

That you for the opportunity to give input to Scotlands plans for the future.

I believe the single most effective change that needs to be rolled out is a change of mindset, from governments and other bodies “pushing” services down to citizens, to a system that enables citizens to “pull” services as and when they need them. This change of thinking needs to permeate all the structures of government, public services, charities, voluntary organisations and businesses. We need to learn how to work better together. We need to learn how to learn, and go on learning, before Scotland can step up to the challenge of independence.

In addition, government needs to design “sensors” that feedback information and data about life in Scotland, how it is changing, what peoples’ day-to-day experience is in terms of their wellbeing. What their stories are. Such data can then be used to shape policy and responses tailored to the real needs of real people. If a decision is difficult, it is because you don’t have enough information.

I have in the past been privileged to work with people who advise on how such systems can be put in place - their expertise was addressed largely to commercial organisations, though only a handful seemed to be listening. It is extremely frustrating to now (as a retired person) be involved with the voluntary sector and to see how wasteful and ineffective the systems that support the public, voluntary, and social enterprise sectors are. The people are great, and they are all doing their best. Its the systems and processes that let them down, every time, and this is not about lack of money. It is about lack of knowledge. Lack of agency. The key ingredients of an effective system are leadership, organisation, problem-solving and capability.

In the wake of the COVID-19 crisis, the world will be a different place, and none of us know yet quite what challenges lie ahead - just that there will be some, and they may be tough. The system I have described above allows a community, local, national, or business-focussed, to adapt and respond to changing circumstances with resolve and resilience that the top-down, “push value” and (in its worst incarnation) ‘command-and-control’ approach cannot get anywhere near. The top-down management system relies on heroes riding to the rescue every time it falls over (which, being at odds with reality, it does, all the time.). The system I describe allows the innate strength and ingenuity of ordinary people to rise to the surface. It allows people to work together in a common purpose. It is to my mind the only way to walk to the future with any degree of confidence.

I realise this may not be the sort of input you were looking for, but if I can be of any further assistance, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Sue Rule