
MANIFESTO FOR A COLLABORATIVE SOCIETY



INTRODUCTION

“Strengthening the threads tying together our various issues and movements – is, I would argue, the most pressing task of anyone concerned with social and economic justice.”

Naomi Klein¹

We believe in the power of what can be achieved when we stand together and act together. That is why we called ourselves Collaborate. Collaboration is a means – a way of working – which can be deployed to many ends. But working collaboratively has also changed the way we think about the ends we value. Collaboration makes

possible futures we cannot achieve alone; it makes complex problems – from inequality to climate change – more possible to address. We see this every day in our work, from Oldham to Gateshead, Essex to Sutton.

Collaboration is critical to the work of our organisation, and to the effectiveness of our partners. But more and more we have a sense that it also holds the answer to many of the problems of our communities, our nation and our world. That insight led to a bold thought experiment through the past year. We asked ourselves: what if we could change the lens through which we see our world – from individualism, competition, hierarchy and heroic leadership, to collaboration, mutuality, networks and shared leadership? We can already see examples of this approach in our work with communities and public services across the country. What if this became the dominant way of working? What would need to change and what difference would this make?

This is what we have called a Collaborative Society. It is the means by which we can achieve things together we cannot achieve alone and, in time, reshape those ends to reflect our shared values and interdependence, paving the way to a fairer, kinder and more sustainable society. Collaboration is an idea whose time has come, an idea that can create hope for a better tomorrow. In this Manifesto for change we set out our thoughts on why a Collaborative Society is needed, what it might look like, how it might be realised, and where we see it already emerging.

- 1 Let Them Drown, Naomi Klein, 1 June 2016, London Review of Books
- 2 Edberts House is a charity in Gateshead, developing projects to build happier, healthier, friendlier communities.

Unless indicated otherwise, all quotes in this document are from Collaborate’s “Collaborative Society” podcast series, which can be found here: www.podcasts.apple.com/gb/podcast/conversations-about-collaborative-society-lord-victor/id1482411631

“Where we can collaborate, we can achieve so much more. And ultimately, that is the shared glory of what we all achieve. You will do better and you will go further if you do it together.”

Sarah Gorman, Director, Edberts House²

“Social change and economic change is intrinsically collaborative.”

Henry Kippin, Director, North of Tyne Combined Authority

“Our instinct is to do things together. That’s how people are built [...] instinctively we are collaborative.”

Lord Gary Porter, Leader of South Holland District Council, Former Chair of the Local Government Association

WHY IS A COLLABORATIVE SOCIETY NEEDED?

01



We are living in a time of transition. The complex and global nature of the challenges that face us as individuals, communities, nations and as a planet is becoming rapidly clearer. Long-standing assumptions that things will only get better no longer hold.

Social and economic inequality is growing. We are in the throes of a climate crisis. Our current economic model is unsustainable in the face of both these truths. In the UK our models of welfare and public services, and the social contract that underpins them, are struggling because they were not designed for the challenges and context of today.

Despite the decisive result of the general election, we still face huge uncertainty in terms of our future direction as a country, raising fundamental questions about what unites us, who we want to be and what we stand for. Brexit is both a symbol of and a distraction from the many forces that are reshaping our lives and society: globalisation, mass migration, demographic change, the age of loneliness, the climate crisis, biodiversity loss and the impact of technology and social media, to name a few.

If we are to navigate these challenges successfully and thrive as people, communities, places and planet, then the questions we must ask are: How do we transition, and what do we transition to? What shifts are needed in how we understand our relationships, responsibilities and approach to change? How do we need to reshape our organisations, government, economy and society? What does this mean for the models of leadership we value?

01 HOW WE SET OUT TO ANSWER THESE QUESTIONS

Collaborate is a small organisation working with people and places across the UK who are navigating their way through questions like these. Taking our work with our partners as the foundation, we wanted to see what we could learn if we looked at the answers they were finding and considered these as small signs of an emergent future. This Manifesto is the result of a year of

thinking and learning from our work, engaging with others who are asking similar questions, and pushing ourselves to be curious and bold. We held events, and invited a diverse range of people to consider these questions through blogs and a podcast series.³ They include social activists, third sector leaders, politicians and senior public servants.

We know this Manifesto is incomplete, our evidence base is small, and we are making leaps from what we observe to what we think the future should look like. Nevertheless, when we draw together the learning from our work, we are convinced there is a bigger story to tell. This is our attempt to tell that story as it seems to us now. So what can we see?

HOPE AND THE GREEN SHOOTS OF A BETTER FUTURE

In these times of turmoil and transition, we can see the green shoots of an alternative future. We can see evolutions in how parts of society, government, public services, institutions and the economy are organising. Our human capacity to adapt is evident in the movements, institutions, leaders and places that are showing us the way.

We understand these evolutions best in the work of our partners in public services, public institutions, foundations, charities and places across the country, where we spend our time and energy working alongside the pioneers at all levels. This is the work that Collaborate helps others do and it is the work we are drawing on here (see the Appendix for a complete list of our 2019 partners). But we can see green shoots of a Collaborative Society across other sectors, places and countries. The more we look, the more we find.

It may be fragile and emergent, but a better and more collaborative future is here already.

³ www.podcasts.apple.com/gb/podcast/conversations-about-collaborative-society-lord-victor/id1482411631

WHAT IS A COLLABORATIVE SOCIETY?

02

ROOTS: A NEW MINDSET AND THE STORY OF 'US'

At the root of all the work we are involved with is a new mindset. By this we mean a new frame, a new story, a new lens through which we view and understand the world. We believe a new mindset is the foundation for a Collaborative Society.

For too long we have been dominated by a competitive and individualistic mindset that is deeply ingrained in our culture, social norms, economy and understanding of society. We call this the story of 'I'.

This mindset underpins the way we think about multiple distinct, but related, areas. It is the foundation of dominant paradigms of recent history and today, such as colonialism, capitalism and patriarchy. For example, the success of businesses today is measured principally in terms of narrowly defined measures of shareholder value, and the health of our economy by GDP. In this worldview, our natural and human resources are understood primarily as being in service to the economy.

Our social system has also been shaped through this mindset. This means that we underplay our responsibilities to each other in our communities, and our shared ownership of the challenges we face, from complex issues such as social isolation and knife crime, to everyday ones such as the cleanliness of our streets. Our education system places schools and universities in a performance-driven marketplace and teaches children to pass exams, not to work together to solve problems. Even our first-past-the-post political system embeds a reductionist 'winners and losers' model at the very core of our public discourse. The New Public Management approach to public services is part of how this mindset has been embedded in government and public services too.

This mindset does not equip us to share the burden of some of our most pressing challenges, nor does it speak to our human need for connectivity and reciprocity. But this mindset is a construct, and it can be changed. We need a new story.

The mindset we need today is collaborative. It is based on the story of 'us'. Its premise is that we are part of a bigger whole, and it asks us to acknowledge the interconnectedness of people and planet, that we are part of a living system. We depend on the health of that system for our mutual well-being, our mutual ability to thrive. Our individual freedom exists within, and is strengthened by, this web of mutual obligation to people and planet.

The climate crisis reminds us of this. Despite its huge threat, in it we find a possible source of hope and change. The story of 'us' tells us that we share responsibilities to each other and the whole living system we are a part of. It demands that we use our power and agency, taking collective action at multiple levels: the individual, the local, the national and the global. And it means that we must think through the long-term consequences of our actions, the impact they will have on future generations and the planet. Our responsibilities are to one another, now and in the future.

Shifting the balance towards a collaborative mindset is not easy, but it is necessary. We think that it has implications which are deep and far-reaching. It can act as a foundation for change in multiple domains, which we explore below.

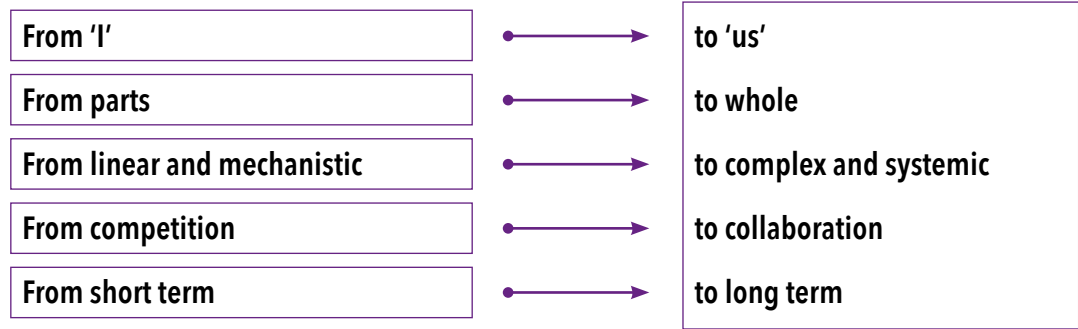
⁴ The Trussell Trust is a charity that supports over 1200 foodbanks in the UK and aims to end the need for foodbanks within society

"Whenever we are having conversations about society and what we want from society, we have to be thinking about it in terms of collaboration because of cause and effect. We have an impact on one another whether we want to or not."

Emma Revie, Chief Executive of the Trussell Trust⁴

02

SHIFTS FOR A COLLABORATIVE MINDSET



"Collaboration for me means understanding that if we are going to survive and we are going to thrive we have to do it beyond the individual... Our survival in this tough world is predicated on how we treat each other and the care that we bring to each other."

Kevin Fenton, Director of Public Health, London Borough of Southwark



"We have to use whatever influence or position we have, to influence the best way that we can."

Patrick Vernon, social commentator and activist, founder of the Windrush amnesty campaign

GREEN SHOOTS OF A COLLABORATIVE MINDSET

The Welsh **Well-being of Future Generations Act** is a groundbreaking piece of legislation that reflects a shift in mindset. It requires public bodies in Wales to think about the long-term impact of their decisions and to work according to the 'sustainable development principle' when addressing complex long-term problems such as poverty, health inequalities and climate change. It also requires public bodies to collaborate, in recognition that no single public body can effectively tackle these challenges alone. Unique to Wales, the Act is attracting interest from countries across the world as a tool for creating long-lasting, positive change for current and future generations. The legislation is supported by a **Future Generations Commissioner**, who acts as "the guardian of future generations" by helping public bodies and those who make policy in Wales to think about the long-term impact of their decisions.



A FRAMEWORK FOR A COLLABORATIVE SOCIETY



02



COLLABORATIVE LEADERSHIP



The dominance of the competitive and individualistic mindset described above has informed the way we traditionally view, value and understand leadership. In times of change or high anxiety with complex causes that threaten existing identities and ways of life, we often see a bias towards 'strongman' leadership; leaders who offer simple solutions and appear to protect their tribe. Globally, we are seeing a resurgence of this heroic type of leader, who looks back to 'simpler times' to evoke a nostalgia that is comforting and familiar. The strongman approach tells people the enemies are clear, the answers are simple, and the solutions are not their responsibility. But the time for this model of leadership, the embodiment of the story of 'I', has passed. These leaders will not enable us to thrive in a time of transition and in the face of complex challenges. And the sense of unassailable power that so often accompanies such leaders is not fit for purpose when social movements and social media are destabilising old power dynamics and giving voice to those who challenge them.

The model of leadership we need today is collaborative. It does not hoard power and take problems away, but mobilises a collective response. It does not provide simple answers and create scapegoats, but engages with complexity and appreciates the insights that come with diversity.

We still need heroes, but now a young girl sailing across the Atlantic is showing us the way. Greta Thunberg's great strengths lie in her authenticity, her bravery in speaking truth to power, and her ability to give voice to a unifying message and to mobilise through her example. Collaborative leaders listen and are able to craft new stories of 'us'. This should not be confused with a lack of boldness – far from it. But boldness is in leading by example, sharing power, creating space for others, and showing empathy.

In public services, we see collaborative leaders stepping forward. They are strong in different ways: strong enough to listen, to show humility, to ask questions, to empower others and to step outside of their organisations and work across systems. This is the new playbook for public sector leaders in a post-command and control world.⁵

This is not easy, and the leaders of public institutions today are not just leading in times of transition, but *living the transition in their own roles daily*. We must learn to adapt our expectations and our processes, and we must value and support leaders as they engage in the difficult task of creating the new from within the old.

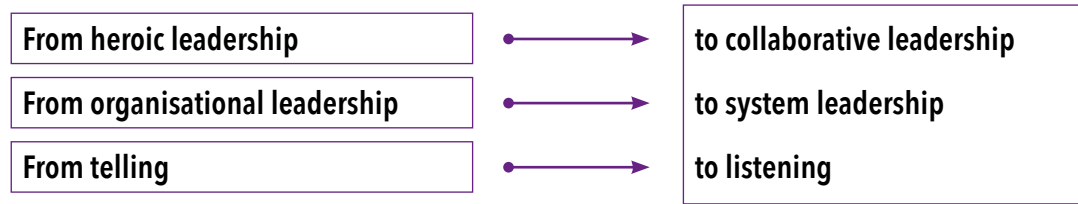
⁵ These behaviours draw on recent conversations with local government Chief Executives in the Solace Ignite Leadership Programme, designed and facilitated by Collaborate

"It's about leaders' values, how you listen to people, how you show humility... More leaders are starting to say the right words. They're talking about kindness, trust, empathy and compassion, and relational models of public services."

Donna Hall, former CEO of Wigan Council and CCG, Chair of NLGN and Chair of Bolton NHS Foundation Trust, Honorary Professor at the University of Manchester

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SHIFTS FOR COLLABORATIVE LEADERSHIP



GREEN SHOOTS OF COLLABORATIVE LEADERSHIP

“Leadership is about purpose and intention.”

Dr Henry Kippin, Director, North of Tyne Combined Authority

Ignite is a system leadership programme for local authority Chief Executives, co-designed by participants and facilitated by Collaborate. In Ignite sessions we hear participants reflecting on a fast-changing world, and expressing the sense that big social, economic and political themes are playing out in unpredictable ways in their communities and local politics. Old certainties are waning and therefore the role of leaders is changing. Qualities of curiosity, humility and comfort with uncertainty are becoming more important, and relationships and trust are today’s currencies of change.



“I am a values-based leader and I really believe in the power of example and role modelling the kind of behaviour you want to see. If it’s not coming from me, I can’t expect it to come from anyone else.”

Kevin Fenton, Director of Public Health, London Borough of Southwark

Essex Local Delivery Pilot is one of twelve projects across the country that are part of a major Sport England programme designed to explore how physical inactivity can be tackled through collaboration and system change. The challenge for the Active Essex team that leads the pilot is one of collaborative leadership. This is about building relationships with multiple stakeholders across the system, including senior public sector leaders and politicians, the third sector, planners, health partners and communities themselves, to ensure that addressing inactivity is everyone’s business and that approaches will work in communities. In this context, leadership is an activity that can be done with or without formal authority.



The **National Leadership Centre** is based within the Cabinet Office and has been established by the Government to “support cross-sector leadership, facilitating and supporting people to collaborate on the toughest challenges the country faces” in response to the “scale and complexity of the challenges faced by public services”. We see this as an important step by central government to acknowledge the challenges facing public sector leaders today and to build new forms of support and spaces for personal development and learning.



02

COLLABORATIVE ORGANISATIONS AND ORGANISING



A collaborative mindset informs how we think about organising for and bringing about positive social change. Organisations still matter, but the culture and behaviours of organisations must evolve to be relevant, purposeful and effective in today's world. The time for command and control and rigid hierarchy is over.

"I think there needs to be an in-between space where people from all sides can come, and you have your civic leaders, your public institutions, your community leaders. And in this middle space we get to know each other better, build relationships and negotiate change."

Malik Gul, Director of the Wandsworth Community Empowerment Network⁶

Leaders must orientate their organisations around a sense of purpose that reflects the public value they can create, and develop accompanying values, culture and behaviours with staff. Social purpose organisations must learn to act as part of a system, which means organisational boundaries must become more porous. Staff in single organisations need to evolve their capabilities to become system thinkers, aware of what they can do and what they can influence, and adept at collaborating with others who occupy a different role in the system.

Organisations trying to address complex problems need to invest in opportunities to bring new ways of working to life through experimentation and co-production. Organisations that commission and deliver services must also become learning organisations, allowing collaboration and adaptation in the name of shared goals, rather than rigid delivery of plans or outputs.

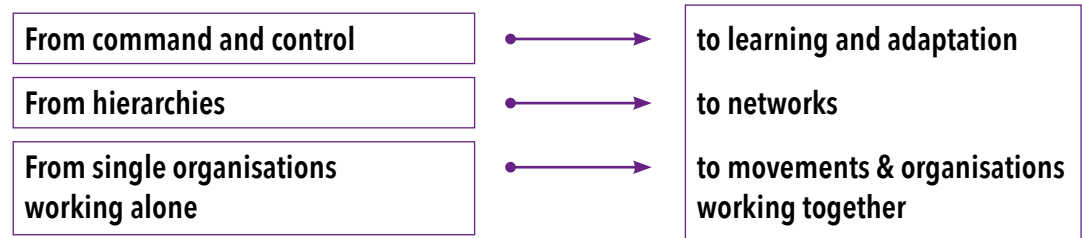
The shift to collaboration also requires movements. Enabled by new technologies, they can challenge institutions and hierarchies that are failing to adapt to today's challenges, creating new forces for change and seeking out institutional leaders who can hear their message. Public institutions must find ways to respond to, nurture and mobilise movements.

At Collaborate, we call this **thinking and behaving like a system**. The foundations and charities we work with are thinking about their role alongside other organisations and funders and aligning in new ways to invest in healthy local systems. In the public sector, we are working with organisations that are creating space for people to build new thinking and practice and fostering a learning culture that is a route to organisational change, not isolated innovation. New collaborations are being built across sector silos (such as local government and health), as well as with the voluntary sector and with communities and citizens. New place-based coalitions of organisations and community leaders are forming to grow place-based change. These coalitions are drawing on the total resources of people, organisations and sectors, sharing ideas, data and budgets, and nurturing the health of local relationships. With this shift in practice comes a need for new forms of collective accountability, and we are working with partners who are beginning to build and test new models.

⁶ WCEN is a whole system approach to community care and prevention through relationships and coproduction

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SHIFTS FOR COLLABORATIVE ORGANISATIONS AND ORGANISING



GREEN SHOOTS OF COLLABORATIVE ORGANISATIONS AND ORGANISING

"We have to collaborate, because if we don't collaborate the inequalities in terms of income poverty, wealth, power and influence get wider and wider."

Patrick Vernon, social commentator and activist, founder of the Windrush amnesty campaign

Oldham Partnership and Plan

The Oldham Partnership comprises public, private and voluntary organisations collaborating on a place-based and holistic programme of reform that includes building thriving communities, an inclusive economy and cooperative public services. The Partnership is one example of the ways in which multiple stakeholders are mobilised in pursuit of common goals in Oldham, and how public service reform is supported alongside other key enablers of a thriving place and a thriving community.



Sport England

Sport England's Local Delivery Pilot programme represents a significant change in funding approach. Rather than focussing funding on local projects in a traditional sense, investment is also being used to build relationships, change culture and work closely with communities themselves, with the aim of creating a more sustainable long-term change in behaviour.



Lankelly Chase

Lankelly Chase's place-based system change work (which we are supporting in Gateshead and London Borough of Barking and Dagenham) aims to support places to improve the way that local systems function for people who face severe and multiple disadvantage, investing in relationship building across systems and the development of system behaviours as a route to tackling multiple and complex disadvantage.



Extinction Rebellion

Extinction Rebellion represents not only an example of a powerful civic movement which mobilised in response to the urgent complex global challenge of climate change, but is also significant in terms of its own form of organising, which is participatory, decentralised, and inclusive.



02

COLLABORATIVE COMMUNITIES



The story of 'us' shifts how we understand ourselves in relation to others, and so our understanding of the nature of society and community. Human relationships and connections are what make us happy and well, and we must value and nurture them. Calling on a neighbour, valuing what we have in common, taking action on the issues we care about in our communities: these are today's acts of positive resistance, steps towards a Collaborative Society.

A collaborative mindset helps us to recognise that ills in our communities are ills we collectively face, and for which we all hold responsibility – be it the rise in the use of foodbanks, increasing knife crime among young people, or the numbers of families living in temporary accommodation. It also helps us to recognise that the strengths in our communities are strengths that we can all benefit from, and contribute to. Government investment and public services alone cannot solve complex problems. A Collaborative Society is one in which we all recognise our part and participate in supporting the wellbeing of our communities. It requires us to invest in the conditions that give people the opportunity and the means to participate.

We work with partners who are building these conditions, sharing power with local people and communities, supporting and enabling community action and investing time, energy and money in building thriving and participatory communities. We see local authorities building new collaborative relationships with third sector partners and valuing the contribution that they and residents can make as equal partners. Across the country there are new experiments in deliberative democracy, exploring ways to share voice and ensure that government action reflects citizens' views. And we see local communities coming together to challenge traditional power structures and create positive change.

"I think the biggest problem we have at the moment in our society is the amount of time we spend othering people."

Emma Revie, Chief Executive of the Trussell Trust

02

SHIFT FOR COLLABORATIVE COMMUNITIES

From them



to us

GREEN SHOOTS OF COLLABORATIVE COMMUNITIES

"A collaborative society would start with wellbeing and happiness."

Donna Hall, Former CEO of Wigan Council and CCG, Chair of NLGN and Chair of Bolton NHS Foundation Trust, Honorary Professor at the University of Manchester

Wigan

The *Wigan Deal* is a leading example of a new social contract between the council and the community, and has had far-reaching implications. One of the core parts of the Deal is the investment from the council into community groups and a focus on connecting people into community activities and participation, alongside public services.



"It's having a society where wellbeing and how we are as people becomes the measure of how successful we are, as opposed to this idea of money."

Sarah Gorman, Director of Edberts House

London Borough of Barking and Dagenham / Every One Every Day

Every One Every Day is a public participation initiative across the whole borough. It comprises networks of hundreds of residents who are working together on a variety of neighbourhood projects to make life better for the whole community. The council has supported the initiative in various ways, including funding and providing collaborative spaces. The *Every One Every Day* platform aims to facilitate community action in multiple ways, for example by connecting local people with similar interests and providing access to ideas, project models, space and materials, with the aim of growing a new participatory culture.



Birmingham Impact Hub / Civic Square

Civic Square is the new initiative being developed by the founders of the *Birmingham Impact Hub*. It builds on the inspiring experimentation and movement-building work of the Hub to "reimagine and put into practice the public square, a place where people come together, communities connect, share, agree and disagree". *Civic Square* will be located in a neighbourhood, "building from the ground up with communities who need it the most".



02

COLLABORATIVE PUBLIC SERVICES AND SERVANTS



The story of 'us' is what our public services and the welfare state originally grew from, and it must be what we return them to now. If public services are what we create to do for each other what we can't do for ourselves,⁷ they are also a manifestation of our values as a society.

"We've got to get back to those values of love and compassion. They are the reasons we became public servants."

Donna Hall, Former CEO of Wigan Council and CCG, Chair of NLGN and Chair of Bolton NHS Foundation Trust, Honorary Professor at the University of Manchester

This is about putting the human back at the centre of public services and acting through relationships, not thresholds and assessments. Relationships enable us to see the whole person, not a narrow slice of needs that fit a particular service. And citizens become active producers of value, not users or customers.

Collaborative public services are integrated and holistic, working in tandem with family and community connections. In collaborative public services, public servants are given the freedom to act in line with their intrinsic motivations and

human empathy, listening and connecting in order to build understanding and trust with residents. The collaborative public servant's role is to nurture the health of the relationships with individuals and families, and with others who are part of the system of formal and informal support that enables people to live good lives.

The job of commissioners, leaders and regulators is to build healthy systems, creating the conditions for the frontline to act in this spirit, and a learning environment that enables continuous adaptation. This approach requires a new form of accountability, moving from the traditional top-down model to one based on peer accountability, learning and the experience of citizens. With Dr Toby Lowe of Newcastle Business School, we have carried out extensive research into collaborative public services. We call this work Human Learning Systems.

In our work we see and help public service and social sector organisations that are:

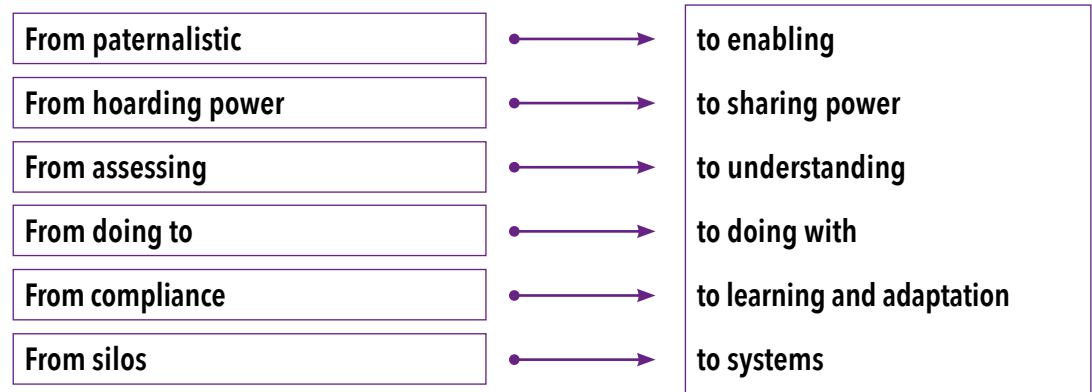
- **Forming new relationships** – between institutions and individuals based on new social contracts of reciprocal responsibility; and between frontline staff and citizens
- **Rebalancing power** – between state and citizens; between different layers of government; between different sectors; and even within organisations (especially traditional hierarchies)
- **Tackling complex problems through collaboration** – rather than through heroic leadership or quick-fixes which fail to provide sustainable solutions
- **Understanding problems through the lens of systems not silos** – drawing the boundaries of investigations wider, embracing the complexity of challenges and exploring deep root causes
- **Growing more collaborative behaviours, relationships, organisations and leadership** – to effect and enable change through networks, movements and relationships, as well as through organisations and hierarchies
- **Building new spaces for learning** – with staff, partners, providers and service users
- **Enabling frontline staff and commissioners to work in new ways** – that reflect their motivations for entering into public service
- **'Thinking big': looking beyond the service lens towards a holistic vision for the future of place** – a future which includes an inclusive and sustainable economy, and one which puts participation and collaboration at the heart of communities.

⁷ Listen to Dr Henry Kippin's Collaborative Society podcast for reference

⁸ See page 24 of *Exploring the new world: practical insights for funding, commissioning and managing complexity*, Toby Lowe and Dawn Plimmer, March 2019, Collaborate CIC and Newcastle Business School

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SHIFTS FOR COLLABORATIVE PUBLIC SERVICES AND SERVANTS



GREEN SHOOTS OF COLLABORATIVE PUBLIC SERVICES AND SERVANTS

Gateshead

Gateshead Council's public service reform prototypes have tested and developed relational and person-centred ways of working between frontline service staff and residents. Upstream signals of possible need (such as Council Tax arrears) have been used to proactively engage with residents and, through the building of trust and relationships, understand the complexity of their lives and pull on the resources of services and community to help. The prototypes prioritise understanding over formal assessments, and follow two simple rules: do no harm and don't break the law. The work is now being expanded in a local neighbourhood, and learning is shared with the wider system.



NHS population health

The direction of travel for the NHS is increasingly collaborative, with the 10-year plan focusing on collaboration across health, local government and the third sector and integrated health and care to achieve better population health. This means that local health and care systems are turning their attention to addressing the social determinants of health and creating more connected, community-based care, with social prescribing taking its place alongside services.



Plymouth City Council and Clinical Commissioning Group

Plymouth City Council have worked in partnership with the CCG to create a 'cradle to grave' integrated fund of £638 million to commission systemic responses across multiple service areas, including public health, leisure, housing, children's services and adult social care. Their purpose is aligned through a shared vision and a co-production approach is taken across all work streams. In addition, an £80 million / 10-year integrated budget to commission a health and care system for vulnerable adults in Plymouth has been created, which does not specify outputs or outcomes to be delivered, but instead focuses on collaboration and learning together. This was tendered through an alliance contract model, whereby organisations in the city came together to create a shared response and are jointly liable for the performance of the contract.⁸



"If you immediately start talking about spending more money on current services, then you are missing the whole point of meeting the needs of future society."

Dr Henry Kippin, Director, North of Tyne Combined Authority

"Our values are very much rooted in the community and understanding rather than assessing."

Sarah Gorman, Director of Edberts House

02

A COLLABORATIVE ECONOMY



It is not enough to nurture change in society or public services without nurturing attendant change to create a more sustainable and inclusive economy.

A collaborative mindset challenges both the way we conceive of how value is created and shared, and the purpose of doing so. Our current economic model and mindset is a big part of the story of 'I': As the economist Kate Raworth argues,⁹ we have taken the principles of 'economic rational man' and applied them to our understanding of who we are, our behaviours, our society and – we would argue – even our public services. But the health of our systems – human, social, environmental – is interdependent with the health of our economy; and the health of the economy should be understood in terms of how well it enables people, society and the planet to thrive, not just through growth in GDP.

A collaborative mindset suggests that we must find new ways to understand 'value', and – again in the words of Kate Raworth – to "meet the needs of all within the means of the planet".¹⁰ The role of collaboration alongside competition in shaping an economic model that contributes to wellbeing today is becoming clearer. It can be seen in the importance of developing the 'industrial commons' – like Catapult Centres and other examples of intermediate institutions that support innovation. It can be seen in industrial and sector growth strategies that set direction and enable firms to increase the pace of innovation by coordinating activity. And it can be seen in the arguments of Mariana Mazzucato for mission-orientated innovation,¹¹ understanding that growth has a direction as well as a rate, and setting that direction towards addressing critical societal challenges.

Many places we work with are nurturing a new economy, for example through support for social enterprises, cooperatives, small businesses, local production (e.g. of sustainable energy and food), and the growing movement for Community Wealth Building. These initiatives are connecting the themes of a stronger, more sustainable and more local economy with the creation of employment, training opportunities and social connections for local people. They are green shoots of the collaborative economy.

But the change required must go beyond this, into the heart of the mainstream economy and large businesses and employers. If we want firms to pursue a broader conception of value – including the contribution they are making to society and the environment – then the frameworks they operate within must enable this.¹² We should encourage the adoption of legal forms for business which, like Collaborate – a Community Interest Company – enable firms to orient around social purpose. We are all shareholders in a collaborative economy.

⁹ See, for example, animation number 3 www.kateraworth.com/animations

¹⁰ Kate Raworth, 'Doughnut Economics, Seven Ways to Think Like a 21st Century Economist', 2018

¹¹ See, for example www.ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/mazzucato_report_2018.pdf

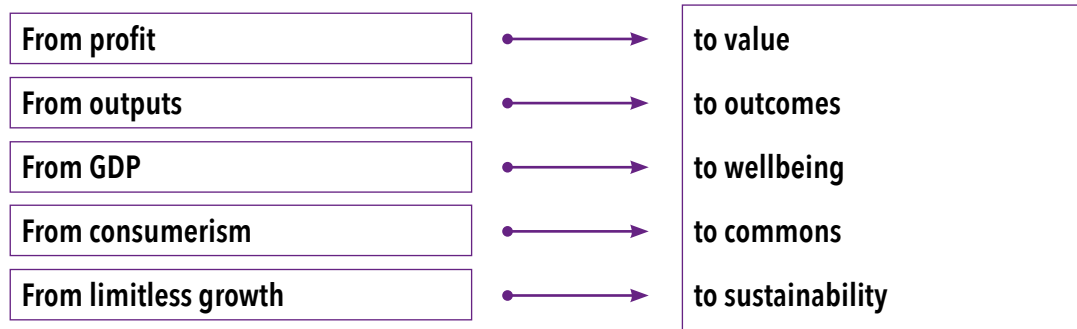
¹² See, for example, the Financial Times editorial 'Does Capitalism Need Saving from Itself?', 6.9.19 www.ft.com/content/b35342fe-cda4-11e9-99a4-b5ded7a7fe3f

¹³ www.preston.gov.uk/media/1792/How-we-built-community-wealth-in-Preston/pdf/CLES_Preston_Document_WEB_AW.pdf?m=636994067328930000

¹⁴ www.treasury.govt.nz/sites/default/files/2019-05/b19-wellbeing-budget.pdf

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SHIFTS FOR A COLLABORATIVE ECONOMY



GREEN SHOOTS OF COLLABORATIVE ECONOMY

Preston Community Wealth Building

Preston has led the way in developing a UK-based approach to Community Wealth Building, an idea originally developed by the [Democracy Collaborative](#) in the United States. Community Wealth Building aims to ensure the economic system builds wealth and prosperity for everyone, by focusing on core principles such as plural ownership of the economy, making financial power work for local places, progressive procurement and fair employment. In Preston, efforts concentrated initially on the spend of local anchor institutions, following analysis in 2013 which found that of £750 million spent by local institutions, only 5% was spent in Preston. This proportion has now substantially increased,¹³ and attention is now focussed on deepening the approach to building a new economy. This includes employment practice, working conditions and pay within anchor institutions, supporting employee ownership models and a transition to new models, as well as exploring the establishment of a regional bank.



Oldham’s Northern Roots project

Northern Roots is creating the UK’s largest urban farm and eco-park on Snipe Clough, 160 acres of green space in the heart of Oldham. Supported by Oldham Council, it will see an underused 65-hectare site developed for local food growing and production as a catalyst for improving the health, wellbeing and economic participation of Oldham residents. This project is interesting because of the way that it combines the creation of a more inclusive and sustainable local economy with new opportunities for residents to build social connections and greater environmental sustainability.



New Zealand’s wellbeing budget

“...While economic growth is important – and something we will continue to pursue – it alone does not guarantee improvements to our living standards. Nor does it measure the quality of economic activity or take into account who benefits and who is left out or left behind.”¹⁴ So reads New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern’s foreword to the country’s ground-breaking first Wellbeing Budget. The budget looks at measures of success beyond economic health, focuses on initiatives with intergenerational benefits, and brings together once siloed government agencies around common goals.



A COLLABORATIVE SOCIETY

We call all of these manifestations of a collaborative mindset a Collaborative Society. A Collaborative Society is what we are when our communities, our institutions, our public services and our economy are working in balance together to enable our shared living system to thrive.

Through a collaborative mindset, it is how we begin to understand our interconnectedness and the actions that might help us tackle the challenges we face. Through better public services it is the means by which we enable more people to become the authors of their own lives, not as atomised individuals freed from obligations to others, but existing in relation to others. Acknowledging and valuing this interdependency is how we build stronger communities, where people have both the means and the opportunities to participate. It is also how we build inclusive economies, challenging both the ways we conceive of the purposes of growth and the means to achieve it within the constraints of our planet.

The green shoots are there already, but how do we grow them?

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HOW DO WE GROW A COLLABORATIVE SOCIETY?

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GROWING A COLLABORATIVE SOCIETY: THREE ACTIONS

The time to tinker at the margins of the social, environmental and economic challenges we face has passed. Old systems have shown remarkable resilience in the face of change, so if the green shoots described here are to grow, then small-scale and isolated innovations must be nurtured with purpose as routes to deeper change.

All of us who care about building a better future should:

IDENTIFY

Identify the green shoots as they emerge in different fields and different places, whether it's community action, public sector or economic reform, private sector innovation or new collaborative leaders stepping forward. We must recognise them as fragile but meaningful possibilities underpinned by a new collaborative mindset, nascent signs of a movement for change. We must learn from the work: why and how it has developed and what conditions will enable it to grow, and we must share this learning widely, openly and generously.

Collaborate's commitment:

- We will continue to search for deeper themes in the work we are supporting across the country, make connections and find patterns, and share our understanding of these themes as they evolve
- We will continue to share our learning publicly and offer platforms for others to share their learning (through networks, events, blogs, thought leadership and podcasts), and bring the learning into our practical work

GROW

A Collaborative Society cannot exist at the margins. We must be bold in our ambition, our imagination and our action. We must nurture the green shoots, for their own sake and for the sake of the bigger possibility they represent. By learning about the green shoots that exist across all sectors, we must begin to understand what is needed to embed and spread this work further. We must support the individuals and organisations who are working against the grain in pursuit of the new and the better.

Collaborate's commitment:

- We will continue to act in the spirit of boldness in which we began this work. We will push this thinking into new areas and explore new questions
- We will nurture the green shoots, working alongside our partners and helping them to progress and understand their work
- We will continue to build our understanding of the mindset, skills and behaviours required of public leaders today and help them to develop their own capabilities and resilience

COLLABORATE

The task of growing a Collaborative Society is a collaborative effort. We need the widest possible coalition of people and organisations involved to pull together, from public sector leaders to economists, social activists to academics, politicians to industry leaders, and everyone in between. We must collaborate to help each other, lend advice and expertise, listen to what people need and find resources where they exist. And we must connect the pioneers and the projects so they can learn from one another, support each other and grow their work together.

Collaborate's commitment:

- We will continue to build networks of pioneers both formally and informally. We understand the building of a movement for change to be a core part of our role and purpose going forward
- We will create new collaborative spaces for unusual suspects to connect with each other in pursuit of social change
- We will build collaborations with other organisations that are working to bring about a Collaborative Society, working alongside them and celebrating their work.

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LOOKING AHEAD

We offer this Manifesto as a contribution to a debate that must continue to evolve as we face today's complex challenges and seek to unite the divisions in our society. We hope that it will help provoke conversation. We do not expect agreement with all the ideas set out here, and we know there is a great deal more work to do to understand what a Collaborative Society would look like.

For example, there are a number of questions raised by this Manifesto that relate to Collaborate's work with public services:

- How do we grow the green shoots into a viable alternative?
- How do we build a broader coalition for change?
- How do we create enabling environments for change in our organisations?
- How important is devolution to enable a Collaborative Society?
- What conditions are needed to build collaborative communities and the new economy?
- What is the role of central government in this new world?

We want to explore these questions with a wide range of organisations and partners to help grow a Collaborative Society through 2020 and beyond. We hope that you will join us.

"All around the country there's project after project, example after example, in communities that are transforming lives. If we can network with them and bring them together, there's a movement that can change the world."

Steve Reed MP

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Our partners in 2019

Aberdeen City Council
 Active Gloucestershire
 Active Black Country
 Barnwood Trust
 Cambridgeshire County Council
 Central London Forward
 City of London Corporation
 Cornerstone Fund
 County Sports Partnership Network
 Croydon CCG
 Dartington Service Design Lab
 Dorset Council
 Engie
 Essex County Council
 Forum for the Future
 GLA (Greater London Authority)
 Grant Thornton UK
 Haringey Council
 The Health Foundation
 Homeless Link
 Hounslow Health and Care Partnership
 IMPOWER
 Innovation Unit
 Kirklees Council
 Lankelly Chase Foundation
 London Borough of Barking and Dagenham
 London Borough of Barnet
 London Borough of Bexley
 London Borough of Brent
 London Borough of Ealing
 London Borough of Hounslow
 London Borough of Sutton
 London Borough of Tower Hamlets

NESTA
 National Lottery Community Fund
 National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC)
 Oldham Metropolitan Borough Council
 Opportunity Nottingham
 Robertson Trust
 Sandwell Borough Council
 Save the Children UK
 SOLACE Group
 South London Partnership
 South Tyneside Council
 Sport England
 Stirling Council
 Surrey County Council
 Sutton CCG
 South West Academic Health Science Network (SWAHSN)
 Wellcome Trust

Our podcast participants

Professor Kevin Fenton, Director of Public Health, London Borough of Southwark
 Professor Donna Hall, former CEO of Wigan Council and CCG, Chair of NLGN and Bolton NHS Foundation Trust, Honorary Professor at the University of Manchester
 Patrick Vernon, social commentator and political activist, founder of the Windrush amnesty campaign
 Emma Revie, Chief Executive of the Trussell Trust
 Lord Gary Porter, district councillor and former Chair of the Local Government Association
 Dr Henry Kippin, Director of Economic Growth for North of Tyne Combined Authority and former Chief Executive of Collaborate

Steve Reed, Labour candidate for Croydon North, Shadow Minister for Children and Families, former leader of Lambeth Council
 Malik Gul, Director of the Wandsworth Community Empowerment Network
 Sarah Gorman, Director of Edberts House, Gateshead

Our Collaborative Society blog authors

Lynn Mumford – Development Director, [Mayday Trust](#)
 Ed Wallis – Head of Policy & Public Affairs, [Locality](#)
 Richard Taunt – [Kaleidoscope Health & Care](#)
 Matt Bell – Chief Executive, [Plymouth Octopus Project](#)

Our Collaborative Society event participants

Kate Raworth, author of 'Doughnut Economics', Senior Visiting Research Associate at Oxford University's [Environmental Change Institute](#) and Senior Associate at the [Cambridge Institute for Sustainability Leadership](#)
 Immy Kaur, Co-founder of [Civic Square](#), previously Co-Founder and Director of Impact Hub Birmingham
 Dr Duncan Green, [Professor in Practice](#) at the London School of Economics, Strategic Adviser to Oxfam GB, author of 'How Change Happens' and the [From Poverty to Power](#) blog
 Rebecca Sutcliffe, Director of Public Service Reform, Oldham Council

Our non-executive board members

Lord Victor Adebawale, Chair, NHS Confederation
 Axel Heitmueller, Managing Director, [Imperial College Health Partners](#)
 Mark Cook, Anthony Collins Solicitors LLP

Other thinkers and do-ers who have inspired us

Professor Mariana Mazzucato, Professor in the Economics of Innovation & Public Value at University College London (UCL), Founding Director of the [UCL Institute for Innovation & Public Purpose \(IIPP\)](#)
 Indy Johar, architect, co-founder of [00 \(project00.cc\)](#) and [Dark Matter Labs](#)
 Otto Scharmer, Senior Lecturer at the MIT Management Sloan School, author of [Theory U](#)
 Dr Toby Lowe, Senior Lecturer in Public Management, Newcastle Business School, Northumbria University
 Hilary Cottam, author of [Radical Help](#)
 Sophia Parker, Founder and CEO of [Little Village](#)
 Cassie Robinson, Head of Digital Grant Making at the [National Lottery Community Fund](#), co-founder of the [Point People](#)

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 Mark Smith, Director of Public Service Reform, Gateshead Council
 Amanda Kilroy, Acting Chief Executive Officer, [Exeter Co-Lab](#)
 Becca Dove, Head of Early Help Family Support, London Borough of Camden
 Naomi Klein, writer and social activist
 George Monbiot, writer and social activist
 Jim Minton, Chief Executive, [Toynbee Hall](#)
 Annabel Davidson Knight, Collaborate associate
 David Relph, Collaborate associate
 Julia Unwin, Chair of the [Independent Inquiry on the Future of Civil Society 2017-18](#)
 Tessy Britton, Chief Executive of the [Participatory City Foundation](#)
 All the local authority Chief Executives who have participated in the Solace/ Collaborate Ignite system leadership programme

Other organisations in the field

[NLGN](#)
[CLES](#)
[Locality](#)
[IIPP](#)
[Centre for Public Impact](#)
[NESTA](#)
[Engie UK](#)

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