From the Margins to the Mainstream

How to create the conditions for new operating models to thrive

nesta **collaborate**

About Nesta

Nesta is an innovation foundation. For us, innovation means turning bold ideas into reality and changing lives for the better. We use our expertise, skills and funding in areas where there are big challenges facing society. Nesta is based in the UK and supported by a financial endowment. We work with partners around the globe to bring bold ideas to life to change the world for good.

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About Collaborate

Collaborate CIC is a social consultancy that helps public services collaborate to tackle social challenges. We are values-led, not for profit and driven by a belief in the power of collaborative services, organisations and systems as a force for social and economic progress. We create partnerships that get beyond traditional silos to deliver credible change on the ground, working with partners and places across the UK. Our clients and partners span local government, the NHS, civil society and the private sector. Get in touch if we can help you via collaboratecic.com

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About the New Operating Models Handbook

'From the Margins to the Mainstream' is part of the New Operating Models Handbook, a set of learning products which explore the new operating models emerging in local government – how they work, what they look like and the key features needed to promote success elsewhere. It draws on the experience of the twenty pioneering Local Authorities participating in the Upstream Collaborative, which was led by Nesta in partnership with Collaborate from 2019 to 2020. The Handbook is made up of six parts:

Introducing New Operating Models for Local Government

From the Margins to the Mainstream:
How to create the conditions for new operating models to thrive

Reframing Risk:
How to adopt new mindsets around risk that enable innovation

Asset-Based Community Development for Local Authorities:
How to rebuild relationships with communities through asset-based approaches

Meaningful Measurement:
How a new mindset around measurement can support a culture of continual learning – notes from the field

A Catalyst for Change:
What COVID-19 has taught us about the future of local government

What are new operating models?

New operating models describe a new way of working for local authorities that acknowledges the complexity and interconnectedness of social issues and the people and organisations that aim to tackle them. The work of the local authorities participating in the Upstream Collaborative, and the experiences of the communities they serve, has informed the development of a framework that characterises what new operating models look like in practice. The framework incorporates the often 'hidden' qualities which underpin this work, such as mindset, values and behaviours, alongside new practical capabilities and enabling infrastructure.

Find out more in 'Introducing New Operating Models for Local Government', part one of this Handbook.

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Contents

00.
Introduction

A new approach to local government and public services is emerging. Local authorities across the country are working on innovative examples of new practice that show a new way of conceiving of public services is possible. New operating models are emerging, demonstrating *'evolutions in how parts of society, government, public services, institutions and the economy are organising'*[1]. These models enable local authorities to draw on the assets of a place, acknowledge complexity, and put citizens at their heart.

Despite the promise these innovative practices show, they tend to remain on the margins of organisations or systems, often struggling to get the support, investment or attention required to be sustained and expanded. The embedded model of public service is hard to shift, and without significant effort and challenge it tends to reject, infect, or co-opt the innovative work that has occurred at the margins.

The solution is not to reduce these practices to fit with the dominant model, but to use them as a catalyst to change and evolve public services from the inside out. If we are to sustain and grow better ways to tackle complex social challenges, we must create an enabling environment that allows this work to flourish.

Much is written from a theoretical perspective about the need for systems change and a shift in how public services operate – but there is more work to be done on providing *practical* suggestions to help practitioners ready their organisations for the innovative practice that is effective but currently stuck at the margins.

This guide, based on the insight and practical experiences of members of Nesta's Upstream Collaborative, supports practitioners to do just that. A diagnostic self-assessment is included to help readers identify and understand the barriers and enablers of change within their organisations and ecosystems, and there is guidance on how to build the enablers needed to embed new, innovative ways of working.

Through the Upstream Collaborative, participants formed workgroups, collaborating around a challenge or opportunity that was relevant to their work and sharing their perspectives and stories to amplify and improve practice.

Each member of the Margins to Mainstream Workgroup is working on their own pioneering initiatives, from integrated place-based and outcome-led working to holistic and reciprocal models of early years support to rebuilding the public service and wellbeing ecosystem from the community outwards. While each place was working on different innovations within different contexts, they have in common a set of principles that have been previously undervalued. In particular, their work emphasises the importance of:

- **Prioritising relationships between citizens and organisations over transactions:** working with empathy, building trust, and understanding the strengths and needs of individuals and communities.

- **Thinking and acting as a system in order to address complex problems:** working systemically and collaborating within and across organisations and citizens in a place.

- **Working in service of people rather than organisations:** creating systems and organisations that work for and respond to the needs of citizens rather than the other way around.

Although developed with local authorities, we believe this guide has wider relevance across a number of different sectors and could form the starting point for discussions that include regional and national systems.

This paper is written by Collaborate on behalf of the ten local authorities and their partners who participated in the Margins to Mainstream Workgroup: Cambridgeshire Constabulary; Gateshead Metropolitan Borough Council; Gloucester City Council; Greater Manchester Combined Authority; Kirklees Council; London Borough of Barking & Dagenham; London Borough of Newham; Oldham Council; Redcar & Cleveland Borough Council; Surrey County Council.

01.
Creating the conditions for change: eleven enablers

Based on their experiences within their own local authorities and ecosystems, the workgroup identified eleven essential conditions that enable innovative practice to thrive.

Figure 1: Eleven enablers of innovative practice

Mindset

A systems mindset and a long-term view

Reframing how we understand & perceive risk

Values, behaviours & relationships

Collaborative cultures

Trusted relationships that can carry the weight of change

Permission & empowerment for staff

Advocacy & influence beyond the local system

Infrastructure

A strong case for change & ambitious vision for place

Sharing information for continuous reflection & experimentation

Enabling policies & processes

Distributed ownership & accountability

Investment in the capacity to change

As shown in the diagram, the eleven enablers can be understood through three groupings that relate to the New Operating Models framework.

01. Mindset: The foundational beliefs and worldview needed to sustain and grow progressive practice.

The mindsets and assumptions of individuals may not be explicitly stated but are likely to be deeply held and have a strong influence over how they think, behave and work with others, in turn influencing organisational culture and approach. Changes to mindset are perhaps the hardest to achieve, but also potentially pay the greatest dividends in terms of creating fundamental, lasting change.

02. Behaviours, values and relationships: The ways people and organisations relate to one another and the behaviours they exhibit.

Behaviours, values and relationships influence the shape of formal spaces like partnership boards, consultations and strategic planning, as well as the myriad of informal spaces where different actors and organisations interact. It is relationships and behaviours that offer people signals about the values and approaches prioritised within an organisation or system. Long-term investment in building relationships and collaborative behaviours is often undervalued in the current model of public services, but is at the heart of the development of more people-centred, complexity-aware responses to social challenges.

03. Infrastructure: The 'building blocks' that drive people and organisations' day to day working.

Infrastructure, which includes commissioning frameworks, funding mechanisms, job descriptions and approaches to organisation and staff development, needs to exert a gravitational pull towards innovative practice and collaboration. Infrastructure is what connects people and organisations, and is critical to sustaining a shift in culture and practice across public services and place.[2]

Establishing these enabling conditions is not down to local authorities alone; the process of change must be a participatory one. Involving those with lived experience and focusing on co-production are critical if we are to understand the shortcomings of the dominant ways of working and consider what more effective and efficient approaches to supporting people could look like. Ultimately, efforts to grow and sustain innovative practice will need to be made across all levels and sectors by many different actors.

These eleven enablers have come directly from the experiences of the local authorities who have been part of shaping this guide. The significance and utility of each enabler as a starting point for change will depend on local context: there is no particular linear or chronological progression to work through, no one right answer or route to change.

There may also be other relevant conditions and indicators: the New Operating Models Framework itself includes additional important enablers of change drawn from the wider Collaborative's work. However, this guide offers a strong foundation for the practical changes required to sustain and grow the green shoots of a new model of public service.

02.
How to use this guide

We hope others will build on the suggestions below to test, develop and explore how the enablers might be strengthened. The tools below could also be used to help identify where others – such as regional or national bodies – need to act, as not all of the changes needed will be in the direct control of local actors. This guide may offer a useful starting point to frame these conversations.

Alongside the diagnostic tools we have also shared some practical examples of how local authorities can develop the enabling conditions necessary to move innovative practice from the margins to the mainstream.

2.1 Diagnostic exercise:
Assessing the strength of the enabling conditions

As a starting point, we have created a short self-assessment tool. For each of the eleven enabling conditions there are three statements which dig deeper into the concept to help you assess how present they are in your organisation or system.

Read each statement and mark how strongly you agree or disagree with them overall. You might choose to answer from the point of view of your service, organisation or local system. Of course, there is always a challenge in plotting cultural characteristics on a scale, so these scores serve as an indicator only; the value of the exercise is largely in asking the question and inviting people to reflect.

You could use this tool in a range of ways, perhaps to guide a conversation in a workshop, or as prompts for interviews to produce rich, qualitative insights into the maturity of these conditions in your organisation or place. However, we do encourage you to reflect on the findings with others and identify how you'd like to address the insights the exercise produces.

Enabler 1: A systems mindset and a long-term view

- We recognise that as one organisation, we alone cannot create the outcomes we care about; we are part of a wider system.

- The short-term interventions and projects we undertake are aligned to a longer-term vision for change.

- We have spaces to explore how we're working and opportunities for improvement with other key players beyond our organisation.

Strongly disagree   (1)   (2)   (3)   (4)   (5)   **Strongly agree**

Enabler 2: Reframing how we understand and perceive risk

- Our approach to risk creates space to consider improvements and opportunities, as well as manage the risk of harm.

- We focus on risks to society and wider outcomes, rather than solely on risks to our organisation.

- We use a range of different perspectives, including citizen's views, to understand and mitigate risk.

Strongly disagree   (1)   (2)   (3)   (4)   (5)   **Strongly agree**

Enabler 3: Collaborative culture

- Collaboration internally (service to service) and externally (with anchor institutions, third sector and residents) is prioritised.

- We work with the community in an asset-based way, sharing power and focusing on building relationships.

- We organise and problem solve around the person, rather than within service or organisational silos.

Strongly disagree   (1)   (2)   (3)   (4)   (5)   **Strongly agree**

Enabler 4: Permission and empowerment for staff

- Frontline staff have permission to resolve the issues they encounter, including through collective problem solving.

- Staff in my organisation are supported to deliver the core competencies of their role, while also flexing their responsibilities when required.

- Frontline staff are valued as a source of intelligence and insight, helping us identify opportunities for innovation.

Strongly disagree   (1)   (2)   (3)   (4)   (5)   Strongly agree

Enabler 5: Trusted relationships that can carry the weight of change

- We invest time to develop and strengthen relationships and encourage staff to do the same.

- We listen to our partners and are able to constructively disagree in a way that builds trust.

- Systems thinking and leadership are promoted at all levels to help people move away from organisational priorities and towards mature partnerships.

Strongly disagree   (1)   (2)   (3)   (4)   (5)   Strongly agree

Enabler 6: Advocacy and influence beyond the local system

- There is a collective voice for the local system or place, made up of a diverse range of stakeholders.

- Partners across the place work together to construct recommendations and asks at a regional and national level.

- Learning is captured and promoted on behalf of the system and place, generating a compelling story and interest beyond the local system.

Strongly disagree   (1)   (2)   (3)   (4)   (5)   Strongly agree

Enabler 7: A compelling case for change and ambitious vision for place

- We have a compelling case for why change is needed, supported by qualitative and quantitative data.

- We use our shared vision as a reference point to guide decision making within my organisation and with partners.

- We have a clear articulation of what the process of change and vision will mean for staff, partners and communities, and understand what we can expect of one another.

Strongly disagree   ① ② ③ ④ ⑤   **Strongly agree**

Enabler 8: Distributed ownership and accountability

- Responsibility for changing the system is shared across the organisation, not held by one team.

- Our ownership and accountability mechanisms recognise the complexity of our challenges and the need for shared accountability across teams and organisations.

- Organisation-wide policy directives are effectively translated to give meaning for specific teams and services, including how they are expected to work, not just what they are expected to do.

Strongly disagree   ① ② ③ ④ ⑤   **Strongly agree**

Enabler 9: Enabling policies and processes

- Our policies and procedures support staff to act in line with a shared place-based purpose, rather than having to 'work around' or in spite of the system.

- Our critical infrastructure (e.g. funding and performance frameworks) are based on empathy and trust and designed and used in ways which are collaborative and prioritise learning.

- Measurement is used as a tool for learning, adaption, improvement and enquiry.

Strongly disagree   (1)   (2)   (3)   (4)   (5)   Strongly agree

Enabler 10: Sharing information for continuous reflection and experimentation

- We recognise that change happens through experimentation and the process of action and reflection between different actors.

- We have a propensity to action – interventions are 'designed by doing' through experiments and prototypes rather than planned in the boardroom.

- There are regular opportunities to review and adjust practice, with a chance for people from across the organisation/system to participate in learning.

Strongly disagree   (1)   (2)   (3)   (4)   (5)   Strongly agree

Enabler 11: Investment in the capacity to change

- We explore what should stop and why in order to enable investment to mainstream effective models after a period of experimentation.

- We give staff the space and time to work in new ways and permission to test and learn, with an acceptance that change takes time and is not a linear process.

- External perspectives and insight support us to develop ideas, work through problems and shift to new ways of working.

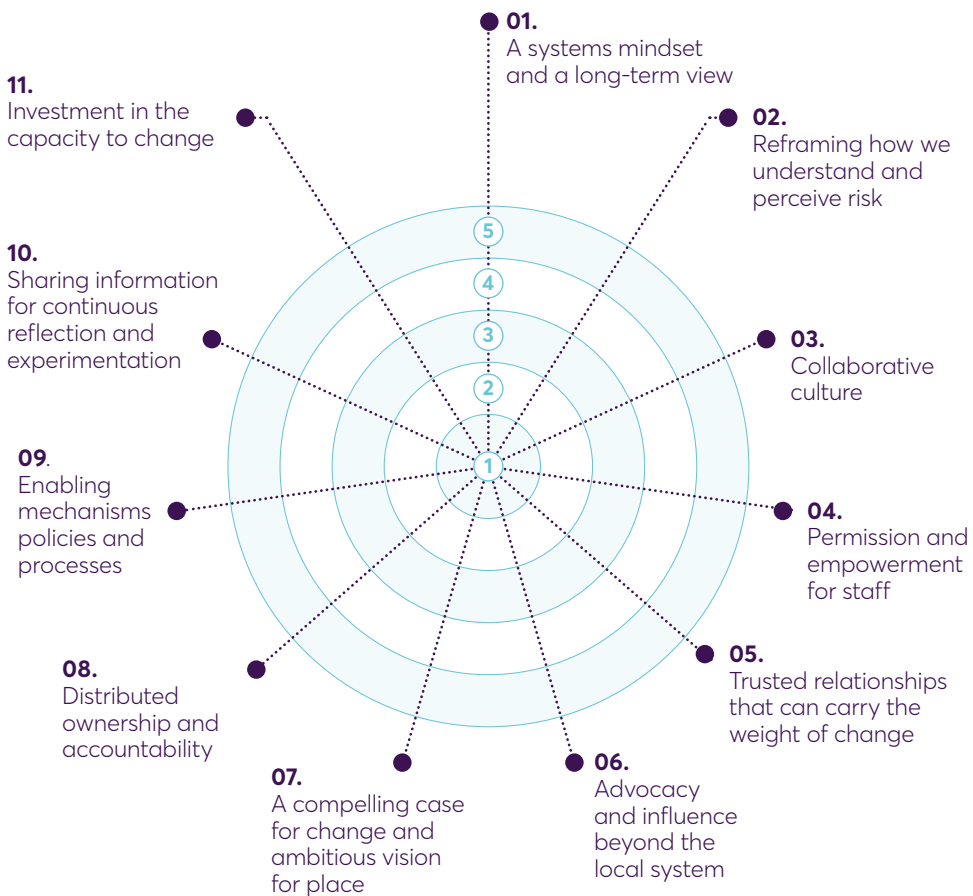Strongly disagree   (1)   (2)   (3)   (4)   (5)   Strongly agree

Plot your score for each element onto the relevant axis of the spider diagram below. Then join up each point to create your finished diagram, which will provide a visual representation of the maturity of the conditions in your organisation or system. Use the findings to begin a conversation about which enablers you'd like to strengthen.

Figure 2: Scoring tool

01. A systems mindset and a long-term view

02. Reframing how we understand and perceive risk

03. Collaborative culture

04. Permission and empowerment for staff

05. Trusted relationships that can carry the weight of change

06. Advocacy and influence beyond the local system

07. A compelling case for change and ambitious vision for place

08. Distributed ownership and accountability

09. Enabling mechanisms policies and processes

10. Sharing information for continuous reflection and experimentation

11. Investment in the capacity to change

(1) = Strongly disagree, (5) = Strongly agree

2.2 Tools to develop the enabling conditions for change

The suggestions below share some of the practical ways the workgroup members have sought to grow and strengthen the core characteristics of mindset, behaviours, values and relationships, and infrastructure in their organisations and places. The mix of case studies and suggestions are aimed particularly at those working in and around local authorities and other statutory services.

2.2.1 Mindset

How to use a systems mindset to create a long-term view

- **Articulate *what* you're committed to, above and beyond your organisation and the current political cycle, but allow the *how* to evolve too.**

The Oldham Model[3] was developed by partners across Oldham and **sits above any organisational strategy.** It consists of three elements that the system is aligned in working towards: thriving communities, an inclusive economy, and co-operative services. The model sets out the shared ambition for the system and acts as a prism through which organisations can view and test their work, ensuring that it fits with the overarching enablers of mindset, behaviours, values and relationships, and infrastructure.

Over time, these underpinnings have been clarified and strengthened, but the overarching model and commitment to collaboration has remained.
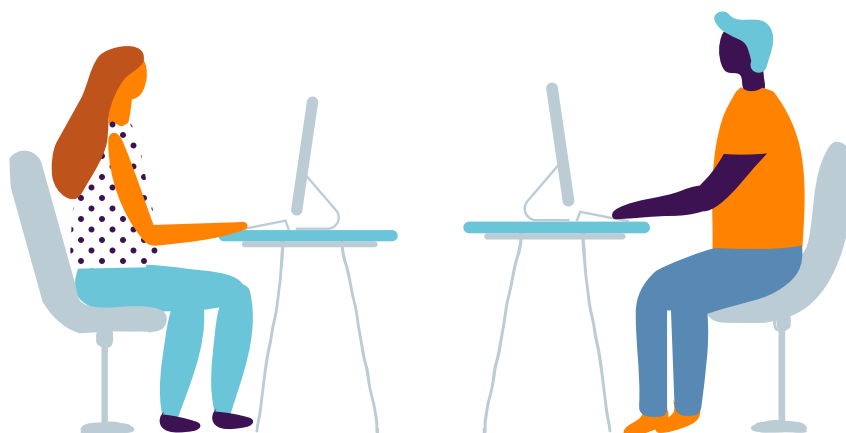
How to reframe understanding and perception of risk

- **See the big picture when making decisions about risk.** The Joint Decision Making Model is used by Cambridgeshire Constabulary and partners to **review and respond to risk in line with the core mission and values of the organisations.** It involves gathering information and intelligence, assessing risk and developing a working strategy, considering powers, policies and procedures, identifying options and contingencies, and taking action and reviewing what happens.

  Importantly, this model supports partners to take active decisions, including electing to do nothing in specific circumstances where this is in the wider interest of the community – for example, in facilitating peaceful protest.

- **Work with partners to manage and respond to risk.** COVID-19 **changed the risk calculation** for many local authorities. In the London Borough of Newham, this created **a new impetus for partnership action** to tackle a longstanding issue of rough sleeping in a shopping centre, uncovering new opportunities and solutions which were not possible before.

- **Create space for experimentation within clear boundaries.** Gateshead Metropolitan Borough Council underpinned their council tax prototypes with **four simple rules** that governed how to work with people: interventions must be legal, necessary, proportional and auditable. Within this scope, frontline staff were empowered and supported to act in whatever way they deemed necessary to support people to thrive.

For more on risk see the sister paper Reframing Risk, also part of this Handbook.

2.2.2 Behaviours, values and relationships

How to create collaborative cultures

- **Evolve how you procure and commission services.** When developing a new model to support vulnerable people (principally across homelessness, domestic abuse and tackling substance misuse), the Public Health team at Redcar & Cleveland Borough Council worked with colleagues from procurement and legal from early on to **procure a partner rather than a service.** The procurement process will focus on selecting a partner consortia with the right values, experience, leadership and understanding of the client group to **co-design** the model.

- **Engage colleagues from key support services to be part of the team solving the problem.** Working with colleagues from key corporate services (e.g. procurement, legal, property, HR) at an early stage of exploration rather than just presenting your solution to them is likely to increase buy-in. People need to be engaged emotionally as well as practically, so seek to capture both head and heart.

- Early conversations with procurement colleagues within the council were crucial to getting buy-in to this new approach, and once everyone was on board there was a new-found flexibility, willingness and support to work in a different way. Though the tender process has not yet started, work has already begun to **build relationships and share the vision** with partners in the voluntary sector so they can help to shape the new approach and be "bid ready" when the procurement commences.

- **Give people opportunities to actively step in and out of different parts of the system.** Oldham Council ran an **"in their shoes" programme** for the Leadership Board, inviting senior leaders to spend a day with a voluntary organisation to experience the system from a different point of view. This helped make challenges and opportunities visible to decision makers and in turn energised them to use their position to unblock issues.

- **Build multidisciplinary teams.** Bringing together diverse perspectives can create new solutions to entrenched challenges. Community Wellbeing Officers at Gloucester City Council work across disciplines (e.g. community engagement, environmental health and anti-social behaviour) to share and pool their expertise and move away from traditional enforcement to finding new solutions for residents through collective problem solving.

- **Move work closer to the community.** Ensure staff spend time in the places where their policies and procedures are having an impact on local people and create a link between their role and the residents they are serving. A simple starting point could be holding a team meeting at a local library.

How to empower staff – and give them permission to act

- **Support people to understand their new priorities, expectations and permissions.** The **role of managers** may need to be reframed from distributing and delegating tasks to supporting and coaching their teams to use their judgement and make decisions.

- **Understand your staff and what drives them.** People working in public services are often values-driven. Understanding what drives your team and tapping into their **intrinsic motivation** can help reconnect people to the core purpose of their work and adjust to new ways of working.

- **Create the right conditions and culture for your team.** As part of the COVID-19 response, Surrey County Council and partners agreed to set up a contact centre to make outbound calls to residents who were shielding, staffed by re-deployed council employees. Because of the limited time upfront to train people, **a team culture was intentionally built based on trusting and empowering staff to fulfil the role they'd signed up for**, on the understanding that they would raise issues and concerns as they encountered them to be worked through and resolved as a team.

- **Flex your process to find the right people for the job.** Key workers working with adults with multiple and complex needs in Redcar & Cleveland Borough Council are often **experts by experience**, recruited not through a traditional advert and interview process but by informally identifying the right kind of people and working with the local Voluntary Development agency to employ and then second them into a multi-disciplinary team.

- **Focus on principles for how to work, rather than instructions for what to do.** Once recruited, the key workers at Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council go through an intense induction focused on **setting out the principles of the approach**, rather than training people in how to respond to every eventuality. Workers are then empowered to use their own experience and judgement about how best to support people in line with these principles.

How to develop trusted relationships that can carry the weight of change

- **Encourage secondments and shadowing exchanges.**
  Support relationships across organisations to develop, mature, and extend networks across the system.

- **Don't rely on formal meetings alone.** The work of building relationships is real; **informal spaces and conversations** such as a chat over a cup of coffee are just as important as formal, set-piece meetings.

- **Practice constructive disagreement.** Successful collaboration doesn't mean people have to agree on everything, but does rely on **mutual understanding and respect** for the priorities, drivers and boundaries of others.

- **Take a strategic approach to partnerships and build trust through real work together.** Barking and Dagenham Council made "enabling and embedding relationships based on trust" a core component of their VCSE strategy. The focus has been on supporting a more collaborative approach, **respecting all partners' contributions as equal** and coming together to achieve more, improving ways of working across all organisations.

  They've agreed to take a prototyping approach, drawing on data and expertise to make it easier for people to collaborate, as well as creating a climate of trust between stakeholders. They have also created **open and honest dialogues to learn together** – both from what's working and what isn't. The power of this investment in relationships was demonstrated during the COVID-19 response, with the Barking and Dagenham Citizens Alliance Network leading the community response.

How to foster advocacy and influence beyond the local system

- **Create spaces for partners to come together with a focus on place.**
  The Barking and Dagenham Delivery Partnership (BDDP) was established in
  November 2016 and worked effectively to develop the Borough Manifesto.
  The BDDP **brings together local partners from across the public, private,
  community and voluntary sectors** to explore how to support and enable
  systems change. The BDDP is a forum for learning focused on identifying
  connections across different partners and workstreams, understanding the
  implications at the level of place and exploring how the system can respond.

- **Be clear on what issues need to be escalated and the audience you're
  trying to influence.** Greater Manchester Combined Authority and Partners
  act on behalf of local partnerships in each area. Localities then **develop
  forums and processes to tackle local blockages within their control.**
  This in turn **feeds up to regional, Greater Manchester level arrangements**
  such as the Reform Board, where issues can either be addressed across
  Greater Manchester or collectively challenged at a national level.

2.2.3 Infrastructure

How to create a strong case for change and ambitious vision for place

- **Collect quantitative and qualitative insights from a range of sources. National and local data, the annual citizen survey and citizen assemblies** reflected a strong narrative among communities and officers that something needed to change economically in the London Borough of Newham. A newly elected Mayor brought the **political will** to bring the Community Wealth building approach to life.

- **Join up data from different sources to create a clear picture of place.** Barking and Dagenham Council has invested heavily in their **insight and data capabilities** to enable them to target support and track change. The Insight Hub focuses on making better use of the council's data to understand customer needs, forecast future demand and design behavioural interventions. The Borough Data Explorer visualises over 117 different indicators, categorised under 7 borough manifesto themes, supporting the measurement of social progress at the ward level.

- **Develop a clear articulation of your vision for place with partners.** The Oldham Partnership brings together proactive and engaged public, private, voluntary and community organisations in Oldham. All of these partners share the common vision 'to make Oldham a place of ambition' and are committed to working with each other and with the people of Oldham to create a productive place with healthy, aspirational and sustainable communities. The Oldham Plan is **a collective action statement** explaining how these different actors can come together to best serve the place and help its people, districts and businesses to thrive.

How to distribute ownership and accountability

- **Broaden the contact between officers and Members.** Members may in practice go to the person in their 'line of sight' to get things done, who will not necessarily have access to the levers to make the desired change. By reducing hierarchy and increasing connections between different parts of the organisation, ownership is increased.

- **Ensure effective handovers take place.** As people leave and enter roles, invest time in ensuring a smooth transition, capturing and transferring formal and informal knowledge and responsibilities. This includes making introductions to key people and partners (within and outside your organisation) so that relationships are maintained.

- **Encourage curiosity and exploration among colleagues.** Following a piece of work exploring their organisational values, Surrey County Council encourage staff to be curious, and act as **curious friends** – asking questions, building their understanding of the work of others and sharing their own passions.

- **Use processes and procedures to drive behaviour change.** Corporate and service planning processes are a chance to embed and align priorities across departments and explore how teams contribute to the broader shift. Spend time with managers and their teams as they go through these processes and explore ideas together.

How to create enabling policies and processes

- **Rewrite the rulebook.** A **'policy bonfire'** that clearly removes and replaces policies which are no longer fit for purpose can send a clear signal and drive forward new ways of working. Reworking key documents such as job descriptions, performance frameworks and service plans have been essential in making the changes real.

- **Start bottom-up rather than top-down by using insight and experience from staff on the frontline to identify blockers.** In Oldham Council, frontline staff identify issues getting in their way and record how many times the issue occurs and what it results in. These 'system conditions' are then escalated to those who can make the changes required.

- **Make changes to key policies.** The workgroup identified specific processes and policies that they had reviewed or were seeking to adapt to become enablers, including: IT and digital infrastructure, performance management and how data is collected and used, recruitment and induction, organisational and staff development, corporate planning, and creating platforms both physical and digital for collaboration.

How to share information for continuous reflection and experimentation

- **Invest in your governance boards to help them work more effectively – especially at the partnership level.** This doesn't happen by accident, and experience suggests that the following can be helpful:

  - Having someone to 'hold' the board – doing the prep work and making connections behind the scenes.

  - Being conscious of the design of meetings and ensuring effective facilitation.

  - Limiting the number of items on the agenda to allow for more in-depth discussion.

  - Focusing on the exchange and development of learning, ideas and information rather than passive updates.

  - Demarcating space for formal or statutory business as well as building relationships and exploring ideas together.

  - Co-chairing arrangements to share power across the partnership.

- **Start small, and iterate. Prototyping** has supported Gateshead Metropolitan Borough Council to learn how to support people to thrive. Their **phased approach** focused initially on developing and testing what was *effective*, then exploring how to make this *efficient*, and then how to make it *sustainable*.

How to invest in the capacity to change

- **Participate in networks and learning spaces.** Create opportunities to access external insight, peer learning and the development of ideas at a broader scale.

- **Invest in external facilitation and support when needed.** This can accelerate progress by bringing new expertise and ideas from elsewhere while also building internal capacity. Expertise in place-based collaboration, system change, strategy development, adaptive leadership, service design, data and insight, and resident engagement may be particularly useful and are often not skills public services have in-house.

- **Seek out alternative perspectives.** Cambridgeshire Constabulary uses the "100 Club" to gain **insights and perspectives from the community** on live policing issues and strategic tasks such as policy review. The group is made up of roughly 100 people from the community representing a deliberately broad mix of local people. The group acts as a sounding board, scrutinising and giving feedback on external impact and perceptions.

03.
Conclusion

The enabling conditions set out in this guide emerged from the Margins to Mainstream Workgroup's experiences of what has helped or hindered their progress. Together, the eleven enablers provide a useful overview of the conditions needed in order for new, more complexity-informed models of public service to thrive – because of system conditions, rather than in spite of them.

This does not provide the complete picture, and much more could be written about how these enablers can be established. Other papers from this Handbook begin this work, taking a more in-depth look at risk and measurement.

It is worth repeating that the work of building these enablers cannot be done by one actor or organisation alone, and that the tools set out here are not exhaustive. Creating these conditions requires the support of senior leaders, the development of a healthy learning environment, and a role for central government and regulators in making space for local innovation and culture change.

Our hope is that these tools will give local authorities a starting point at which to examine their own organisations and systems, and help practitioners identify the sources of frustrations faced while seeking to nurture successful – but countercultural – approaches. Having identified what you can change and received inspiration for where to begin, we hope to leave you in a better position to advocate, negotiate and collaborate with those outside of your immediate system in order to achieve greater change.

04.
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05.
Endnotes

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3   http://www.oldhampartnership.org.uk/home/oldham-model/

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