and administration. New hierarchies and new sets of power distribution are emerging. The change is happening very quickly. Public sector organizations (and suppliers) suddenly have to deal with the fact that information is "out there".

Concerns about privacy in opening up public data and participating on collaborative platforms cannot be overlooked. There are legitimate fears about releasing social and personal data (even if it is not identifiable). Organizations are worried because they have been blamed in the past. Privacy should not be used as an excuse, but it is an important issue that needs to be addressed.

Two schools of thought emerged on the definition and strategies related to the move towards open government.

On one side, it was proposed that the issues and initiatives related to transparency, access to information and public accountability need to be addressed separately from those related to making public data more publicly accessible. This is because the former issues immediately move government into a legalistic and rights-based approach (i.e., the public has a right under law to access certain defined information); whereas the latter issues are a policy choice (i.e., data produced with public funds should be in the public's hands, but government is not responsible for how it is used, people take ownership of the data). The open question is where, as a society, do you choose to use a rights-based approach versus a policy approach?

On the other side, it was argued the two approaches can be separated conceptually, but in practice they are intertwined. Moreover, if governments are prepared to put information out through access to information requests, why not just put it out there to begin with? Besides, the development of information technology will force governments to rethink freedom of information legislation.

9. PUBLIC ACCOUNTABILITY AND GOVERNANCE FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

Andrew Adonis introduced this session on public accountability and the speakers.

Presentation

Amyas Morse spoke about public accountability in a decentralized model of government. Decentralization should be based on what increases the likelihood of better public results. If something works well at the national level, then it should be managed at that level.

In the U.K. context, there are two basic governance models being debated and implemented: centralized and decentralized models. Regardless of the governance model, there is a need to know that tax dollars are being spent in a controlled and efficient manner. Accountability demands proof that resources are being efficiently used. The information that is collected should be the minimum information that is needed to ensure that this is happening.

Plenary Discussion

In the ensuing discussion, a number of points were made.

Accountability is more than compliance; it is about performance and value-for-money. Compliance is a base-level requirement and it should be more than a "box ticking" exercise. However, some government programmes are drowning as a result of the growth of compliance requirements.

There are issues in performance measurement. What matters most can be difficult to measure. Moreover, the information collected is often not used as an analytical or decision-making tool in government. Peer review can be used to monitor professional practice. Value-for-money reports do not need to follow a strict scientific protocol. When it comes to measuring and judging performance, common sense should prevail.

Discussants Comments

Julian Wood, as discussant, made a number of points about public accountability.

People are held accountable for different things – value for money, responsiveness to local concerns, service performance, system design, performance failure and compliance.

As different actors are interested in different aspects of accountability, this implies a multi-tiered approach to accountability. The implication for public sector leaders is that they are likely to find themselves answerable to multiple tiers in multiple ways.

Information is key to the compliance, performance and resilience of decentralized systems. The information requirements will differ depending on the governance model (corporate, regulatory, consumerist or direct election).

Done well, decentralized accountability can lead to better accountability, but if ill-thought through, it can lead to accountability gaps and problems in identifying and addressing service failure.

Plenary Discussion

In the ensuing discussion, the following points were made:

- Accountability, responsibility and answerability are different things;
- There is a need for a system of accountability in cases of multiple/dispersed responsibility;
- Multiple/dispersed responsibility brings a risk of fragmented accountability that needs to be considered up front; for example, in a co-developed service, there needs to be clear expectations regarding service design and service performance.
- There is an outstanding question as to what horizontal or shared accountability would look like.

Presentation

Eve Mittleton-Kelly spoke about models of governance for complex situations, using a practical example of a national, distributed project to bring out the theory.

Be the Boss (BtB) is a national project, set up in April 2010 to provide ex-service military personnel with funding and support to set up their own business. It is funded by the Department of Business Innovation and Skills, coordinated by the Royal British Legion and distributed by multiple partners and devolved administrations. The objective is to get multiple partners working together as a whole system to deliver results.

The BtB governance approach and support infrastructure address the following characteristics of complex, distributed projects:

- They cannot be controlled centrally and instead, require distributed leadership and a guidance framework to provide coherence;
- There is a need for diversity and exploration of the space of possibilities;
- They must emphasize a learning environment that facilitates co-evolution – connectivity and good communications;
- The support structure should be a co-created, enabling environment, informed by complexity theory.

Carys Evans spoke about accountability in a devolved administration, using local service boards in Wales as a backdrop. There are pros and cons with devolution. An advantage is that local authorities and communities are in charge of designing their own approaches and systems. Devolution to the local level also creates a greater awareness of the need for a holistic approach in serving citizens. A disadvantage is that devolution can create organizational complex-

ity and can add layers of accountability.

When devolution was implemented in Wales, it quickly became clear such a small country could not replicate all the architecture of a large country. A simpler leadership model was needed. Local Service Boards were created to be the local leadership team for an area. They had no statutory basis and no budget. They were challenged to identify 2 or 3 wicked issues or system failures that the team should tackle. Some took up the challenge while others found it more difficult.

A number of success factors can be identified where local service boards have worked.

- A team concept was key. A lot can be accomplished in spite of formal governance structures. Rather than trying to change formal accountabilities, the focus should be on encouraging lateral thinking and making progress on practical issues.
- Place is what unites people; having them working in a shared location was a strong integrating force.
- Cross-fertilization of expertise encouraged learning and improved results.
- It was important to clearly communicate the purpose – what the team is really trying to achieve.
- There is a need to build trust, respect and understanding among organizations.

Going forward, local service boards in Wales are moving public services from a direct delivery orientation to a model with citizens at the centre. They are feeling their way to a model whereby professionals work with citizens in a co-creation relationship, but it is still in the early stages.

On-going challenges include ensuring sustainability, maintaining the energy for innovation in a budget-cutting environment and building on things that support and strengthen cohesion and integration.

Plenary Discussion

On the challenges facing the BtB initiative, it was noted that, while the structure has been set up, delivery had not yet begun. The challenge in establishing the structure was that different locations had different infrastructure and were not in a position to offer the same level or quality of assistance (e.g. expertise on how to start a business, one-on-one mentoring to develop a business plan, support after the funding is approved). It will be a year before it is possible to assess all of the delivery challenges.

It was noted that local service boards did not emerge on their own, since they had no statutory base or funding. It took initiative by government to get them going because of a lack of a partnership culture and the question of who would be the convenor and under what authority. Each partner knew their part of the picture, but did not think about convening to achieve coherence.

Finally, it was noted that neither of the examples presented started with the client or citizen at the centre of the exercise.

Presentation

Helen Bailey spoke about a new concept being piloted in the UK. Beginning in April 2011, direct control over a portion of local spending will be handed over to communities, free of centrally imposed conditions. The first phase of this initiative will take place in 16 areas, where 28 local councils and their partners will be put in charge of community budgets. These will pool various strands of Whitehall funding into a single "local bank account" so communities can develop local solutions to local problems.

In the U.K., around £8 billion a year is spent on approximately 120,000 families that have multiple problems, with funding only getting to local areas via hundreds of separate schemes and agencies. Despite this investment, these families' problems continue. Services need to join-up and interventions need to be made to improve the situation.

Ministers believe community budgets will also help drive down overhead costs by removing the bureaucratic financial restrictions that have created barriers, generated waste and duplication in public spending, and stifled local innovation. Local authorities will be able to redesign and integrate frontline services across organizations and share management functions to reduce running costs for the best local outcomes.

This initiative is still a work in progress. But the government intends to roll-out community budgets nationally by 2013-14. Local authorities are being asked to do innovative things with 30 percent less budget. The central government is still looking at mechanisms for tracking funds and new measures for performance management.

Discussant's Comments

As discussant, Alan Tupper made a number of observations on the presentations and the topic of public accountability more generally.

With respect to the BtB example, an ongoing challenge will be that the project is based on comparing problems with more conventional ways of organizing and delivering services with the perceived virtues of using a more distributed organizational model and lessons from complexity theory, both of which are largely untested.

Selling the idea of local budgeting in other countries might prove to be a difficult task. For example, in Canada, there is a constitutionalized sense of equal treatment of all citizens. This makes certain types of partnerships, which could lead to differential solutions, more difficult to pursue.

Regarding accountability, over the last two decades it has become a superior democratic value; yet it is still not well understood or practised. There are no common definitions for it. Accountability is still largely focused on process and is still predominantly vertical.

Modern accountability is a "many hands" problem, with multiple sectors and partners involved. A transparency-accountability-ethics industry has developed over this time, assisted by modern information and communications technology. This has helped to open up government and has helped in holding government to account. But it also has drawbacks. It is based on individualized accountability and has led to "the blame game." It has led to unrealistic standards of

good behaviour and to a political reaction in favour of obsessive accountability. Layers of control and compliance measures have been introduced. These are costly and, in many cases, are getting in the way of results.

Finally, citizens are still not a meaningful part of the thinking about accountability.

Plenary Discussion

There was support for the discussant's observation that governments have not sufficiently clarified issues of responsibility and accountability to citizens.

The U.K. arrived at the idea of community-based budgets from the perception that a large amount of public money was being spent on too many things. The national government was seen to be excessively departmental and rigid. It had an unhealthy obsession with structure and specialization. In addition, a chasm existed between national and local government. One option for ensuring accountability in the U.K. context was "to follow the money". When funds arrive at the same place but from different sources and for different uses, it is possible to design an integrated accountability system in that place—which in the U.K.'s case, is at the community level.

One of the challenges of rolling out community budgets nationally will be to preserve the advantages of local experimentation and differentiation. The process of community budgeting may get messy. But this might be a good thing. It is in the space between the cracks, where the national government is not joined-up that you will get creativity.

Controls and structure exist to reduce ambiguity. One way of doing this is through the use of targets. But these come with certain drawbacks, particularly in the U.K. where they have been overused in the past. Targets are often a response to a lack of confidence in local delivery. If trust can be built between local authorities, communities and the national government, it may be possible to reduce the use of targets and to strike a better balance.

Presentation

Tony Wright's presentation was on the role of the legislature in ensuring stewardship. He began by noting that, while there has been a rise in the use of the term accountability in the British Parliament, members of Parliament are not as keen about applying it to themselves as they are to applying it to everyone else.

There is a need to make the public service work better in a constantly changing context. The last two or three years had seen huge market failure and huge state failure. This raises questions about horizon scanning and whether governments were scanning for the right things.

While there have been improvements in the performance of the state, making the public service work better is a constantly evolving story. The current trend in the U.K. is toward smaller government that can enable the co-production of public goods and services in society. There has been a loss of confidence in the state, so it has to achieve its objectives through nudging others to do things. But, it has been the state that has delivered most of the things that society thinks is worth having. So, we should not lose sight of what the state has done. This 'publicness' of public service needs to be remembered; but with 'publicness'

also comes accountability.

The current mantra is about public information/public data and the citizen-auditor who will hold the public service to account. But this does not mean that it is possible to dismantle traditional instruments of accountability. The two must sit together and be complementary. As government becomes more diffused and disaggregated, accountability becomes more important. If lines of accountability become confused, ways will need to be found to reconnect the dots.

The 'Big Society' concept in the U.K. suggests that the 'community' will do things. But who is the community? And how will these things be paid for? Much of the third sector is dependent on commissioning. That is different than the state withdrawing and the community taking over. The state is still providing the public service in some way. Parliament needs to keep its eye on the development of accountability mechanisms that follow the changing configuration of government to ensure that there is a consistent and coherent answer to accountability issues. This should be part of Parliament's core business.

Finally, good government needs good accountability. While you can do much to match accountability mechanisms with new structures, you still need to have conventional Parliamentary forms of it.

Plenary Discussion

Some main points emerged from the group discussion around accountability in community-based service delivery, parliamentary accountability, and the stewardship role of the state.

Where government is relied upon to deliver services, whether through direct or indirect means, there must be accountability; but you can have too much accountability. It needs to be balanced with the need to deliver services and achieve results.

In community-based delivery, it is important to be clear on who the community is, what it can and cannot do, who the community is accountable to and by what means.

New forms of accountability should supplement traditional forms of accountability. In Parliament, traditional accountability mechanisms, such as opposition parties have lost some of their effectiveness. They do not tend to be constructive in their criticism, so are unable to provide constructive scrutiny. Parliamentary committees tend to follow the traditional structures of government. If government is getting joined-up, Parliamentary committees should get out of their structural boundaries and follow the programs.

Finally, the state will remain the guarantor of last resort. But there are many things the state cannot do. It cannot and should not replace individual initiative, family support or community actions as sources of cohesion, resilience and social progress.

10. INTRODUCTION TO DAY THREE

Jocelyne Bourgon noted the day would focus on how to translate the capacities that public servants will need to serve in the 21st century into skills and competencies. It would look at how to prepare people.

Then she provided a summary of the previous day.

The morning had focused on the impact of modern communications tools to modern government. These tools were about more than holding public servants to account. They were also about government engaging with citizens and co-creating public value with them. In considering related issues such as public data as a public good, transparency and the engagement, the issue of rights-based versus policy-based approaches to open government were discussed.

The conversation had turned to accountability in the afternoon. While there was a lively discussion, there was no resolution on the issue of figuring out how to preserve traditional vertical accountability, while encouraging and embracing collective responsibility, inside and outside of government. The issue of compliance and controls was discussed. It was noted that there is a difference between failure from experimentation, system failure and wrong doing. It was agreed that compliance is important in government, but that it should be done using the minimum number of measures that are needed to do the job. Compliance should not be so overbearing that it affects the capacity to fulfill the mission.

In the afternoon, there had also been a discussion about the effort underway in the U.K. to devolve services to local providers, which was changing the relationship between government and service providers, government and communities, and government and citizens.

11. LEADERSHIP FOR A NEW SYNTHESIS

Gus O'Donnell, the chair for this session, noted two challenges facing the U.K. public service are relationship-building between ministers and the civil service during a change of government, and the issue of modern accountability for modern government. He then introduced the speakers for this session.

Lynne Sedgmore spoke about a leadership development approach to support the capacities embodied in the New Synthesis framework. This approach would address such areas as leading across boundaries, relational leadership and leading without formal authority. It would help to develop leaders who can see, orchestrate, respond to and improve the whole system.

The following should form part of a leadership development model:

- All four elements of the New Synthesis (compliance, performance, emergence and resilience) and their implications;
- Collaborative inquiry and reflective learning, including the exposure of assumptions and taken-for-granted conventions through engagement across cultural, international and national boundaries;
- A blend of learning from individual, team, organizational, sector and system-wide contexts;
- Learning to lead within a global context; sharing and developing international experience.

These elements would guide the development of leadership capabilities for dealing with public sector complexities and challenges as framed by the New Synthesis perspective.

Roel Bekker provided an overview of government reform in the Netherlands, which resulted in improvements and significantly reduced the size of the public service without layoffs. These reforms stemmed from initiatives within the public service that were not imposed from outside. It was a three-year programme that was completed on time, led to a reduced administrative burden, more cross-government collaboration and greater flexibility. The future of these reforms is uncertain.

He then spoke about research that he has undertaken on the senior management cadre of Dutch public service between 1970 and today. A lot has changed in society over that period (e.g. new communications technologies, the growth of China, the fall of the iron curtain, the expansion of the European Union, etc.). The research question was: how has this affected the top ranks of the public service?

The study looked at top managers and what makes them so remarkable. When asked to identify remarkable leaders, the people surveyed in the study tended to identify the same individuals. So, people know a leader when they see one. Leaders stand out for their personal, social and cognitive skills.

Some things have not changed over the four decades covered by the study. In the past, as now, one finds both generalists and specialists among senior leaders. The selection of people at that level is based on merit and other considerations.

There is an element of luck and coincidence in rising to the top.

While many of the same skills are required to lead the public sector today as in the past, there are some new skills required. These include:

- Flexibility;
- Horizontal networking;
- Greater managerial expertise and less reliance on a specific expertise;
- Using bottom up and top down approaches, as required;
- Relationship and community building.

In conclusion, it was noted that senior public officials spend less time in a particular job today than in the past.

Plenary Discussion

It was generally agreed that leadership is hard to define but easy to recognize. A review of the profile of senior leaders in the U.K. showed increasing demographic diversity to be one of the biggest changes over time in the senior ranks of the civil service.

With respect to the specific skills public sector leaders need, it was observed:

- Leaders need to work and achieve results across organizational and sectoral boundaries, even in the face of deficit reductions when there is a tendency to revert to departmentally-focused processes;
- Relational leadership is crucial, but the difficulty is how to prepare people, particularly since current leaders were not trained that way;
- Communications skills are needed, including how to deal with Parliament, effective briefing, dealing with poor performers, working across boundaries and the political/public service interface (below the level of minister and permanent secretary), and listening to citizens, stakeholders and staff;
- The ability to identify new patterns, to “see the new” and to respond appropriately to it as it is emerging is needed; and
- The capacity to combine a short term focus, mid term actions and long term results.

Some current leadership development models currently aim to build some of these skills. Singapore has created a leadership development model that moves from a focus on specialist skills to management skills and global leadership. Canada has a leadership development framework that focuses on the fundamentals of the job, getting ready for the next level, networking, reflection, global issues, emotional intelligence and 360 degree feedback. Those working in this area observe that leadership development is context specific, involve collaboration with peers and must be undertaken across sectors and hierarchies.

The backgrounds and experiences of effective senior leaders were also discussed. It seems to be increasingly essential that leaders have a diverse set of experiences as they develop in their career. They should have both policy and operational experience. And there is a need for experience for greater cross-fertilization between the public and private sectors, including working with civil society organizations and social enterprises.

Developing skills has a lot to do with how the performance of leaders is evaluated. It needs to include the longer term legacy of their contribution and the ability to build sustainable leadership in their organization so that when they leave, they have left behind a better organization. This means senior leaders should be in a particular job for longer than they are now in many jurisdictions. The consensus in the room was that their tenure in a given position, assuming they are performing well, should be about 5 years and not more than 8 years.

Finally, it is not realistic to expect leaders to be able to do everything. While all the capacities cannot reside in a single leader, they should be expected in the whole organization. It is not just a question of developing leaders, but of connecting the right leaders to the right tasks.

12. POLITICAL LEADERSHIP AND THE NEW SYNTHESIS

Greg Clark explained that the new government in the U.K. was embarking on a radical redistribution from 'big government' to 'big society' that involves:

- A power shift from the central government to communities and people; and
- A horizon shift from short term to equipping Britain for long term success.

He noted that, in the U.K., only one in five people think they have an influence over how public services are delivered and the majority of those involved in delivering services feel they can't influence decisions.

The actions being pursued to promote inclusiveness include:

- Removing bureaucratic burdens;
- Empowering communities to do things differently;
- Increasing local control over spending;
- Breaking open monopolies of supply of public services;
- Making public bodies transparent; and
- Strengthening accountability to people.

He indicated the fastest way to get going is to start small and focus on specific issues.

Andrew Adonis argued that setting people free will require a massive effort by the state. It won't just happen. It will likely have to be induced because it won't just percolate on its own. For example, free schools only happened where there was an engaged middle class and even then it required an exertion of central authority. The state will need to be an *agent of change*. Leadership deficits at the local level should be addressed.

He offered four reflections on political leadership.

- The media: It is all consuming, intrusive and saps energy from political leaders. The best way to deal with it is to welcome it and not to try to avoid it. Political leaders need to be conversant with the new social media and know how to use it.
- The message: Every word is heard and broadcast. Political leaders need extraordinary capacity to lead debates. They need to be good at explaining.
- The mission: Political leaders will only be successful at bringing about change if they know the change they want to bring about. They are hugely dependent on the intellectual capital they build before becoming a political leader – it is critical to their success.

- Style: Horizontal and vertical networking is important. Political leaders need to get out and about. They need to destroy the perception that they are distant and non-responsive.

Plenary Discussion

The discussion converged on issues related to the U.K.'s big society agenda. Shifting power to local communities will require significant effort by the state, but it will also need the engagement of the community. Two shifts are needed: power and financing.

The concept of shifting power is not about people doing things for themselves in their spare time; it is about using the authority of government to engage the people in doing things for themselves.

Success will depend on tolerance for failure. Not every effort will end in success. However, there is no evidence that the failure rate in community organizations is any higher than in other organizations. So it is important not to let about the fear of failure get in the way of moving forward and innovating. There is latent capacity in communities that will be discovered. It is important to document success stories and spread best practices.

Local communities are not synonymous with local government. Some will be defined at the neighborhood level. Whether it will be a local authority or community group that receives government funding, accountability issues must be addressed. The more democratically accountable is the local community, the better.

13. DEVELOPING LEADERS FOR THE FUTURE

Zoe Gruhn spoke about the challenges of developing future leaders. She noted that a rapidly changing environment is creating increasing demands on political and public sector leaders. These include:

- Significantly greater movement in and out of the most senior public sector roles;
- A premium will be placed on the skills of leading and managing market sensitive organizations and being able to create organizational agility;
- A prerequisite among leaders to be able to create a vision and to communicate this vision with passion;
- Leaders will need to demonstrate a much greater readiness to engage with staff relying less on their authority and much more on the capacity to be open and responsive;
- Having in place leaders who have sufficient levels of self confidence to implement real change but whose approach is collaborative;
- Emotional intelligence has become an overworked concept but is increasingly needed;
- Other requirements such as project management capabilities, an understanding of performance management, a grounding in finance and accounting practices, and private sector experience.

This will have an impact on leadership and will impact the types of talent and experience that leaders need, including:

- The need to move in and out of public service, gaining experience from a wide range of organizations and situations;
- Experience of working in close proximity to the public and with other sectors;
- Experience in leading change agendas whether in the public or private sectors should form a necessary part of any skills set;
- Practical exposure to organization design and behaviour, team building and conflict resolution.

Plenary Discussion

The following main points emerged from the group discussion:

- Some of the learning needs of political leaders and public service leaders are the same. For example, they all need relationship-building and communications skills. There is a need to build a better relationship between the public service and politicians from all parties. Learning and leadership development in the public sector could benefit from joint activities that involve politicians and public administrators.

- Efforts to get public service leaders the experiences they need must be an integral part of performance management and career development.
- Public service leaders need a broad experience including international exposure, front line experience, experience with community groups and social organizations and experience working with politicians.
- Young public servants see greater value in getting close to ministers, not working on the “frontline” in operations or service delivery. Being closer to the centre of government is seen as the way to fast-track a career.
- In a tight fiscal environment, there is a need to find innovative ways for public servants to get a broad experience. More could be done to reach out to other sectors without having to leave the public service. For example, opportunities could be explored for public service leaders to be mentored by or to shadow private sector leaders or to take short assignments with local communities or charitable bodies.

14. FINAL REFLECTIONS

At the end of the event, participants reflected on what was top of mind for them. They contributed a number of observations on the role of the state and the New Synthesis project going forward.

On the role of the state, it was observed that many of the factors that drive a better society are outside of government. The problem is that governments have become good at intervening in a controlling manner and at leaving things to the market to decide. There have been failures with both approaches, and many issues are not amenable to either approach. Instead, governments need to become better at influencing norms of behaviour in society and helping society to address its own problems.

There are two current models of the state: the traditional, Weberian top down, hierarchical model and the neo-liberal minimalist model. The New Synthesis suggests the state of the future is neither of those. The New Synthesis is about defining a new role for the state; it is about modernizing the state, not about dismantling it. It is about an affirmative state, not a minimalist state.

It was observed that a strong narrative was needed about adapting public sector institutions and organizations to the needs of modern society. The challenge is to translate the ideas into something that is pragmatically useful in different countries. The constant interplay of theory and practice in this narrative will be essential.

The New Synthesis concepts are easier to grasp when they are applied to specific problems and issues. However, working on these might not result in the paradigm shift that is needed.

There are two options for next stage of the New Synthesis work – to deepen the discussion among the six partners or to broaden the discussion beyond the six partners. This will have to be addressed at the meeting of country coordinators. Individuals also need to consider what they will do with what they have learned in their own countries and circumstances. There are both collective and individual decisions to be made.

15. CLOSING REMARKS

Andrew Adonis closed the roundtable by thanking everyone for their attendance and active participation. Jocelyne Bourgon added her thank you, noting that she was proud to have been part of the process.

16. CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

Forty-five participants, scholars, and researchers from six countries participated in the London roundtable. The focus of the discussion was about how to transform public institutions and organizations be better aligned with the complex and unpredictable environment in which they must operate. The discussion looked at issues around how to enable social enterprise and community involvement in public service delivery; how to increase transparency by making public data available as a public good; the use of modern technology to enable society and citizens to co-create public services and help themselves; and how to restructure accountability systems to enable distributed and decentralized governance arrangements. The roundtable also explored the institutional and organizational reforms needed to help government and society achieve better collective results going forward. This included developing commissioning practices and devolving service delivery to local authorities. Finally, it addressed the leadership for a New Synthesis environment.

This was the last of the five international roundtables scheduled for 2010. The focus will now turn to integrating the findings into a comprehensive narrative in preparation for a World Forum in October, 2011.

ANNEX A: NAMES AND AFFILIATIONS OF INVITED SPEAKERS AND PARTICIPANTS

Lord Andrew Adonis, Director, Institute for Government, United Kingdom

Roel Bekker, Professor and former head of public service reform, The Netherlands

Lord Michael Bichard, Senior Fellow, Institute for Government, United Kingdom

The Honourable Jocelyne Bourgon, President Emeritus, Canada School of Public Service, Canada

Adrian Brown, Fellow, Institute for Government, United Kingdom

Rod Clark, Chief Executive, National School of Government, United Kingdom

Sarah Deeks, Business Operations Manager, Financial Services and Public Sector, Booz & Company, United Kingdom

Jenifer Graves, Manager, NS6-Canada Partnership, Canada School of Public Service, Canada

Merel de Groot, Ministry of Interior and Kingdom Affairs, The Netherlands

Zoe Gruhn, Director of Learning, Institute for Government, United Kingdom

Tim Hughes, Researcher, Sunningdale Institute, National School of Government, United Kingdom

Brian Johnson, President, Gladeview Consulting Ltd., Canada

Andrew Johnstone-Burt, Vice-President, Booz and Company

Philip Karré, National School of Government, The Netherlands

Eve Mitleton Kelly, Professor, London School of Economics, United Kingdom

Helena Kerr, President, National School of Public Administration, Brazil

Natalia Koga, former head of staff, President, National School of Public Administration, Brazil

Tobias Kwakkelstein, Strategy Advisor, Ministry of the Interior, The Netherlands

Lena Leong, Senior Researcher, Centre for Governance and Leadership, Civil Service College, Singapore

Donald Low, Head, Centre for Public Economics, Civil Service College, Singapore

Carmel McGregor, Deputy Commissioner, Australian Public Service Commission, Australia

James Meddings, Vice President, Organizational Leadership and Innovation, Canada School of Public Service, Canada

Peter Milley, Senior Advisor, Canada School of Public Service and NS6 Research Director, Canada

Sir Gus O'Donnell, Cabinet Secretary and Head of the UK Civil Service, United Kingdom

Laura Ibiapina Parante, Phd. candidate in sociology, University of Marne-la-Vallée/UMLV-Cité, Brazil

Susan Phillips, Professor, School of Public Policy and Administration, Carleton University, Canada

Sue Richards, Senior Fellow, Institute for Government, NS6 Coordinator for the UK, United Kingdom

Tan Li San, Director, Strategic Policy Office, Public Service Division, Prime Minister's Office and Director, Centre for Governance and Leadership, Civil Service College, Singapore

Rômulo Paes de Sousa, Vice Minister, Ministry of Social Development and Fight Against Hunger, Brazil

Allan Tupper, President, Canadian Association of Programs in Public Administration and Head, Department of Political Science, University of British Columbia, Canada

Martijn van der Steen, Associate Dean and Deputy Director, Netherlands School for Public Administration, The Netherlands

ANNEX B: LIST OF PRE-READING MATERIALS, PRESENTATIONS AND CASE STUDIES

Papers

Alford, John and Hughes, Owen, (2008), Public Value pragmatism as the Next Phase of Public Management, *The American Review of Public Administration*, 2008; 38; 130

Alford, John, (2009), *Engaging Public Sector Clients, From Service-Delivery to Co-production*, Palgrave Macmillan

Bourgon, Jocelyne, with Peter Milley, (2010), *The New Frontiers of Public Administration*, Public Governance International, Ottawa, Canada

Cottam, Hilary, (2008), *Beveridge 4.0*, Participle Limited, London, United Kingdom

Cottam, Hilary, (2010), *Participatory Systems, Moving Beyond 20th Century Institutions*, *Harvard International Review*, Winter 2010, United States of America

Hughes, Tim and Richards, Sue, (2010), *Citizen, Family and Community Focused Public Services: New approaches to public service design and management*, Institute for Government, London, United Kingdom

Mitleton-Kelly, Eve, (2010), *The Royal British Legion, Be The Boss*, *Governance Review*, LSE Complexity Group, United Kingdom

Mulgan, Geoff, (2010), *The Rise of the Relational State*, unpublished paper, United Kingdom

NS6 Project Leader's Team, (2010), *Discussion Paper: Disentangling Performance Measurement, Control and Accountability*, Ottawa, ON: unpublished working paper

Ostrom, Elinor, (1996), *Crossing the Great Divide: Coproduction, Synergy, and Development* *World Development*, Vol. 24, No. 6 pp. 1073-1087

Ostrom, Elinor and Basurto, Xavier, (2010), *Crafting analytical tools to study institutional change*, *Journal of Institutional Economics*, pp. 1-27

Lynne Sedgemore, (2010), *Leadership and the New Synthesis*, unpublished discussion paper, London, United Kingdom

Presentations

Bourgon, Jocelyne, (2010), Introductory Remarks, unpublished Powerpoint presentation

Campbell, Dominic, (2010), Openness is ..., unpublished Powerpoint presentation

Hughes, Tim and Richards, Sue, (2010) Citizen, family and Community Focused Public Services, unpublished Powerpoint presentation

Low, Donald, (2010), Workfare in Singapore, Fostering Social Inclusion, unpublished Powerpoint presentation

Mulgan, Geoff (2010), The relational state?, unpublished Powerpoint presentation

Mittleton-Kelly, Eve, (2010), New Synthesis, A Public Service Renewal Agenda for the 21st century, A Different Model of Governance for Complex Situations, unpublished Powerpoint presentation

Shadbolt, Nigel, (2010), Open Government Data: Toward Radical Transparency and Decentralization, unpublished Powerpoint presentation

Perrin, William, (2010), Radical transparency, unpublished Powerpoint presentation

Sedgmore, Lynne, (2010), Leadership Formation for the New Synthesis, unpublished Powerpoint presentation

Sharples, Adam, (2010), Commissioning for results, unpublished Powerpoint presentation

Case Studies

Koh Tsin Yen, (2010), Singapore Workfare: Framing the Issue, Singapore Civil Service College, Singapore

Vieira, Vania and Correa, Izabela, (2010), The Transparency Portal of Brazilian Federal Government, Brazilian Office of the Comptroller General, Brazil

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