Heywood Foundation Public Policy Prize - "Digital "

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ID: 2030-11 - Category: Digital
Cost effective re-purposing of Test and Trace for management of long term conditions
Repurposing NHS Test and Trace for a cost-effective health service

 As COVID-19 case numbers fall, we have a group of potentially redundant clinicians who have developed the skill set to manage health issues with members of the public over the phone. At the same time, it is estimated that 15 million people in England have one or more long-term conditions (LTCs). The WHO has already identified that treating such conditions in acute settings is not an effective treatment nor a cost-effective strategy. Now that telephone health management has become a part of the public consciousness, we should build on the IT systems in place and use the clinicians within Test and Trace to manage and improve LTC patient outcomes.

 According to a Commons Select Committee, one of the biggest challenges to face the health service is the management of those with LTCs. However, the NHS has been built to tackle acute issues. The WHO recognises the inability and inefficiency of acute settings to manage chronic conditions. Their briefing paper on innovation in this area recommends that, for developed

countries such as ours, innovation in healthcare models is needed, along with mass marketing to shift the thought paradigms within the population. The WHO also recommends a multi-sectorial health body to treat and manage long-term conditions, along with a range of staff utilising phone and digital platforms for the dissemination of information and patient access. Test and Trace, with the utilisation of multi-disciplinary clinicians to contact the public, has in essence become a pilot project to test the medium. Statistics suggest that 70% of the health and social care budget is spent on 30% of the population. The reality of this statistic is that patients with LTCs are visiting healthcare settings regularly and are desperately seeking help and advice to best manage their lives. A general search on the Internet demonstrates the many and varied patient groups that have been set up for those seeking advice and guidance for their diagnosed chronic conditions, from fibromyalgia to arthritis to loneliness. There is a great need in these patient groups for reliable advice from experts to help them understand and manage their conditions. Research has shown that acute settings are not the best places to manage chronic conditions. Presently 111 and 119 offer the telephone as a way for patients to seek advice. However, with Test and Trace clinicians make the call. GPs and local authorities could refer to a rebranded Test and Trace, namely NHS Lifeforce. A mass marketing campaign could promote the service to ensure that the public knows that it is trusted clinicians on the phone line offering evidence-based advice. NHS Lifeforce would be a more appropriate way to treat chronic conditions, with opportunities for regular engagement and motivation. It would also be a more cost-effective way, using the phone, text messaging as well as emails and letters rather than 10-minute GP slots and long-awaited hospital appointments. Support and advice could be scripted and focused on issues such as mental health problems, obesity, diabetes and lifestyle choices. It would also be an opportunity to tackle the silent but deadly issue of loneliness that can so often lead to long-term conditions. NHS Lifeforce also offers a way to utilise the clinicians and the IT systems already created for Test and Trace, rather than discard them or have a reduced staff work to the narrow brief of infection control. For those frontline staff who have become burnt out and may be on the point of retiring, this would offer an ideal setting to use their experience and skills. NHS Lifeforce could work in the same way as Test and Trace with clinicians working a varied pattern of shifts from home and 7 day working 8am-8pm. A pilot project working with patients with "Long Covid" would be an appropriate place to start. There are estimated to be 300,000 to 400,000 patients diagnosed with this type of chronic fatigue condition. In summary, the system set up for Test and Trace should be adapted to offer the public a new, innovative, preventative and thereby cost-effective model for managing long-term conditions.

ID: 3031-11 - Category: Digital

The NHS Requires Flexibility Staffing, Not Just More Staff

While it is obvious that the NHS needs significantly more staff, and indeed the government have pledged to train these, it is just as obvious that it is not practical to fund on a continuous basis all the additional staff that might be required during health emergencies such as we are currently experiencing.

The staffing requirement during the summer months, is under normal circumstances, lower than during the winter, particularly during a heavy flu season. During a localised incident it would be higher again, and during a pandemic obviously sky high. While it may be possible to have a small amount of movement between local hospitals, much more than that is not practical and during a pandemic as all hospitals require extra staff that just aren't available.

The inability of the Nightingale hospitals to be fully staffed highlighted the lack of additional capacity and just why this issue needs to be tackled to avoid similar issues occurring during future emergencies or pandemics.

The NHS Reserve - A Force For Good

To overcome the transient nature of the NHS staffing requirement, as outlined above requires an out of the box solution and I believe that forming an NHS Reserve is just such an idea.

Establishing an NHS Reserve similar to the reserve forces of the Army, Navy and Air Force, would allow the NHS to affectively increase its staffing to meet any demands placed upon it and in a cost effective manner. Whether these are large scale, national and long in duration, such as future pandemics, or short term and localised, such as large industrial incidents or terrorist attacks, an NHS Reserve could be mobilised at short notice to assist in whatever capacity was required.

Having a supply of highly trained and motivated staff ready for service at short notice everywhere across the country would be of massive national benefit. Many care staff, nurses, hospital doctors and GPs have left the NHS in the last few years due to the excessive strain they found themselves under, however many of these might be willing to support the NHS again in an alternate role.

We know that once the pandemic is over the waiting lists for patients requiring treatment will be longer than ever and that the staff who will be trying to bring these lists down will already be exhausted. If such a reserve was already in place image how much easier it would be to simply call on the extra staffing to assist with the extra burden. The Reserve could not only be called

upon to fill vacancies during difficult times, it could also relieve permanent staff having to work excessive hours due to exceptional circumstances.

The Reserve volunteers could regularly work within hospitals so remaining up-to-date with current practices by filling temporary vacant posts while full time staff undertook additional training, had sabbaticals or were away for any other reason, and all this could happen without leaving any Hospital short staffed. This would be a far less expensive option than the massive drain on the NHS that continuously hiring agency staff is.

This reserve could also place the UK in a unique position to assist poorer countries in times of need, and the knowledge that staff gained whilst undertaking this work might prove useful back to the UK.

Some members of this Reserve could also receive highly specialised training such as dealing with the effects of chemical weapons, gun shot wounds and many other non standard situations which would allow them to be deployed and therefore this expertise to be available within any hospital in the area or indeed the country, as and when needed. This Reserve could be used to staff the Nightingale Hospitals, and to free up regularly staff to continue with non COVID related health treatments.

Three quarters of a million people volunteered to assist the NHS yet only a small percentage were actually utilised. With the introduction of an ongoing training programme, a little imagination and some will power 'The NHS Reserve' could become a future force to be reckoned with.

ID: 1992-11 - Category: Digital

A bespoke networking platform for employment, entrepreneurship and re-training for over-50s women

Summary: The policy response to the under-tapped economic potential of over-50s women should be the creation of a government-sponsored national platform (called 'Portfolio Women' or similar, to represent a step-change in career). It would act as an accessible and user-friendly cross between Mumsnet and LinkedIn for women aged over 50, with official backing from the DWP, DfE, the Government Equalities Office, and input from the DIT and British Chambers of Commerce.

The aim would be to facilitate networking opportunities between women seeking to employ others, or to work up new business ideas together based on their complementary skills. HMG would seed-fund the best ideas and provide training and logistical assistance to get social enterprises and SMEs up-and-running in different localities, as well as providing help to scale up the best transferable business ideas to the national, and even international level. The platform would also, critically, act to find new ways of deploying older women's transferable skills in a freelance, part-time or full-time capacity to the wider economy.

Rationale: The pandemic has accelerated a pre-existing trend towards the under- and unemployment of the over-50s workforce in the UK, many of whom could, and want to, continue working up to and including retirement age. Between 15 and 20 years of pre-retirement tax and national insurance contributions from this demographic are at risk of being lost to the Treasury.

The good news is that 'second' or even 'third' careers can be tailored to meet the needs of the economy as it recovers from the pandemic. The skills and experience of women aged over 50, in particular, can be utilised in new ways, not only to create new forms of employment and income for themselves, but to design and contribute to new forms of working and entrepreneurship that employ others, men and women, older and younger.

The overall objective would be to break with the idea that only what an individual has done in the past is applicable to what she goes on to do in the years before and beyond retirement. Just as younger people now move more flexibly between career paths and sectors, so the changes already impacting on the economy should govern the flexibility with which older workers re-imagine their contribution to new and developing businesses and industries. Many women who have worked in the service sector may feel they have little to offer to an economy increasingly based on new technologies and environmental jobs. But all sectors need front-facing, sales, marketing and 'people' skills, and the UK economy has disproportionately lost women workers with precisely these skills since 2020.

Setting up a user-friendly and dedicated portal to encourage over-50s women to think differently about their employment potential in the post-2021 UK economy would provide a much needed boost to those who might otherwise see few replacement employment opportunities for themselves. In 2019, Alison Rose, Chief Executive Officer at the NatWest Group, led a review which revealed that the unlocked potential of women entrepreneurs represented a loss of £250 billion to the British economy. Despite the subsequent rise in female-led enterprises, a quarter of women are now giving up their careers due to work-life imbalances exacerbated by the pandemic, according to McKinsey (https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/realising-potential-female-entrepreneurs-has-never-been-aliso n-rose/).

Unless they are engaged in full-time care roles, the time constraints on over-50s women's are often less acute than for younger women juggling childcare, home education and business responsibilities at the same time. Older women's experience of family commitments (eg children living longer at home; caring for elderly relatives and grandchildren) often provides them with the insights and very locally-embedded networks required to identify business opportunities that meet new and existing community needs. Yet they frequently lack the support, confidence and practical help to make these insights commercially viable, and may only have their own experience as employees to build on.

Some women will be natural entrepreneurs, while others will have the back-of-office skills needed to make the best ideas happen, lawyers and accountants included. Older women who have previously held senior national and international positions may wish to remain economically active in a different capacity, in combination with others. Some entrepreneurial ideas and business plans could be geographically very focused (eg in neglected rural areas) or seek to draw on nationwide networks of 'common spirits' who collectively want to see (eg) an expansion in provision for 'at home' care for the elderly, or a more cost-effective provision of goods and services that can only be implemented at scale.

The key to this platform would be flexibility: each woman would register her CV, skills and experience, along with an indication of her desired outcomes, such as the number of hours she is available to work each week, and at what level of responsibility, together with the skills and

re-training requirements she would be willing to offer or acquire in specific economic sectors. Online forums could be arranged at (eg) three levels to cover 'rural/neighbourhood', 'urban/sub-urban' and 'national/international' opportunities and ideas for registered members to explore together, combined with links to resources and funding opportunities applicable to each locality and level. Setting up remote linkages between women working at home or in different locations would also benefit businesses requiring a variety of professional skills: a book-keeper in Newcastle, could quite easily become part of a local start-up in Hampshire, and vice versa, for example.

A policy explicitly tailored to re-employing older women, and/or deploying their skills to create new businesses would be a major selling point of this new platform to the wider economy. Many older women give up the search for employment because what they want, and what employers want, no longer coincides. Ageism and a mismatch in how the younger workforce views what older people, above all women, have to offer have led to a damaging set of stereotypes. Levelling the playing field to showcase what this demographic has to offer would provide a win-win outcome for all.

ID: 200-11 - Category: Digital

Building Back Resilience: an integrated approach in the aftermath of an Anti-Social Virus.

Summary: Jeremy Heywood left a legacy of an innovative, locally-led programme (Greater Manchester's Working Well pilot) that demonstrated it could improve resilience even in challenging circumstances, where other programmes had failed. Building Back Resilience proposes to take the learning from this work and apply it to the challenge of the impact on unemployment and mental health in the aftermath of the pandemic. It will introduce and test two additional innovative features: a diversion scheme away from sanctions and focused on life-skills and new vocational skills acquisition for those at risk of dropping out of employment, education and training as a result of depression; a new remote multi-disciplinary support team, with keyworkers drawn from experts-by-experience at its heart, to take the place of the face-to-face teams of talking therapists and keyworkers previously. Policy Background: Jeremy Heywood provided the kind of open-minded, pragmatic leadership that was always willing to reconsider existing policies in the light of the changing facts - in the words of another great leader: "However beautiful the strategy, you should occasionally look at the results" (Winston Churchill). No sooner had we agreed with the Treasury, in 2007, for an investment of £300M in the new IAPT programme to roll-out talking therapies on the NHS, than we were faced with the

financial crash in 2008. It is recognised that IAPT has gone on to be a world-leading exemplar for implementing access to evidence-based therapies. But as well as the promise to scale up access (IAPT was set to achieve a target of 1.5M adults per year, prior to the pandemic), which it has delivered, when Lord Layard and myself agreed the business case with Jeremy Heywood and the Treasury mandarins there were two further promises that we made: 1. To reduce the burden of depression as a common mental illness and 2. To support people with depression who were also unemployed to return to work, to achieve cost-savings on welfare benefits, as well as improve population wellbeing. After the financial crash in 2008, IAPT was unable to achieve either of these other 2 promises. Under the Coalition government, during a period of austerity, we saw rates of suicide increase; rates of self-harm, depression and anxiety also increased; rates of disability and long-term unemployment attributed to depression increased, along with steep increases in rates of prescribing antidepressants (from 35M in 2008 to 70M in 2018, notwithstanding the success of IAPT on reducing waiting times for talking therapy, and the fact NICE guidance in 2009 had not recommended antidepressants as the first line treatment for most cases of mild-to-moderate depression). Government policies had been designed to be evidence-based and faithfully implemented. But on the health side (IAPT) and welfare side (Universal credit and the Work Programme) their results were both showing up as increased harms. Building Back Resilience: an integrated approach Heywood was persuaded that what he called 'a market failure' was responsible. IAPT services were not prioritising the employment support needs for these patient groups because that was 'not our responsibility' ("we are mental health professionals, not job coaches"). The Work Programme providers, who were contracted under a Payment-By-Results programme, were not prioritising the mental health needs for these client groups because that was 'the responsibility of the NHS' ("why should we waste our money on offering access to private therapy when the NHS says it is already offering this for free?"). RAND Europe were jointly commissioned by the Ministers (Lord Freud at DWP; Sir Norman Lamb at DoH) to report on a more integrated model that could overcome these problems. Out of this a series of pilots were set up by the Joint Work and Health Unit and, in Greater Manchester, given the opportunity of a newly devolved agreement, an investment of £10M was match-funded by the Cabinet Office and European Social Fund for a Working Well pilot. The results of the 3-year Working Well pilot in Greater Manchester were impressive: over 20% of clients returned to sustained employment (4-5 times better results than elsewhere). Building Back Resilience: adapting to changed circumstances The cost-benefit aspect of Greater Manchester's Working Well design was based on an ambitious target for 20% of clients returning to sustained employment (over 12 months). In the areas of the country that are most impacted economically, and in certain employment sectors, a more innovative cost-benefit model will need to be built. We will draw on work done by the What Works Centre for Wellbeing, bring in expertise from the British Business Bank and elsewhere, and use this to construct and adapt a new cost-benefit model based on local, social resilience returns for

investment. In addition to the independent quantitative evaluation of Working Well, we undertook a qualitative evaluation, led by a joint LSE and Durham University team, funded through a European Research Fund project – Knowledge for Use. From this we learned more about the untapped knowledge and potential for greater use of non-professional, expert-by-experience skills and expertise. There are challenges to enable effective teamworking when multi-disciplinary teams include different professional backgrounds working alongside non-professionals. The changed circumstances of the pandemic, however, offer an opportunity for greater collaborative working via remote platforms (e.g. MS Teams, Zoom etc), as well as greater flexibility in working with clients remotely likewise. Key to this are good attachments and building trust with clients over time which, in turn, needs good support also for teams. It is precisely the kinds of interpersonal relationships that Building Back Resilience will aim to improve, through what we refer to as conditions for building epistemic trust, where the consequences of the pandemic have wreaked additional collateral damage. Hence, we believe, that the urgent crisis for mental health that we face also presents an opportunity. Building Back Resilience combines learning from previous evidence-based policies with adapting to a changed situation by offering a new solution with realistic promise of success.

ID: 113-11 - Category: Digital

NHS retired doctors and nurses 'Regular Reservists'

Would it be possible to put retired NHS staff on a list of 'Regular Reservists' similar to Military personnel who after active service were on 'reservist lists' for up to 2 years to be recalled in the event of war?

ID: 11-11 - Category: Digital

We could fix this problem by mobile laboratories which are easy to assemble, affordable and able to greatly increase testing capacity. Laboratories are built within shipping containers, then shipped to the designated country. Once in the country, the mobile lab can be transported by trucks to provide testing in areas with less hospitals or areas suffering from a lack of testing. Such laboratories fulfill the requirements of a Biosafety Level II lab which is the standard required to deal with COVID-19 samples, and are equipped with PCR machines to allow for testing. This is a cheap and efficient way of quickly increasing COVID-19 testing, in identifying invisible super-spreaders and in saving lives.

ID: 3063-11 - Category: Digital

Improving the way that GPs operate and building up a comprehensive health database.

GPs have extended the use of triage and phone and video consultations during the pandemic. I assume that, in the same way as different drugs were trialled to see which worked best to counteract the disease, these different practices are being evaluated to see what woks best for which patients and which diagnoses. There has also a large expansion in the use of home tests such as lateral flow tests and oxygen monitors. This could be considerably extended.

 The NHS could develop a standard kit and range of diagnostic tests for use at home, based on the existing diagnostic steps that GPs follow. For example, it is already possible to get temperature, blood pressure, heart rhythm and oxygen levels as well as weight and height, and to take photographs of the affected part of the body. Lateral flow tests could be developed for diseases other than Covid. A range of blood testing tools could be developed using just a few drops of blood (as is currently done for INR). I realise that some considerable work would need to be done, but the development of the existing lateral flow tests, the development of the vaccines and the development of new ventilators show that these things are possible.

 In parallel with this effort on the equipment and measurement procedures, an Internet diagnostician could be developed. It will check take the patient step by step through a diagnostic procedure, with the patient being able to provide the results from the various tests. In some cases, the diagnostic software will advise that the patient visit either their GP or A&E; and the system will enable the results of the tests to be forwarded accordingly before the patient arrives. In other cases, it may conclude that there is no need for medical intervention.

 Of course, there is the risk of misdiagnosis, However, there is nothing to prevent the patient seeing either their GP or A&E if not satisfied. There is also the challenge of the patient carrying out the tests correctly. This last could be ameliorated by asking that the procedures be followed monthly, so as to familiarise the patient with them and to provide an additional diagnostic tool in that unusual results would be easier to spot.

 GPs would have access to all these data and should review them from time to time to look for such peculiarities. It should be possible in some cases to take preventative action to avoid some conditions from developing.

 In addition, the availability of all those data should help in analysing public health risk factors within the population and assist in the test and trace process for new diseases. An analysis of the data will also enable the Internet diagnostician to be improved and additional testing requirements identified. It could also be used in training new medical staff and as an aide

memoire for current staff.

As with any data collection exercise, there is the impact on privacy, and the risks of misuse and unauthorised access. Security protocols will need to be established and monitored.

The development of such a system will take a little time but is eminently possible. In addition to those indicated above, there is the opportunity for the NHS to patent some of the developed equipment and, more importantly, to provide a world leading process in diagnosis, preventative medicine and public health analysis.

ID: 1760-11 - Category: Digital
Clubs and Classes National Voucher Scheme - Submission 5 (all slightly different!)
The COVID-19 pandemic provides a once in a generation opportunity to revolutionise the provision of creative, sporting, and recreational activities throughout the country. The policy I propose will deliver a huge demand shock for the arts, entertainment and recreation sector which will strengthen and grow supply chains until they provide a diverse offer of high-quality clubs and societies. It will also harness the huge untapped well of talent that has abruptly found itself working back in local communities and who expect to continue to do so in some capacity in the future. It will forge new and stronger community bonds across socio-economic, cultural, and generational divides. It will provide children with the opportunity to discover and nurture talents, develop diverse friendships and connections, and build self-esteem, particularly important for those not lucky enough to find academic study easy. The goal is a society where children grow up with many strings to their bow, who identify and pursue their interests, and who experience a complex network friends and mentors within vibrant communities.

I propose introducing a government funded voucher scheme that will ensure demand for creative, sporting, and recreational activities is driven by children and their parents. Every child will receive £200 a year in the form of vouchers that can be spent with any registered provider. To be eligible providers will need to prove that their class provides value to the child in some way by helping them learn a skill, develop an interest, get exercise, or simply have fun and build friendships. The cost of each class is set by the provider but should have a limit to encourage regular activities rather than one-off special occasions. The vouchers will be administered on a government website on which children, with permission from parents, will sign up for classes. To help ensure this programme crowds-in rather than crowds-out consumer spending parents will also be able to spend their own money on additional classes for their children. If the

vouchers are offered to children aged 4 to 18 then the cost to the taxpayer would be approximately £2.2 billion, excluding development, administration, and evaluation costs. Of course, any vouchers that aren't used won't cost the government any money.

The purpose of this market driven approach is to allow price signals to drive a supply of activities that children and their parents value and enjoy. The significant demand shock provided by the government will quickly strengthen, widen, and diversify existing supply chains and bring new innovative products to the market from suppliers such as theatres, football clubs, local newspapers, and galleries. These industries have been damaged significantly during the pandemic and this investment will help them recover.

The scheme also aims to harness the millions of talented adults who now work in the heart of their local communities. These home-workers may decide to supplement their income by providing evening classes, going part-time or even beginning a new and rewarding career. This huge resource of potential providers will help ensure supply chains develop, diversity and consolidate, creating a product that increasingly attracts self-perpetuating consumer spending. This raises the opportunity in the future, if necessary, for the vouchers to become means tested and for the government to reduce its spending commitment.

The economic case for this policy is strong. It will provide a post-COVID stimulus package that, through a market driven approach, ensures waste is avoided. The investment would be evenly spread around the country reaching every city, town and village. Any adult or local business that can provide a valuable and fun activity could immediately earn an income and potentially grow a profitable business. Much of this money will be put directly into the hands of those who have recently seen their incomes drop. This will help ensure a high multiplier effect that catalyses the wider economy.

Secondary supply chain effects will also target industries that have suffered during the pandemic. Enterprising businesses and organisations such as shops, cafes, gyms, libraries, or schools, could benefit by renting out their space to providers. Alternatively, commercial

property owners with empty shops on their hands may seek to capture these revenue streams directly. This could lead to a re-functioning of high streets into cultural centres that provide creative and recreational activities and a place for communities to meet.

This scheme will tackle many of the challenges that children in the 21st century face, such as bullying, disruption in the classroom and mental health issues. Many children that struggle academically develop a lack of self-esteem due to the absence of other activities through which they can experience success. These students will often compete for attention by being disruptive or being the class clown. Others will mitigate their lack of self-worth by attempting to make others feel the same way. The solution to these problems should be preventative and should start with a society that creates a wealth of opportunities through which children can feel success. Through fun and worthwhile clubs and societies children learn to identify and pursue interests, experience a sense of achievement, and occasionally plant the seeds for a future career. This policy will also build diverse and complex social networks which strengthen their resilience to bullying and forge strong community bonds.

Finally, this policy aims to begin a process of national rejuvenation, building stronger and more complex community bonds and a societal resilience that prepares us for future national emergencies. Intergenerational connections will become the norm with children finding role models beyond the authority figures of parents and teachers, and distant Youtube stars. Parents who often feel isolated in modern urban suburbs will benefit from the development of a deeper support network of adults who also have their children's best interests at heart.

It is important to add that child safety must be central to the design of this scheme. To this end a rigorous system of checks and monitoring must be implemented. However, the stronger community bonds that this scheme aims to engender would also help ensure vulnerable children are protected.

ID: 175-11 - Category: Digital
Widening of the HMRC R&D tax credit mechanism to encompass creative development
All creative development involves risk. Whether in video game development, a play script, a

new rap artist. Yet this is not the sort of risk that banks, VCs or the City are prepared to invest in as it is 'unproven', 'risky', with uncertain outcomes.

Investment is generally made by the creators themselves, small companies, by trusts and grants. For many it is a hand-to-mouth existence. Even for relatively successful tv or film production companies, the risk they carry as they develop new projects or tv formats pitching them to large rights-grabbing platforms can take them to the brink of closure.

However we already have a system which works exceptionally well to support technology innovation, that could easily be extended to support innovation across the creative sector. HMRC R&D Tax Credits rebate or credit any business up to 33% of the spend on innovation involving the development of unique technology solutions for their business - whether they are successful or not. The Tax Credit system covers research, materials, development, overheads etc that relate to that technological research and innovation.

It has been successfully applied by countless companies to a wide range of projects in all sectors. It is a recognised system with a support infrastructure of accountants funded by retaining a percentage of successful R&D Tax Credit applications.

To extend this system to cover creative idea development for games developers and other screen based industries, to support idea development in our dance houses or theatres, to enable designers to innovate within their consultancies without having to continually rely on a 'work for hire' model could drive a tsunami of innovation that positively impact Britain and the world.

We already have the top two creative schools as voted by their global peers in the University of the Art London and the Royal College of Art. By unlocking a wider ability within the creative economy to explore new models, new ideas it allows the creative sector to continue to lead the

world post pandemic.

This model would have the additional benefit of helping creators to own and retain more of their Intellectual Property - a driver of growth anbd value within this sector. And would encourage greater investment in idea development from third party investors - particularly if the R&D Tax Credit could be mirrored in their accounts.

The other benefit of this proposal is that by extending a mechanism that is already in place would be relatively easy and cost effective. It is light touch yet would be seen as supporting an enormous sector of the economy who has been badly affected by the pandemic.

ID: 1767-11 - Category: Digital

How best to combine information currently held and make it accessible for public use

By providing ready access to the metadata from all the various information databases that the U.K. currently holds on its citizens and using it to its fullest potential there will be a substantial improvement in the value for money provided to taxpayers. Combining this ready access to the metadata (access to individual personal information would still need proper authorisation - based solely on its value to the citizen) with AI will enable those parts of government responsible for allocating publicly funded resources to satisfy health, social and (maybe in time) business needs. Once allocated the public value of the output from the targeted usage of those resources can be measured the lessons from its success (and even more failure) learned and applied in the next iteration of that and other policies and resource allocations. This is intended to enable the rapid exchange of best practice, and resource allocation, across all departments. The control and management of the various database/s, access to them and, not least, the quality of the interpretation of any analyses of metadata should be the responsibility of an independent OBR style team given the freedom to source the very best talent from both within and outside the civil service. This structure is intended to keep the quality and relentless focus of the resource away from short term political influence in much the same way as the OBR is enabled to stand outside government control and report on its performance. Once this accessible information resource is properly understood and controlled then limited access to customized analyses of metadata could be offered to approved third parties for mutual benefit at full commercial value. Equally the expertise developed in extracting full operational and commercial value from the mass of government held information could be offered to other

countries/institutions once again at full commercial value and for mutual benefit.

ID: 1639-11 - Category: Digital

Digital poverty and education inequality solutions: technology credits and an AI teaching assistant

It needs to be accepted that access to technology is fast becoming a human right. For this reason I propose a two part solution to the digital divide.

Firstly, the long term and ever-increasing technological inequalities must be addressed as soon as possible. The more the world moves to online solutions and services, the further behind those that are already disadvantaged are left. My proposed solution to this is 'UK technology credits'. This can be means tested, and/or vouchered so there are clear limits on what such funds can be used for, and so those who don't need this support aren't wasting funds. But it should be of utmost priority of the Government to ensure every UK household has access to the internet (the credit should include funds for data allowance), a laptop and phone. Or even the ability to rent or loan technology - e.g from a library. There should also be a central government scheme (see the UK Crowd-resource platform submission) for donating old technology so that this can be redistributed, reducing the costs of such an initiative, and a waiting list for such technologies in the same way people register for housing.

Such a scheme would pay for itself as the growing number of online free education, jobs boards, etc. would allow disadvantaged groups rapid and wide access to resources.

Once this occurs, then the possibilities to rapidly solve so many of society's problems and challenges grows exponentially. It also means there are endless possibilities for the UK Government to lead the way globally and technologically innovate!

One such example and the second part to this solution is to create an AI teaching assistant. Note, the first part in ensuring everyone has technology access is required, so this doesn't

become a tool that grows the divide and helps those who already have the most whilst leaving those who don't have further behind. This AI teaching assistant can level out the inequalities caused by differences that exist in school quality, or availability of adult support for children. It also means that instead of mentoring and tutors being accessed only by those children whose families can afford it, those who aren't further disadvantaged by this educational divide and instead will have access to technology and innovation to supplement their education.

It is relatively straightforward to create an AI-powered chat bot, and this is a technology already trusted, used and advised by the national services (e.g. online therapy courses, or apps e.g. Wysa). The national curriculum and the wide range of open-source teaching and online course tools and data can be used to develop an app. Students can build a profile and complete quizzes to determine their current level of ability and then AI recommendations on courses, videos, resources to work on. This data could be shared with schools so they get a picture of where students are at and tailor classes and teaching to meet the needs of the class they are teaching (e.g. if the data shows the majority are struggling with fractions, then they can know to focus on this in a revision lesson). This aggregate data can be used by the government to make improvements to the national curriculum and lead data driven decision making for education. The app can also be used to provide additional skills lessons and information, e.g. budgeting for kids. The content can be provided by the many charities that exist in this space. The government could run challenges from the app to encourage creativity and engagement amongst children. The app can have animated videos, quizzes, games, with the wealth of online tools aimed at improving the quality and style of education to increase engagement with children.

The app can then have AI powered problem/answer ability - for children who need further help and walk-throughs with a specific topic, making this interactive and providing questions throughout. The search can be limited to ensure the information is child-friendly. Users can link with friends to see profiles and challenge each other to quizzes or educational games and encourage each other's progress. This should really supplement and support the traditional teaching experience and ensure a child always has a place to ask a question and find help with their education needs.

Reminders for homework can be scheduled and AI recommendations provided for resources to

help, as well as regularly updating the skill and ability profile so parents can see where their children might need extra support. This can be primarily aimed at children, but even widened to adults e.g. college courses, national skills courses etc.

Such technology can also then be applied to other areas, for example, an AI personal training or health and wellbeing assistant - using existing videos from various sources e.g. exercise videos linked on the NHS website, nutrition guides etc. Users can input goals and have the app remind them, as well as be able to chat with the AI bot to record difficulties, amend the programme, get encouragement and motivation, and as a search tool to find guidance and information. Examples include: finding a local free exercise class, finding a local park with outdoor gym equipment, finding a guide to different food sources, linking to mental health apps and meditation videos and allow routines and reminders to be scheduled to encourage people to commit to these activities on a daily basis. This could be rolled into the NHS app and contain symptom tracking, so users have one place for health and wellbeing support. A public app such as this would lead the way for governments using technology to improve citizen wellbeing and society.

ID: 575-11 - Category: Digital
A Territorial Army for the NHS
The policy proposal for the NHS Capacity challenge identified in Q1b above is to create an NHS Reserve or Territorial Army akin o the military's TA.

Objective:

To build a trained and experienced reserve team, able to to support the NHS in times of crisis or seasonal work overload.

Principles:

The NHS would identify specific roles or functions which (a) are most likely to suffer from staff and skill shortages either seasonally or in times of crisis such as pandemic, epidemic, natural or transport disasters, terrorist attacks etc. ; and which (b) lend themselves to discrete or specialist training as described below .

The difference between this Reserve programme and a normal volunteer programme is that

reservists will be selected and trained with a specific function or role in mind , which they can perform with a minimum of supervision as and when the need arises. The Covid Pandemic suggests a number of possible areas for Reservist training including : intensive care treatment, operation of ventilators and administering of vaccinations. Other examples might include basic nursing; first aid and trauma treatment, operation of specialist intensive care equipment , ambulance driving or simply general porter/auxiliary services.

A recruitment campaign would be aimed mainly at young people regardless of their level of education but a rigorous assessment process would identify which role was most suited to each candidate . Background and psychological checks would also be undertaken to ensure general ability and suitability of the candidate concerned.

Each successful candidate, a Reservist, would enter into a contract with the NHS through which he/she would commit to an initial and annual refresher training programme and to be available for a service call up for a minimum period each year on an -as needed basis. Employers would be encouraged, incentivised or even required to offer terms to new recruits which would allow Reservists to give the necessary commitment of time. Training would consist of a two part programme covering (a) general NHS standards and principles such as ethics, data protection, hygene etc and (b) the specialist skills needed to fulfil the requirements of relevant function. The specialist training would include some practical, on the job, experience which would be refreshed annually.

Each Reservist would be paid an annual sum in respect of his/her minimum annual commitment plus a per diem amount to reflect any additional time spent in NHS service. Other incentives could be considered such as tax breaks on Reservist payments, free rail /bus passes and an exemption from jury service.

Advantages. The Advantages of the NHS Reservist scheme would include:

- 1. Capacity Building : The creation of a flexible and auxiliary work force which could complement permanent NHS staff with the skills and knowledge that are most needed in times of seasonal stress or unexpected crisis;

2. Financial : Resources that are scalable will allow the NHS to avoid some full career training costs which are likely to increase as the supply of trained overseas staff becomes more scarce after Brexit. It could also reduce the amount paid to Medical/ Nursing supply agencies to cover temporary shortages; 3. Career Opportunities : The Plan could be a convenient entry point for young people who are not ready to commit, full time, to the NHS – but whose Reservist

experience convinces them that they do indeed have the necessary vocation to care for others.

4. Utilisation of resources: The Plan is suited to the current employment climate of 'gig economy' workers and zero hour contracts and would provide an anchor of continuity for those who have no long term career prospects or commitment

5. Citizenship Enhancement: A Reservist Plan provides an opportunity for people to contribute to, and thereby earn a stake in society. It would help to 'round off ' those who pursue their main careers in professions such as law, finance or IT and would provide some real life experience and people skills for those who are otherwise cloistered in an office or 'virtual' environment .

ID: 1759-11 - Category: Digital

Clubs and Classes National Voucher Scheme - Submission 4

The COVID-19 pandemic provides a once in a generation opportunity to revolutionise the provision of creative, sporting, and recreational activities throughout the country. The policy I propose will deliver a huge demand shock for the arts, entertainment and recreation sector which will strengthen and grow supply chains until they provide a diverse offer of high-quality clubs and societies. It will catalyse a new purpose for the high-street and harness the untapped well of talent that has abruptly found itself working back in local communities. It will forge new and stronger community bonds across socio-economic, cultural, and generational divides and will provide children and adults with the opportunity to discover and nurture talents, develop diverse friendships and connections, and build self-esteem. The goal is a society where children and adults enjoy a rich tapestry of experiences, who identify and pursue interests, and who develop a complex network friends and mentors within vibrant communities.

I propose introducing a government funded voucher scheme that will ensure demand for creative, sporting, and recreational activities is driven by children and their parents. Every child will receive £200 a year in the form of vouchers that can be spent with any registered provider. To be eligible providers will need to prove that their class provides value to the child by helping them learn a skill, develop an interest, get exercise, or simply have fun and build friendships. The cost of each class is set by the provider but should have a limit to encourage regular activities rather than one-off specials. The vouchers will be administered on a government website on which children, with permission from parents, will sign up for classes. To help ensure this programme crowds-in rather than crowds-out consumer spending parents will be able to spend their own money on additional classes. The raw cost of the vouchers if offered to all

children aged 4 to 18 would be approximately £2.2 billion.

The purpose of this market driven approach is to allow price signals to drive a supply of activities that children and their parents value and enjoy. The significant demand shock provided by the government will quickly strengthen, widen, and diversify existing supply chains and bring new innovative products to the market from suppliers such as theatres, football clubs, local newspapers, and galleries. These industries have been damaged significantly during the pandemic and this investment will help them recover.

Crucial to the success of the scheme is to harness the talent and spending power of the millions of adults who now work in the heart of their local communities. This home-working army could provide a significant boost to supply by supplementing their income with evening classes, going part-time or starting a new and rewarding career. This huge resource of potential providers will help ensure supply chains develop, diversity and consolidate, creating a product that increasingly attracts self-perpetuating consumer spending.

These home-workers could also provide significant additional demand. The voucher scheme will catalyse a rapid increase in breadth, depth and quality of cultural and sporting activities that can be offered to adults during the day when children are at school. This crowding-in of spending power is necessary to ensure this revitalised sector is self-sustaining.

This policy will also create demand up the supply chain for high street commercial property in which these classes can take place. Enterprising businesses and organisations such as shops, cafes, gyms, libraries, or schools, could benefit by renting out their space to providers. Alternatively, commercial property owners with empty shops on their hands may seek to capture these revenue streams directly. This could lead to a re-functioning of high streets into cultural centres that provide creative and recreational activities and a place for communities to meet.

The economic case for this policy is strong. It will provide a post-COVID stimulus package that, through a market driven approach, ensures waste is avoided. The investment would be evenly spread around the country reaching every city, town and village. Any adult or local business that can provide a valuable and fun activity could immediately earn an income and potentially grow a profitable business. This money will be put directly into the hands of those whose incomes have recently dropped ensuring a high multiplier effect that catalyses the wider economy.

This scheme will tackle many of the challenges that children in the 21st century face, such as bullying, disruption in the classroom and mental health issues. Many children that struggle academically develop a lack of self-esteem due to the absence of other activities through which they can experience success. These students will often compete for attention by being disruptive or being the class clown. Others will mitigate their lack of self-worth by attempting to make others feel the same way. The solution to these problems should be preventative and should start with a society that creates a wealth of opportunities through which children can feel success. Through fun and worthwhile clubs and societies children learn to identify and pursue interests, experience a sense of achievement, and occasionally plant the seeds for a future career. This policy will also build diverse and complex social networks which strengthen their resilience to bullying and forge strong community bonds.

Finally, this policy aims to begin a process of national rejuvenation, building stronger and more complex community bonds and a societal resilience that prepares us for future national emergencies. Intergenerational connections will become the norm with children finding role models beyond the authority figures of parents and teachers, and distant Youtube stars. Parents will also benefit from the development of a deeper support network of local adults.

The strong community bonds that this scheme aims to engender will help ensure vulnerable children are protected. However, child safety must still be central to the design of this scheme. To this end a rigorous system of checks and monitoring must be implemented.

ID: 1061-11 - Category: Digital

Initiatives to improve the UK's cyber security during the COVID-19 pandemic and beyond.

The UK has been heavily targeted by hostile state actors (HSAs) in cyberspace throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. Initiatives need to be introduced which further strengthen the UK's ability to defend itself. These include introducing a quantitative, public "Cyber Hygiene" rating scheme for UK organisations, as well as additional obligations for British cloud service providers (CSPs) to tackle the increasing malicious use of their services.

Firstly, HMG should explore complementing the 2018 NIS directive by introducing a grass-roots, compulsory baseline of cyber security for UK organisations. This would be a system which measures a company's cyber security against a common set of standards to result in a public, tiered, quantitative rating. This is similar to the way the Food Standards Agency uses the Food Hygiene Rating system to influence consumer choice and thus, the rigour with which restaurants uphold a satisfactory level of cleanliness. The Cyber Hygiene scheme would have the same effect online: influencing potential customers' (both civilians and other organisations) decisions as to whether they would trust the organisation in question with their data, encouraging those with lower ratings to improve their security.

The Cyber Hygiene scheme should be separate from the National Cyber Security Centre's (NCSC) existing Cyber Essentials scheme, which provides an optional cyber security control framework for small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs). The Cyber Hygiene scheme should complement this and become mandatory for every UK organisation which operates online in any capacity.

In 2021, nigh on everything is done over interconnected networks: from discussing government policy, military doctrine and economic data, to storing intellectual property (such as vaccine research and development) and trade secrets. If the defence of those assets are sub-par, even the least sophisticated hackers can compromise them, causing preventable consumption of law enforcement and security resources. Hence, during a global pandemic, a base level of cyber security should be high priority for British organisations involved in the response. The consequences of overlooking basic measures are stark, as evidenced in 2017 when a failure to patch vulnerable Windows computers allowed the infamous WannaCry ransomware to

significantly disrupt the NHS' operations. The protection of healthcare institutions and the vaccine supply chain has never been more important, and a second WannaCry-esque incident in the current climate could be catastrophic.

Mandatory public display of an organisation's Cyber Hygiene rating would act as deterrence for both senior management and hostile actors: in the former's case, by ensuring the appropriate amount of investment is piped into cost-effective security solutions, and in the latter's by making highly rated organisations less attractive targets for hostile actors. Effective implementation of the scheme could have an added benefit of lessening the burden on the UK's security and law enforcement agencies well beyond the pandemic.

Implementing this scheme does however present a risk by possibly highlighting organisations with lower ratings and increasing their attractiveness as targets in the eyes of malicious actors. In these (likely few) cases, HMG could provide limited monetary incentives to smaller organisations, point them to the Cyber Essentials control framework and provide the advice of pre-existing consultants from the NCSC to "fast-track" them to an acceptable rating.

The second measure would be to explore levying requirements on British cloud service providers (CSPs) to more robustly track foreign malicious usage of their services and improve UK law enforcement and security investigations.

Cloud computing has revolutionised the way organisations work with data. Organisations can pay cloud providers a fee to use segments of their data centres to store intellectual property rather than storing it on premise. This cuts a lot of overhead and maintenance costs for companies, but also effectively outsources the security of the company's proprietary data to the cloud provider. This presents a vast, expansive threat surface which foreign cyber actors are exploiting as vectors into organisations of interest. This is evidenced by the significant hostile supply chain cyber campaign identified in December 2020 which used access to U.S. software vendor, SolarWinds, to penetrate its customers such as U.S. government departments. The direction of travel towards cloud computing means that organisations working in the fields of

vaccine research and development and healthcare will likely follow suit, presenting heightened risk.

Complicating matters is the fact that CSPs can offer access to their cloud environments via foreign resellers with limited requirements for tracking the identities of those setting up accounts. This makes it easier for hackers to conduct cyber attacks against UK interests or leverage UK CSP access to launch attacks against other nations, causing UK reputational damage. It makes it difficult for investigators to obtain accurate evidence to prosecute those responsible as actors can easily obfuscate their identities and dispose of malicious infrastructure. Hence, legislation mandating CSPs to maintain robust record-keeping is needed to help improve national security and law enforcement investigations and protect the UK's reputation.

Care should be taken to avoid being too draconian – any action must be in line with the UK's values as a liberal democracy and focus on promoting a peaceful cyberspace. Indeed, one of the previous U.S. administration's final Executive Orders (EO) in January 2021 sought to levy similar responsibilities on U.S. CSPs and the UK should explore following suit even if the EO is rescinded by the new administration.

The UK will continue attracting the attention of sophisticated cyber actors from across the spectrum while it remains a world-leading cyber, science and technology power. HMG can and must keep ahead of the threat by taking reasonable steps at home to harden its cyber environment. This will impose costs on those who seek to steal the UK's intellectual property or degrade its critical infrastructure.

ID: 1030-11 - Category: Digital

Levelling the retail playing field by replacing Business Rates with additional standard rate VAT

There has been an increasing relation during the pandemic of the value of local bricks and mortar businesses, with research from Deloitte Digital showing that 59% of consumers in Britain have used more local stores and services to help support them during lockdown, and 46% of

consumers say they are more likely to spend money at a shop that supports local charities, such as food banks, once the lockdown has lifted. However, these are the same businesses that have borne the brunt of restrictions, including none-essential retails, and hospitality/cultural venues. One way to support these businesses by lowering their fixed costs would be to replace business rates (and equivalent property taxes) with an increase in the standard rate of VAT to 25%.

One of the actions taken by the government to support businesses during the pandemic has been providing business rates relief/holidays to help businesses forced to close for extended periods. This support provides the opportunity to review and reform the business rates and wider business tax regime to help those businesses which bore the brunt of the impact of COVID-19 restrictions: "bricks and mortar" retailers and other businesses with high fixed costs due to large property portfolios. The current business rates system has proven to be problematic in an increasingly digital world. This problem was apparent before the pandemic, as highlighted by the House of Commons Treasury Committee Impact of business rates on business report published on 22 October 2019. This report outlined possible alternatives including an online sales tax, a new sales tax, or additional tax on profits. However, an increase in the standard VAT rate provides benefits not realised by those options. There are benefits for both businesses and individuals, with those hit hardest by the pandemic in both groups being among those who benefit the most.

The measure could be roughly cost neutral, in 2019 business rates (and equivalent business property taxes) raised £31 billion of UK government income, whilst VAT raised £130 billion. With the current standard rate of VAT set at 20%, a 5% VAT rise would be roughly equivalent to the income raised by business rates. This does not consider the contribution of lower rated VAT goods such as domestic energy, but the breakdown of figures for this are not as easily available, therefore my arguments are caveated with this impact uncalculated.

The benefits for businesses are:

1. Lower fixed costs, which makes businesses more resilient to economic downturns.

2. Fairer taxes between digital and physical retailers, with reduced tax burden on businesses

with large/high value property enabling them to cut prices to compete with digital competitors.

3. No increase in tax on essential items such as food, sanitary products, or energy which are 0 or 5% rated for VAT.

4. As well as helping physical retailers, it will also help cultural venues, as extension of government plans to reduce business rates for some cultural venues. Some cultural venues would also benefit from their admission charges being VAT exempt.

5. Simplification of business tax regime by completely removing business property taxes, and replacing with a system already used by the majority of retailers

6. A proportionally lower impact on alcohol prices due to duty making up more of the cost of alcohol, therefore reducing the impact on hospitality venues.

The benefits for individuals are:

1. Lower prices for essential items sold by physical retailers due to no VAT increase and lower business tax burden. Businesses in the highly competitive markets for food, health/sanitary products, and books, are likely to pass on savings due to competitive pressure.

2. More competitive pricing for individuals who are unable to shop online due to either lack of digital skills or access.

Benefits for government are:

1. Reduced cost of tax administration due to removal of business rates valuation and collection

2. Boost local retailers which benefit local economies more than online sales which are disproportionately skewed to multinational or drop shipping companies with no local or national economic benefit.

The benefits above are more substantial than those generated by an online sales levy. This is because an online sales levy applied on all online sales would discourages physical businesses from offering digital sales in addition to physical sales due to increased tax and administrative burden. VAT is often characterised as a regressive tax because low-income households spend a greater proportion of their income than high-income households.

However, this change would not increase the regressive tax burden because it only applies to standard rated items which make up a lower proportion of the spending by lower income households. One potential problem of this change would be the need to split VAT income between local and national government. However, this could be done either based on VAT income being split by the location of the sale (for physical sales) or another formula being created entirely. Given that business rates income is currently split between local and national government, according to a formula, it is not beyond the ability of government to create a suitable formula for VAT income.

Another problem is government income would suffer during economic downturns due to reduced public and business spending generating lower VAT receipts. However, this could be negated by more businesses surviving these downturns due to lower fixed costs, and the change also enables governments to take greater advantage of growth in spending during better times. Prior to the pandemic VAT income had grown for a decade and once more "normal" times resume, the higher VAT income generated by the increased VAT rate could provide a boost to public finances to help pay down the massive debts incurred during the pandemic.

This change would create a fairer market between physical and online retailers, without discouraging digital innovation, whilst benefitting lower income families, and encouraging local spending with the increased economic benefits that it brings. This will help Britain recover from the impacts of the pandemic and aid the country's development in an increasingly digital world, whilst ensuring government income is not significantly affected.

ID: 899-11 - Category: Digital
Bridging the digital divide

I've split my problems and opportunities into two categories, based on research of key factors around the digital divide in the UK.

1. Access

a. Hardware

It's estimated that 700,000 young people do not have adequate access or training to use devices at home (Nominet, 2019).

3.8 million people in the UK remain entirely offline (Lloyds Bank, 2020).

It's estimated that there are 40 million unused devices in UK homes (BBC, 2019).

Donating equipment as a business is currently tax deductible. Making this a similar, short-term scheme for individuals would maximise recycling of unused devices in each household – for example, providing a £20 incentive per device donation.

Donations of equipment is currently fielded through several different organisations, from DevicesDotNow to the BBC to private charities to schools themselves. Re-organising this through local councils would allow them to distribute to a variety of organisations in need: not only schools, but also housing associations and refugee centres, for example. All of the individuals served by these organisations are proven to be less likely to be online and to suffer financially, in earnings and employability (Lloyds Bank, 2020).

Longer-term, a consistent donation scheme, in addition to central government funding, should be used to ensure the most vulnerable and least digitally accessible are not further disadvantaged through digital illiteracy. This could be funded through a digital services contribution by large companies, increasing their social responsibility and promoting their brand. This happens somewhat already (above), but should be centralised. My suggestion is through councils, as disadvantaged groups lie not only in schools, but also housing associations, refugee centres etc..

Additionally, the environmental impact of re-distributing these devices would be staggering. Manufacturing a laptop is estimated to emit 227kg-270kg of CO_2 (phys.org, 2011). Let's say 50% of unused devices in the UK are laptops, so 20 million devices. Taking the lower end of CO_2 emissions per device at 227kg, that's 4.54 billion kg CO_2 wasted from laptops that are unused.

b. Internet/wifi

12% of people previously state they didn't have internet access at home as they were able to access elsewhere (ONS, 2018).

Many people rely on 4G as their internet connections, with approximately 26 million in the UK as pay-as-you-go customers. This was obviously problematic during lockdown, without the ability to easily top-up. Some people report that they have to choose between food and wifi in their weekly budgets (The Guardian, 2020).

143 million GB of data goes unused every month, increasing to 165 million GB during lockdown (FutureNow, 2020). Per GB, Emerge Interactive estimates 3kg of CO_2 is emitted. Therefore

during lockdown the UK was wasting 495,000,000kg CO2 every month.

 Vodafone Netherlands ran a scheme to donate excess gigabytes of data each month to people in need, redistributing through foundations and charities. This was an opt-in scheme. By pushing through policy to make re-donation of unused gigabytes mandatory for telecom providers through digital literacy/local charities, this data be redistributed to those in need. Penalties for providers that don't comply makes sense, as they are still getting paid for the excess GB that is unused and don't lose anything by donating.

 Zero-rating (providing free access) essential websites would mean those people that access essential services (Money Advice Service or Universal Credit), don't need paid services. These sites should be zero-rated now and forever, with on-going additions to keep this up to date. An example is O2, who did this for 20 essential websites over lockdown.

 A longer-term infrastructure solution, based on that of Singapore, should be collaborated through the government and multiple private providers (preferably not Conservative donors) to redistribute localised internet access in disadvantaged areas. There is a key divide in access geographically across the UK that could additionally be bridged with this solution (Lloyds Bank, 2020).

 2. Digital literacy

 ~9 million people in the UK are unable to use the internet and their device by themselves and 11.7 million do not have the digital skills they need for everyday life. Disadvantaged groups (such as those in poverty, disabled and elderly) are most likely not to be online. Intersectional groups are not measured. These groups are more likely to pay higher prices for their utilities and less likely to save money and be financially aware (Lloyds Bank, 2020).

Providing digital skills to 100% of the UK population would allow many more people to access essential information and benefits, and could also contribute over £14 billion annually to the UK economy (CEBR, 2015). The Good Foundation's Blueprint for 100% Digitally Included UK (2020) states that a central government investment of £130 million is needed, which would theoretically provide a return of 107x investment.

One study showed that one-to-one coaching on digital literacy is an effective approach (CCHPR, 2019). Benefits included simple tasks such as setting up an email address and navigating digital banking. In the case of this study, results included reduced debts and reaching interview stages in job applications.

A number of skills toolkits already exist, all accessed online: DfE Skills Toolkit (online), FutureDotNow (online), and Tech Talent Charter (online). A pattern emerges: the most disadvantaged people are offline, and remain without the skills to get online, to access the tools that they need to enable them to be effective online.

People who don't use the internet are more likely to feel isolated from others (ActiveAge, 2010). "Older adults are exceptionally suited to meet these needs [of younger people] … because they welcome meaningful, productive activity and engagement" (Carstensen/Stanford, 2016). I propose mandatory volunteering be incorporated into IT curriculums, combined with Citizenship curriculums and including training and delivering the enablement. Reaching out to disadvantaged groups such as the elderly through local charities and associations, using resources that are free and available, would digitally enable a large number of people in a short period of time. Additionally, it would increase undervalued soft skills young people are often lacking, such as presenting and delivering with confidence – something that private schools typically excel at over state schools.

ID: 893-11 - Category: Digital
Community Small Grant Scheme

Aim

To address the following point1 : the role of philanthropy, social investment and business and what forms of finance can be used to support communities in order to make it easier for small, level community groups (groups) to improve the services they provide by enabling more capital investment.

Why

Small groups, at the coal face, are mostly and rightly focussed on the next task. Often times longer term improvements or small scale investment is of lower priority that the task at hand. Fundraising in these groups is used for both current spending and capital expenditure. By providing support for the latter (whilst also retaining a focus on the former in some circumstances) groups can be encouraged to grow and be more effective in supporting their local communities.

Proposal

The formation of a Community Small Grant Scheme (CSGS), administered by local authorities, to support expansion activities of community focused organisations that are currently funded through self-fundraising or stakeholder donations.

Scope

A grant from central Government, ring-fenced for the sole purpose of providing support for groups will be issued to each council.

Each Community Small Grant (CSG) will deliver £500-£1,000 to community groups for small, low level initiatives primarily to support investment in facilities and secondly to support current spending (if deemed appropriate) to improve their organisation or deliver on their aims such

examples could include:

- Installing or upgrading communication equipment (internet/broadband)

- Redecorating public or community areas (church halls, skate parks, soup kitchens)

- Restoring or replacing equipment (sports equipment, cooking equipment)

Oversight

There is currently provision for small business grants, as a result of coronavirus, administered by local governments. The infrastructure of this could be translated to the CSGS, alongside related oversight. Additionally applications where the community group matches the grant from the Council should be afforded a higher priority to encourage self-fundraising to continue.

Pros

1) Relatively small amount of money for the maximum of impact at the micro level.

2) By donation matching small groups are encouraged to continue to fundraise and they can double their impact.

3) Low administrative burdens with a lot of the processes in place (e.g. from existing business grant schemes).

Cons

1) Groups may no longer be encouraged to self-fundraise.

Mitigant: Encourage donation matching.

2) Fraud.

Mitigant: Ongoing relationship with the council and councillors to ensure aims are being met.

3) Inability to meet applications from all groups.

Mitigant: Only allow one application per group every three years. Independent decisions committee made up of an equal representation of councillors or apolitical officials.

ID: 3053-11 - Category: Digital
Prediction Markets Could Help Stop the Next Pandemic

Prediction markets would bring information to light on possible crises. It's not culturally acceptable to predict suffering, but not having this information costs lives. The Government can create useful but controversial markets. Predictions from these markets will "break the ice" on important issues, bringing forward discussion and any necessary government action, saving lives.

A lack of information has led to poor decisions around Coronavirus. Consider the followingcases: Handwashing was prioritised over mask-wearing, quarantining incoming travellers

was deemed impossible and a too-short initial lockdown led to months of additional confinement. Had we known this at the time, live in the UK could have carried on as normal, as it largely did in New Zealand and Taiwan.

Some people did know this information, but there weren't good channels to the public or politicians. On 24th January 2020, a top forecaster with the username "traviswfisher" reduced their forecast for the 2020 global population, citing the "wuhan coronavirus" as the reason. This level of concern took 6 weeks to be expressed by the UK Government. How does information like this move from unknown experts to the public?

Prediction markets funnel information from many sources into a single stream. The stock market is a good example. If people think a stock will go up in value, they can buy it. If they think the opposite, they sell. In this way, it transforms the actions of many actors into one clear signal, the stock price. Had a prediction market existed, people like "traviswfisher" could have contributed their ideas into a signal which would have pointed more quickly to the danger around COVID-19.

What's more, prediction markets provide an incentive to report unpopular information. Currently, people mock bad predictions and largely ignore good ones. Markets create a reliable incentive. You can report your information anonymously and earn money. There is a

simple challenge to anyone who claims the market is wrong - "bet on it".

The central point is that prediction markets let us learn controversial information more quickly. Imagine there had been a market on "deaths due to new diseases in the UK in 2020", which in January jumped to 100,000. Many would decry this as awful, that people would gain money from predicting death. But equally, this information could have saved many lives if it had been taken seriously earlier.

Private companies can't deal with this reputational blowback. Two of the largest prediction markets in the UK are run by bookies, Smarkets and Betfair. They will predict "safe" topics like elections and national reopening, but they don't want to risk the bad publicity of predicting diseases, poverty or unemployment.

The Government can lead the way by setting up Channel-4-style, publicly-owned prediction market, which predicts a broad range of useful topics. The Government regularly discusses death and taxes, so faces much less reputational risk from doing so. This would provide cover for for-profit companies to do the same.

A flourishing UK prediction market ecosystem would result in better lives for people, better policy outcomes and better journalism. If there had been a market on "deaths from new diseases in 2020", a jump to 100,000 would have shocked the public. People would have bet against it, but those with the information would have kept the price up. In the meantime, articles could have been written about this. Headlines about Italy would stand side by side with those showing markets predicting exactly the same for the UK. Every day this brought the response forward would have been worth billions of pounds and 100s of lives.On the other hand, Governments are concerned with reputational risk too. In 2003, the US Department of Defense suggested their prediction market might include a market around terrorism. As a result of the backlash, the entire program was cancelled. There would need to be clear guidelines - avoiding markets around deaths of individuals or those which would likely incentivise crime. There is however a clear precedent for this, insider trading is illegal but profitable, yet the stock market still exists.

Prediction markets are unusual, but COVID-19 has provided a window of opportunity for unusual but good solutions. The public understands that new problems require new systems. Where prediction markets might normally be too strange they can be part of a range of changes around ensuring crises like this don't happen again.

Additionally, the Government would in turn receive cover for policy moves legitimised by prediction markets. Many times in the last year the UK government has waited weeks after an initial suggestion to act, finally pushed by public opinion. This has avoided unpopular policies, though has led to more deaths than would have happened with swifter action. Had prediction markets created urgency sooner, the government could have acted more quickly and saved lives.

It's hard to predict what's going to happen, but it's worse when you get no benefit from doing

so. In the last year, there has been some reputational gain for those who made good predictions, but it's too little, too late. Prediction markets are a timely solution to this problem, though they are too controversial for private companies to undertake alone. A best-in-class public option would spur the private sector onwards and support the Government in providing good policy.

ID: 2178-11 - Category: Digital
Key building blocks for modernising Social Security

Modernising the UK Social Security System should aim to simplify and make more user friendly its operation, better integrate its multiple components and improve its flexibility and responsiveness in the face of future emergencies. Key building blocks needed to provide a foundation for the modernisation plan's progressive implementation are to: (a) introduce a standard benefit ID number for all UK citizens and long term residents entitled to receive benefits; (b) use this benefit ID number as the primary identification number for individuals on public data bases used for paying social security benefits; (c)) require all adults to have bank accounts into which any benefit entitlements would be paid; and (d) when the above three steps are in place, introduce a limited Universal Basic Income system under which all adults of 18 and over would be entitled to a basic income when they are not in paid employment, in full-time higher education or receiving a state pension. These steps are further explained below.

Benefit ID Numbers. A unique benefit identification (BID) number would be assigned to each citizen at birth and recorded in the Somerset House registry. Long term residents and naturalised citizens would be assigned a BID number when their status and entitlement to benefits are approved. Existing adults and their dependent children would need to apply to Somerset House giving their birth details and current addresses so that BID numbers can be assigned and details sent to them.

Using the BID numbers on Benefit Data Bases. The records for each individual would be filed on public data bases that are concerned with paying social security financial benefits using or cross-referencing that individuals BID number. This would include the HMRC, income support, housing and supplemental benefit registries, local government social services and work and pensions registries. This will facilitate digitisation and cross communication and integration of records as needed. Safeguards would be introduced to prevent unauthorised access to personal records.

Bank Accounts. To facilitate rapid and, when appropriate, automatic payment of benefits, all adult beneficiaries would be required to have a bank account whose paying in details would be

made available to HMRC and relevant benefit agencies. If necessary, for those not able to manage accounts on-line, banks would be encouraged to offer simple, cost free, debit card operated accounts whose basic operations could be managed using cash machines. Again, appropriate privacy and security safeguards would need to be built in.

Universal Basic Income. Once the above steps are in place, a limited Universal Basic Income system could be introduced. All adults not in full time higher education or receiving a state pension would be entitled to receive a standard basic income. If they are not in paid employment this basic income would be paid directly to the individual's bank account by HMRC. Employers would be required to notify HMRC of the date on which an individual's employment starts and terminates and would take over responsibility for paying the basic income as part of the total wages to be paid to the employee. Thus, the basic income would take the place of job seekers allowance and be paid without delay to those who are or become unemployed as an entitlement without need for an application or proof of job seeking. The cost of introducing this limited Basic Income would depend on the level at which it is set. For example, if the Basic Income was set at £75.0 per week (the current level of job seekers allowance) and the amount of basic income paid were taken into account in assessing entitlements for supplementary benefits such as income support and housing benefit, the total additional cost of introducing the basic income should be quite manageable. At a later stage, and when public finances allow, basic income could be extended to cover adults in higher education also. This would help students defray living costs while at university and reduce the level of their eventual student debts which Government is effectively guaranteeing.

ID: 1642-11 - Category: Digital

Legal measures, civil service training and long-term capability development can all help fix public procurement

It is first important to realise that public procurement cannot be wished away. Since the 1980s, the state's ability to handle problems directly has declined, and the issues it faces have grown more specialist in nature. Public procurement is a reasonable response to this state of affairs and taking difficult topics back in-house cannot be seen as a panacea: see, for example, the government's eventual retreat from developing alternatives to Google's and Apple's software for its COVID-19 track-and-trace app. Additionally, despite high-profile failures, public procurement can also claim some clear successes, such as in domestic waste collection, or in the introduction of private cleaning services in some NHS trusts.

There have also already been attempts to improve the public procurement process, notably under the Public Contracts Regulations 2006 and additional regulations which came into force in 2015. However, these have not been sufficient to bind the government to good practice: in 2018, only 39% of public tenders were published on Contracts Finder (as stipulated by the 2015 regulations). This leads to uncompetitive tenders, which academic research strongly suggests leads to increased costs and other issues. The pandemic has encouraged poor behaviour. Of the £17.3bn in new contracts awarded by the government from the start of the pandemic to July 2020, only 1% were through competitive tenders.

Well-meant reforms can also set up perverse incentives: for example, requirements that the government prefer the most cost-effective project have frustrated attempts to address ecological damage or regional inequality, while encouraging bidders to set a nominal price as low as possible, safe in the political evaluation that cost overruns and further public expenditure will likely come penalty-free. Once the government has committed to a supplier for a large project, the political necessity of completion often makes the supplier into a monopoly-provider of its services, with the potential for abuse that can entail.

As the scale of public procurement – nearly £300bn in 2017-2018 – is so enormous, no one solution can be sufficient. However, separate measures can be introduced to improve the process of public sector procurement over the short, medium and long term. Throughout, the state should be guided by the principles that there should be meaningful alternatives wherever possible, that contracts negotiated should contain enforceable responsibilities to perform to quantifiable standards, and that civil servants negotiating contracts should be equipped and incentivised to negotiate at the same level as their commercial counterparts.

In the short term, the government should introduce legislation which would automatically append clauses containing severe and escalating penalties in tendered contracts over a certain value which went on to exceed budget, overrun their schedule or underachieve targets by a fixed proportion (e.g., 25%). Doing this at the political level is blunt but necessary, as imposing these kinds of punitive clauses is rarely in the interests of commercially-outgunned civil servants, many of whom will move on from their role before the project is completed. Introducing this principle at the legislative level would also help stimulate parliament's role in

the oversight of large public sector projects, which is important in re-addressing the balance towards a higher-spend, higher-outcome universe away from today's pay-later-and-regret-it position.

The government could also introduce a policy where, should a project outperform targets or come in under budget, some small-but-meaningful share of the proportional benefit is awarded as bonus payments to the civil servants who negotiated and administered the contract, regardless of whether they have since moved on. This would act as a strong individual incentive to run procurement contracts well. As it is, low pay and the government's reliance on external consultancy for strategy roles means that talented civil servant's strongest career incentive is to take their skills private and use their knowledge to negotiate against the public purse.

In the medium term, the government should pursue many of the much-discussed avenues for civil service reform. Specialists – both in the field of the contract being commissioned, and in the art of negotiation itself – are rare. IT, commercial, project management and statistical skills are all key areas for improvement. Civil servants are also encouraged to move between roles on a regular basis by a pay structure that rewards frequent shifts over developing a specialism. Lower churn would increase personal accountability and stimulate long-term skills development.

Last, successive governments should work to rebuild the capacity of the civil service to perform some projects entirely in house. This is and should not be seen as a fundamentally statist project – only a recognition that the principal benefits of private procurement occur when competition is fierce, and so in some cases, the state may need to act as a "competitor of last resort". This is particularly important in sectors where high start-up costs deter competition (e.g., defence) or where the outcome is so politically important as to put pressure on Whitehall to conclude contracts quickly (e.g., health).

Building up this capability is more than a question of skills-acquisition, however: governments will need to make the apparently difficult argument that the people who administer the

now-more than £1 trillion of government spending deserve similar (or in some cases, superior) career prospects, pay and prestige to their private sector counterparts. Currently there is little to celebrate: Downing Street has often preferred an external corporate pedigree over relevant experience in its selection of consultants for the development of its response to the COVID-19 outbreak.

While there are numerous short-term measures that can encourage this change – such as raising senior salaries and fewer attempts by Downing Street to do-down Whitehall – this effort would likely have to take place over multiple political generations and therefore more outlandish ideas – such as the formation of a British Sciences-Po or a Crown Consultancy Service – deserve full consideration. Failure to resolve these issues may mean following an American path, where the public's view of even electoral integrity itself can come to hinge on the reputation of a corporate provider (in this case, of voting machines) almost entirely outside the government's control.

ID: 1879-11 - Category: Digital

Make museums and galleries throughout Britain once again a focus and source of excitement

In an age of streaming TV and social media, it is short term sensationalism that captures peoples attention, while old-school sources of wonder such as museums and art galleries are left behind.

Britain has some world class museums and art galleries. Unfortunately for the majority of the population, they are mostly in London. A huge volume of artefacts and artworks are not even on display in the museums and galleries because there is not capacity. They therefore languish in the store rooms. They do not benefit the museums/galleries, the public, the artefacts/pictures or their rich tapestry of background stories.

Engagement with museums outside of London (perhaps better to say, outside this small elite number of institutions) is muted. Localised displays that remained relatively unchanged with the passing of time, mean there is little engagement with them from the local community other

than mother/baby coffee mornings and some school trips. This is a tragic waste of what could and should be a wonderful framework for excitement and learning.

Solution... national programme of participating larger London institutions and smaller local ones, whereby annually (quarterly???) each of the smaller museums/galleries (those than can offer sufficient security) receives a small but absolutely world class display from the backrooms of the National museums/galleries.

Engage the local media and schools to whip up anticipation and engagements, telling the backstories, context and the thrill that might have existed about these items when they were first commissioned or made.

Bring the public back to local town/city museums before they disappear into obscurity.

ID: 2267-11 - Category: Digital
How can public policy react to a digital divide exposed by the coronavirus pandemic?
Tackling the emerging discrimination resulting from the digital divide, an issue exacerbated by COVID-19, is paramount to reducing social inequalities impacting a variety of socioeconomic groups. The regeneration and modernisation of public libraries could facilitate universal internet provision, endorse and further the trend of working from home and promote community engagement.

Public library use has steadily been falling year by year, polling by Statista (2020) shows that since 2005 there has been at least a 20% drop in respondents who had visited a public library. Coates (2018) attributed this decline in library use to poor stocks that are badly organised, short unpredictable opening hours and buildings being poorly maintained and lacking decoration. Furthermore, Coates (2018) highlights that libraries are digitally outdated compared to alternatives, with Amazon dwarfing their capability of offering multiple means of accessing texts and even going as far as providing book recommendations. Separate from the libraries,

however, this decline in use can be attributed to funding cuts to libraries as a consequence of austerity measures. Despite the criticisms and the under utilisation of libraries, public support for libraries remains overwhelming, a poll commissioned by Money Saving Expert (2015) found that 90% of respondents felt their local library service should be protected.

Libraries are becoming somewhat outdated seeing as the incentive to fund them is steadily decreasing. Modernising libraries could solve two significant issues caused and/or accelerated by the Covid-19 pandemic. Modernising them would provide incentives to continue funding them to preserve them and would also solve the digital divide created by the pandemic, which is putting those without technology and internet access at a disadvantage. Modernising them would entail changing their overall structure. In other words, existing libraries would be divided into two different sections; the first section would be the traditional library meant for reading books and studying in a quiet environment whereas the second section would be meant for free access to the internet and technology. Furthermore, it can provide students with an alternative study space where they can socialise.

This proposal would provide significant benefits to disadvantaged young people. The first section detailed the fact that even before covid there was a large gap in the attainment of disadvantaged young people compared to their peers. A 2017 study found that there is a gap of half a grade in every GCSE subject taken (Education Policy Institute, 2017:np). The Sutton Trust (Lally and Bermingham, 2020) also found that 15% of teachers reported that they believed that not all their students had access to a device at home on which to do online work. Seeing as a multitude of online learning and revision resources are available freely, providing a device and internet connection will benefit those who cannot afford paper textbooks. The quiet working environment will also benefit low-income students by providing a quiet space to work, which many are likely to have lacked during the lockdowns. More details can be found above, but by situating these rejuvenated libraries within residential communities and targeting the places with the largest gaps in attainment, we can avoid people being excluded due to travel costs as most will be able to walk from their home to a library.

A policy agenda tackling the growing divisions resulting from the digital divide would also benefit the UK adult population. The Office for National Statistics' 2019 report on the digital

divide promulgated that only 51% of households with annual earnings of £6000-£10,000 had home internet access. Comparatively, 99% of households with an income of more than £40,001 could use the internet at home. Such digital exclusion exacerbates difficulties for individuals already living in poverty. Job applications, budgeting, accessing health and social services, and applying for Universal Credit are all made more challenging as services are continuously shifting to the digital sphere. Community internet provisions are imperative in reintegrating the digitally excluded members into society. Locating internet hubs within communal spaces not only encourages social interaction amongst communities but also enables those without home access to vital online services. However, providing internet access as a policy in isolation may not be sufficient. The Lloyds Bank Consumer Digital Index report 2019 further affirms that 22% of the population lack basic digital skills. Although the primary aim of our proposal is universal internet access, integration of computer/internet training may be integral in increasing the inclusivity of digital services.

Furthermore, digital inclusion is a critical social justice issue that is not widely attributed to its effects on ethnic minorities in the UK. However, the most recent data in 2019 from the ONS represent disparities in internet usage for different ethnicities. It found that disparities had narrowed for minority groups and were less significant than income (ONS, 2019). Elahi (2020) argues that this does negate ethnicity as a factor, it is vital to consider intersectionality as ethnicity and socio-economic factors work together to create digital exclusion. Gypsy and Traveller communities (no reference to this group in ONS 2019 dataset) face digital exclusion and are both an ethnic minority and affected by socio-economic factors. In the 2011 consensus, Gypsies and Travellers experienced the lowest employment rates, highest levels of economic inactivity (Comarty, 2019). Factors such as low literacy rates and environmentally daunting classroom environments could make it more difficult for members from these communities to benefit from digital technology (Scadding and Sweeney, 2018). In 2018-2019, pupils from the White Gypsy and Roma ethnic group had the lowest GCSE attainment (ONS, 2020). Libraries could be a great alternative by providing a comfortable environment and providing digital services that support low literacy levels.

ID: 2259-11 - Category: Digital

Expansion of R&D incentives to encourage the flow of FDI and innovation into the UK
As the UK charts its course post-EU and looks to recover from the economic damage caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, it is more important than ever to attract innovation and investment into the country. The development at unprecedented pace of vaccines categorically shows the

direct impact that innovative science and technology has upon the whole UK economy. However, when compared to other nations, the UK underinvests in research & development (R&D) relative to most competitor nations and is losing foreign direct investment (FDI) at an alarming rate. We are calling for an expansion of R&D incentives to encourage the flow of FDI and innovation into the UK and in this response, we will detail actions the UK can take to attract investment and produce innovation.

The UK benefits from the investment, innovation and demand that inward investment brings, but the value of net FDI flows into the UK is dropping, falling for the third year in a row in 2019, with a further fall expected in the 2020 figures. To illustrate the importance of FDI to the UK economy, FDI into the UK results in approximately 4 million jobs, contributing 27% of UK approximate gross value added and contributing to 27.2% of capital investment. The UK has the highest FDI stock as a proportion of GDP in the G7 (at 68.8%). This is higher than the OECD average (43.8%).

Combining these figures with spend on R&D that is below the OECD average (1.7% of GDP) and much lower than competitor countries offer (R&D expenditure in Germany is 3.1% of GDP, the US is 2.8%, France is 2.2%) as well as the OECD's low ranking of the UK's R&D tax scheme for large companies (23 out of 44), the vulnerabilities abound. Although the UK is ranked in the top 10 on most measures of business competitiveness, other countries are constantly improving their business environments. The UK needs continuous reform to increase competitiveness and to retain and attract FDI as any increase in international competitiveness will see the UK susceptible to disinvestment.

There are two ways that this problem can be approached. The first is by incentivising existing investors to spend more on their R&D in the UK and the second is to attract more R&D spend. Increasing R&D intensive FDI will contribute to the UK becoming a world-leading science superpower and see total R&D spend as a proportion of GDP reach 2.4% by 2027. It will also enhance UK competitiveness, boost productivity and create highly skilled jobs across the nation, unlocking wider economic and societal benefits.

Recent studies have shown that that tax incentives are effective drivers for FDI given that with globalisation, locations are becoming more and more similar. When combined with other positive business environment elements, nations that offer tax incentives become more attractive places to invest. These tax incentives influence the decision-making process for internationally mobile investments that have competition between locations.

As examples from highly attractive countries for inward investment, Singapore, behind their low corporate tax rate of 17%, provides grants for science, technology R&D/innovation covering up to 30% of project costs. Grants covering manpower (up to 50%) are also widely available. Germany provides grants of up to 50% of cost in R&D projects.

With this context in mind, we propose the following actions to fix the problem and capitalise on the opportunity:

 - Introducing an incremental sliding-scale for R&D tax credits which rewards increased R&D investment over time to incentivise multinationals to undertake incrementally greater R&D investment in the UK over other locations.

 - Introduce a sliding scale of R&D tax credits depending on the nature of the work e.g. higher rates for work leading to a patent, or focusses on key sectors or projects such as hydrogen power and battery storage – such a policy has the advantage of being potentially self-funding by reducing credit rates on less innovative work.

 - Increase R&D tax credit relief for R&D activities in the most disadvantaged regions which could introduce bands reaching up to a 50% reduction on eligible expenditure in the highest priority region(s), giving the UK a headline grabbing highest discount compared to key competitors, e.g. G7 or EMEA. For example, an increase in R&D Expenditure Credit (RDEC) rate from 13% to 20% on R&D carried out in a freeport, subject to clearance being granted by HMRC via the existing provisions of the Advance Assurance scheme would come at a modest cost but create a significant increase in attractiveness for innovative overseas companies.

 - Tighten existing rules to reduce 'leakage' that allows global R&D activity undertaken outside the UK to benefit from UK R&D tax credits in order to incentivise increased UK-based R&D

activity.

 - Double-count PhD salaries as qualifying expenditure for R&D tax credits to encourage high-value R&D activity, increase academia-industry crossover and retain top talent in the UK, as well as attracting the best scientists and engineers from around the world.

 - Update Patent Box and R&D tax credit eligibility to strengthen the UK's offer to innovative software, AI, quantum and other 'big data' companies by measures such as allowing data purchase to qualify for R&D tax credits

 - Expand the scope of Patent Box to cover intellectual property (IP) such as software, licences and copyright companies, so that non-patented code-based R&D is eligible, keeping pace with competitor nations.

 - Permanently extend the capital expenditure 'super-deduction' announced at Budget 2021 for buildings and assets to be used in R&D, matching competitor nations and encouraging FDI into tangible assets, creating 'sticky' jobs and associated spillovers into clusters and local communities.

 A focus on better incentives to enhance the UK's attractiveness for FDI does not neglect domestic business. Increased flows of FDI benefits all businesses and ultimately the wider economy through higher productivity, lower prices and higher wages. The actions presented here provide tangible ways to both address the problem of underspend on R&D and the decline in FDI as well as seizing on the opportunity that the UK has to become a more innovative economy.

ID: 2212-11 - Category: Digital
Civil Critical Implementation Teams
This idea addresses a method to boost the recovery of the UK economy following the COVID-19 pandemic, with particular focus on key infrastructure projects, while utilising the resources that may become available from military reduction in force.

 Benefits could include:

• Significant cost savings through more efficient implementation of projects.

• Boosting morale in the military by offering an onward career path.

• Retaining "reserve" access to highly trained military personnel.

• Extended use of some equipment.

• Enhanced progress towards carbon reduction targets.

• A boost to the apprenticeship scheme.

During the crisis, the re-tasking of military personnel to address urgent logistical, construction and support requirements made possible several key projects, from Nightingale hospitals to PPE distribution, and manning both testing stations and, later vaccination centres.

The levels of support were wide ranging, covering planning and management to "boots on the ground" personnel in support roles building hospital wards, moving vast quantities of equipment and supplies, wielding test swabs and hypodermics. All with the respect and gratitude of the vast majority of the public.

I propose that this type of support could be continued and formalised in future, by utilising the hard-won skills of our military planners and implementers within an organisation of "Civil Critical Implementation Teams".

Rather than simply lay off or retire members of the armed forces, they could be transferred to a civilian CCIT organisation. There, they could apply their wide range of skills, and their discipline, to assist with implementation of key infrastructure projects. The huge "electric car infrastructure" project in the UK could really benefit from such a well-trained and disciplined

organisation at its helm.

By having the teams undertake regular refresher and training courses, in the same way as the Territorials, the teams could form a useful boost to military reservist strength. Depending upon preferred government spending plans, perhaps even make the CCITs a part of the Territorials in some way?

There is discussion within the defence review of using more hardware rather than "boots on the ground". To just write off this valuable human resource would be a travesty given the investment already made in and by these dedicated people. Therefore, why not instead redeploy them to assist, train, and perhaps oversee, new civilian teams that could support the government's major policy implementation plans, both home and abroad?

A bonus may come from the redeployment of obsolete or redundant military equipment as well. For instance, heavy construction, cable laying and transport equipment. The teams could include personnel already skilled in the use of such equipment.

Importantly, this idea would demonstrate how much we as a country value the skills and dedication of the military and are not prepared to simply write off their experience and commitment when we need to restructure.

The Civil Critical Implementation Teams could provide opportunities and benefits for government, including:

• Creating a core team of people who have practical expertise in:

o Leading and planning critical initiatives to achieve stated objectives in high stress or time-critical situations.

o Identifying the most efficient and effective routes to ensure successful delivery of objectives.
o Leadership skills that produce the best results from their people.

o Taking aboard people with few skills and turning them into highly skilled individuals that deliver. (Thereby perhaps a boost to the apprenticeship program as well).

• Boosting morale within the military by addressing "where do we go from here" for some personnel facing redundancy or retirement.

• A new way of looking at budgets; the cost of these teams could be applied to the budgets of the project are supporting rather than to the defence budget whilst they are engaged in that activity.

• Provide training and management support to private sector companies engaged by government to ensure that the projects are brought in on time and to budget. We have already seen how successful this can be with the Vaccine Roll Out.

• Enable the government to retain armed forces personnel such that if they were needed to support urgent defence or humanitarian events around the world they could be reassigned to that role.

I believe that this idea has many potential benefits to the government, the military, the environment, the economy, and the country as a whole.

ID: 2130-11 - Category: Digital
Use of UN SDGs and targets as a template for recovery
Using the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) can provide an existing internationally agreed framework on which to base a sustainable recovery plan which supports sustainable development for people and planet.

"We need to turn the [covid] recovery into a real opportunity to do things right for the future."
– UN Secretary-General António Guterres

The UN SDGs provide a template of goals and targets for Covid Recovery. In addressing the 17

Goals and influencing the daily decisions and behaviors of individuals organizations and states, Covid and future similar issues will be addressed. However the SDGs are often thought to be global issues and are often seen as relating to 'other countries'. To support the use of the SDGs in the UK, they need to be broken downto identify how each applies in all contexts of daily life and work of individuals. It will be by changed behaviors of individuals as consumers, producers and citizens that a post Covid sustainable recovery and all 17 UN 2030 SDG's will be achieved.

Submitted on behalf of the Greater Lincolnshire UN Association

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ID: 1893-11 - Category: Digital

Driving Reassessment

I received my driving license 33 years ago. In all that time my skills have never been reassessed or updated. Yet there are other things in my life, far less dangerous than driving, that I am expected to update.

Example first aid - there is a requirement for me to have a first aid certificate to do my job. I did my 1st first aid course 40 years ago and I have never had to use that skill.

Electricians have to be assessed annually, gas fitters every 3 years. But deaths from electrical or gas installations are minimal and always have been.

On average 3,000 people a year are killed due to driving annually on UK roads.

This figure has not reduced since the introduction of speed cameras or the Speed Awareness Courses. Vehicle incidents happen and will always happen with fatalities, but most are not due to speeding but bad driving. Essentially if you are speeding then that is bad driving.

Drivers need to be taught to be sensible when driving.

Anyone who drives for a living should be assessed every 3 years. This would not be a pass or fail unless the driver is that bad. This would be a practical (ie driving with an instructor present) as well as a test paper just to remind and update skills.

People who drive for a living - postman, delivery drivers, sales people, sales representatives, farmers, trades people, construction workers, anyone who drives a van or car for a company on company business or for their own line of work.

The idea of putting a speed camera van at the bottom of a hill, Monday - Friday 9am -5pm isn't there to improve driving, it is there to fine people to raise money for the Treasury. It doesn't catch, stop or educate boy racers driving for fun at night.

I witness some appalling driving, but they are not speeding so the chances of getting caught are minimal. I followed a van for 10 miles. The driving was driving erratically. When I drew next to him at the traffic lights he was on his phone! But that's OK as he wasn't speeding he was driving dangerously.

At the age of 68 everyone should be required to take the a driving test if they wish to keep driving and that should continue every 3 years. This would be a pass or fail course.

The benefits are obvious - less crashes, less fatalities, less police, ambulance and hospital time and expense. Maybe cheaper insurance.

It would generate a lot of employment for driving assessors and may generate more money than speed cameras for the Treasury in vat and tax revenues and save money not employing camera teams.

But it can't be introduced without giving something back. Remove all speed cameras, fixed and mobile units. Scrap the Speed Awareness Courses (driving is a practical skill not reading a book) and bring in reassessment courses for professional drivers.

ID: 1457-11 - Category: Digital

A Commission that reveals the potential and power of global philanthropy

As Harvard and others report, there is very little understanding of the magnitude of global philanthropy. Harvard describes its own major study on philanthropy as "broad strokes" and compounded by lack of data. Consequently the policy framework governing philanthropy is unlikely to maximise the potential of this significant economic activity. The pandemic may provide a timely opportunity to begin a process which both unveils the scale of philanthropy and, in so doing, affords the UK an opportunity for global leadership.

There are some important indicators that set the scene. Cap Gemini estimates today's High Net Worth Wealth is valued in 2020 at $74 trillion. Harvard identified 150,000 charitable foundations by 2018, with collective assets exceeding $1.5 trillion. To put it in to some perspective, the UK's net worth is £10 trillion according to the Office of National Statistics.

Philanthropy is a highly fragmented sector and its complexity is layered by culture and demographics. For example, institutional philanthropy is heavily concentrated in North America and Europe, while 48% of High Net Worth Individuals (HWNI) are under the age of 40.

The backdrop of the pandemic affords the UK an opportunity to demonstrate its credentials as a global citizen and a leading centre of global philanthropy. At a time when all governments are

looking to maximise revenues to underpin public services, now is the moment for a process of discovery to provide some baseline data for global philanthropy. A process, in the form of a Commission for Philanthropy, would also come up with some policy recommendations that can inform countries on how best to foster philanthropy, and how to harness philanthropy.

The Commission should convene a group that comprises stakeholders in the philanthropic ecosystem including, but not limited to, philanthropists – individual and institutional, government, private sector, civil society and beneficiary organisations. The terms of reference should address the character and patterns of philanthropy; establish a baseline dataset of philanthropy globally; assess the complex and long-term implications of philanthropy on the role of the state, for public services – notably the provision of education and health – and for the voluntary sector; raise awareness among governments, individuals and international partners of the scale and effect of philanthropy; and propose policies and mobilize support for practices that facilitate, galvanise and support the philanthropic giving chain.

The optimal outcome of such a Commission would be to identify how philanthropy can best align philanthropic endeavour with national interest. It should also generate practical ideas and solutions – especially for lower income countries – on how to tap into the boom in global philanthropy, thus making an important contribution to Global Britain's soft power diplomacy. It should also address the thorny issue of philanthropy in relation to high net worth wealth and taxation.

Britain is well placed to lead on such an endeavour since it is home to a thriving philanthropic sector, and leverages an obvious alignment between the role of the UK as a global services centre and philanthropy.

There are, of course, other emerging economic and scientific areas whose value is no less significant, and so warrants discovery. But perhaps the most compelling reason for philanthropy is that the act of giving is an innate part of the human condition. The pandemic has provided a powerful demonstration of collective generosity as people give what they can to help others.

The UK can make a valuable contribution in bringing together global expertise and talent to better understand a very significant economic activity about which there is relatively little knowledge or comprehensive data. It would be a fitting tribute to the Covid-19 pandemic and its many victims, if it serves as a catalyst to unleashing the full potential of philanthropy, enabling the many and not the few to access it, and informing policymakers how they can effectively marshal philanthropy in the national interest.

ID: 895-11 - Category: Digital

Bridging the digital divide

I've split my problems and opportunities into two categories, based on research of key factors around the digital divide in the UK.

1. Access

a. Hardware

It's estimated that 700,000 young people do not have adequate access or training to use devices at home (Nominet, 2019).

3.8 million people in the UK remain entirely offline (Lloyds Bank, 2020).

It's estimated that there are 40 million unused devices in UK homes (BBC, 2019).

Donating equipment as a business is currently tax deductible. Making this a similar, short-term scheme for individuals would maximise recycling of unused devices in each household – for example, providing a £20 incentive per device donation.

Donations of equipment is currently fielded through several different organisations, from DevicesDotNow to the BBC to private charities to schools themselves. Re-organising this through local councils would allow them to distribute to a variety of organisations in need: not only schools, but also housing associations and refugee centres, for example. All of the individuals served by these organisations are proven to be less likely to be online and to suffer financially, in earnings and employability (Lloyds Bank, 2020).

Longer-term, a consistent donation scheme, in addition to central government funding, should be used to ensure the most vulnerable and least digitally accessible are not further disadvantaged through digital illiteracy. This could be funded through a digital services contribution by large companies, increasing their social responsibility and promoting their brand. This happens somewhat already (above), but should be centralised. My suggestion is through councils, as disadvantaged groups lie not only in schools, but also housing associations, refugee centres etc..

Additionally, the environmental impact of re-distributing these devices would be staggering. Manufacturing a laptop is estimated to emit 227kg-270kg of CO_2 (phys.org, 2011). Let's say 50% of unused devices in the UK are laptops, so 20 million devices. Taking the lower end of CO_2 emissions per device at 227kg, that's 4.54 billion kg CO_2 wasted from laptops that are unused.

b. Internet/wifi

12% of people previously state they didn't have internet access at home as they were able to

access elsewhere (ONS, 2018).

Many people rely on 4G as their internet connections, with approximately 26 million in the UK as pay-as-you-go customers. This was obviously problematic during lockdown, without the ability to easily top-up. Some people report that they have to choose between food and wifi in their weekly budgets (The Guardian, 2020).

143 million GB of data goes unused every month, increasing to 165 million GB during lockdown (FutureNow, 2020). Per GB, Emerge Interactive estimates 3kg of CO_2 is emitted. Therefore during lockdown the UK was wasting 495,000,000kg CO_2 every month.

Vodafone Netherlands ran a scheme to donate excess gigabytes of data each month to people in need, redistributing through foundations and charities. This was an opt-in scheme. By pushing through policy to make re-donation of unused gigabytes mandatory for telecom providers through digital literacy/local charities, this data be redistributed to those in need. Penalties for providers that don't comply makes sense, as they are still getting paid for the excess GB that is unused and don't lose anything by donating.

Zero-rating (providing free access) essential websites would mean those people that access essential services (Money Advice Service or Universal Credit), don't need paid services. These sites should be zero-rated now and forever, with on-going additions to keep this up to date. An example is O2, who did this for 20 essential websites over lockdown.

A longer-term infrastructure solution, based on that of Singapore, should be collaborated through the government and multiple private providers (preferably not Conservative donors) to redistribute localised internet access in disadvantaged areas. There is a key divide in access geographically across the UK that could additionally be bridged with this solution (Lloyds Bank, 2020).

2. Digital literacy

~9 million people in the UK are unable to use the internet and their device by themselves and 11.7 million do not have the digital skills they need for everyday life. Disadvantaged groups (such as those in poverty, disabled and elderly) are most likely not to be online. Intersectional groups are not measured. These groups are more likely to pay higher prices for their utilities and less likely to save money and be financially aware (Lloyds Bank, 2020).

Providing digital skills to 100% of the UK population would allow many more people to access essential information and benefits, and could also contribute over £14 billion annually to the UK economy (CEBR, 2015). The Good Foundation's Blueprint for 100% Digitally Included UK (2020) states that a central government investment of £130 million is needed, which would theoretically provide a return of 107x investment.

One study showed that one-to-one coaching on digital literacy is an effective approach (CCHPR, 2019). Benefits included simple tasks such as setting up an email address and navigating digital banking. In the case of this study, results included reduced debts and reaching interview stages in job applications.

A number of skills toolkits already exist, all accessed online: DfE Skills Toolkit (online), FutureDotNow (online), and Tech Talent Charter (online). A pattern emerges: the most disadvantaged people are offline, and remain without the skills to get online, to access the tools that they need to enable them to be effective online.

People who don't use the internet are more likely to feel isolated from others (ActiveAge,

2010). "Older adults are exceptionally suited to meet these needs [of younger people] … because they welcome meaningful, productive activity and engagement" (Carstensen/Stanford, 2016). I propose mandatory volunteering be incorporated into IT curriculums, combined with Citizenship curriculums and including training and delivering the enablement. Reaching out to disadvantaged groups such as the elderly through local charities and associations, using resources that are free and available, would digitally enable a large number of people in a short period of time. Additionally, it would increase undervalued soft skills young people are often lacking, such as presenting and delivering with confidence – something that private schools typically excel at over state schools.

ID: 889-11 - Category: Digital
Transforming Libraries into Community Hubs & Safe Spaces to Socialise, Grow and Learn
Isolation and loneliness have been an issue during this pandemic, but also Community hubs have blossomed online, bringing out the best in people. We can't let that fade away, we need to carry that forward and bring people together in person once we are able, but we need a place to do this.

Public libraries could be re-invented and used to provide that space. This should be done in the spirit of creating a safe inter-generational, multi-cultural community space where people can learn, work, socialise, develop skills and crafts.

As a result of changing technologies and the last recession, many public libraries were shut or had their opening hours severely reduced. We need to re-think these spaces to meet society's current needs and maximise their potential. Each library could be looked at to meet the demographic and economic needs of their local community, employing some of the suggestions listed below.

Old & Young Together:

I believe we could do more as a society to bring people together in a mutually beneficial way. For example, the issue of loneliness is a particular problem for the elderly, whereas the young are adept at using all social platforms to communicate. Local sixth form centres and secondary

schools could be approached so that teenagers who are adept with modern technology, and who want work experience or to volunteer through the community or do Duke of Edinburgh, could volunteer to share their skills, and in turn, learn themselves from the experience of helping others. If more is needed to support an elderly population, group audio book sessions or scrabble clubs could be set up.

Children's Book Clubs:

Some children need access to more books and also could do with being encouraged to read in a relaxed, sociable and enjoyable environment. Libraries could provide the space for these book clubs to take place with local volunteers. A pilot was set up in Northcote Library and the children called their club "Chatterbooks". It was very well received. For many children this would not only help their literacy, but enable friendships and maybe even provide a critical safe space.

Teaching English as a Foreign Language:

Language can be a barrier and lead to isolation. We need to do all we can as a society to integrate and help people to develop the language skills they need to feel like a valued member of the community and also to maximise employment opportunities.

Craft Groups:

There has been a boom in crafts during the pandemic, be it knitting, crochet, painting, sewing. Libraries could provide a space for people to come together and develop their skills. These could range from free social gatherings to paid for classes. It could even result in some products being sold and the creation of new businesses. These activities are very beneficial for mental well being.

Using the wall space to support local artists:

Many libraries have blank, empty wall space. Inviting local artists in to display their art would help make libraries more interesting and inviting spaces. This would be mutually beneficial as the artist could sell their work on display and the library could take a commission. Our local borough runs "Artist Open House" days, but this would take it to another and more permanent level.

Homework Clubs:

Depending on the local demographic, which may range from deprived, where there is a dire need to support children after school, to very affluent (in some areas parents pay £50 - £70 hour for their child to be tutored). Either way, the library could provide extra support. This could be subsidised, charged for, or part of a scheme where mentors and volunteers help.

Office Space & meeting rooms:

Many libraries have smaller rooms that remain unused for most of the time. Depending on the size, these spaces could be advertised as available as meeting rooms / lecture spaces / office space / Wellbeing & Mindfulness space. If the room is there, it should be used. They could provide an essential support to new and struggling businesses. Schemes could be run where they are available rent free for a while, then the business would be charged once it is up and running. Libraries can help as a practical spring-board for new businesses.

Cafes:

Bookshops have seen how having a cafe can support trade and encourage people to stay longer. Not only would the introduction of cafes make the library more welcoming, but it could be a source of income. This could be done in conjunction with already established coffee shops.

Practical Implementation:

The Government could provide Library consultants who look at each library and assess the building and demographics and needs of the community, suggestions could come from the local community and the library could be used to its maximum potential, depending on the layout, space and rooms it has to offer. The buildings exist 24 hours a day, it's a waste not to maximise use of them. Some libraries do already run children's reading sessions, baby song times and computer classes, but so much more could be done to breathe new life in them and to provide a space for some of the groups that have set up virtually as a result of Covid-19.

These initiatives do not have to be a burden on the taxpayer, some could be subsidised by the state, and others could generate an income in their own right or be carried out with the co-operation of private enterprise. With the internet and downloading books online, libraries as they existed do not have much of a future. They have to evolve or die. In the past they have provided much more than just a place to study quietly or to lend books. They provided a safe space and a community hub. We need that more than ever now.

ID: 267-11 - Category: Digital

Leadership is Everything

We live in a fast-changing and innovative world where commentators report that two-thirds of the companies that will make up the S&P stock market index in a decade's time have yet to be created. We live in a time where Uber has changed the transport industry, Amazon has turned first the book and then the retail industry upside down, Airbnb has transformed how we holiday and Google, well, Google helps us to find new ways to understand the world we live in. But why didn't Waterstones or Barnes and Noble launch Amazon, or Thomas Cook launch Airbnb? Why didn't the UK capitalise on its' invention of the computer ? Why does the US always take the lead in business success ?

In the UK the need to grow such industries is more important than ever. We need companies that are not just innovative but are capable of growing into businesses that employ hundreds of thousands of people in the UK and across the globe. Brexit coupled with the pandemic underlines the importance of this more than ever.

The real success of Jeff Bezos is not that he is innovative but that he is resilient. Apple's biggest

success is not their innovation but their focus - their confidence in knowing when to say 'no' . Branson's greatest asset is his ability to fail. There is no such thing as failure - you either win or you learn but staying true to that requires great leadership.

The UK is a creative and innovative country. What we lack is great business leaders.

The Idea

Create 10 (more if you wish to scale up quicker) new companies right across the country in varying industries focusing on all types of business - technology , cleantech, manufacturing , logistics , retail, finance, travel etc

Focus on finding and backing leaders to lead them ie focus on the leader and not the product. Use personality testing to find the right personalities and skills.

Fully back the leader. Provide a significant equity based incentive. If he or she wishes to bring others in and share such incentive that is his or her call.

Work with the leader to put a team of mentors and support around him or her. All great leaders have unlimited mindsets . Working with the right coaches and mentors frees this mindset. He or she must choose them (as a by free the leader from bureaucracy by requiring a mentor to provide any report required by stakeholders)

Having chosen the leader and his or her team, finance the involvement of management

consultants to find the right product. Successful businesses are all about People Process Product (and pricing). Give the leader the full control of the consultants. Management consultants overcomplicate everything - they believe it shows value. Good leaders simplify everything. The focus is to develop a product that is both innovative and capable of scaling up to become an employer of more than 100000 people.

Provide the business with the necessary finance to kickstart the business. Bear in mind that too much finance /debt can work against the growth of a business.

Mould the 10 business leaders into a supportive peer group - thought leaders , a gentle competition etc . the purpose is to learn and develop and fine tune a process and model for the growth of other major corporations

Provide the business leader with PR support to protect against damaging social media intrusion at too early a stage.

Millenials and Generation Z now account for more than 75% of the World population. Their needs from business are different. Only moral purpose companies will exist in years to come. Looking after and understanding the needs of society are integral to any growing business. Begin with that at the core.

I am the founder of gunnercooke llp which has grown a min of 25% every year since its inception , 10 years ago , so much of my thinking has come from experience. I have also worked on over 100 buy -outs and with their CEOs' , again adding to the experience. I am the author of To Innovate or not To Innovate , a book on the process of innovation .

Never underestimate the power of level 5 leadership. Leadership is everything. Leaders bring followers. Without followers you are just going for a walk. Leadership is a special art - focus on leadership first and innovation second.

ID: 260-11 - Category: Digital

Whilst the NHS has been applauded for its response to the Covid-19 crisis, it highlights the fragility of the system given the need to reduce support for other medical issues e.g. cancer detection and treatment. This brings into question the organisation and management of the NHS. It can be said that the NHS would have a superb organisation were it not for its patients.

The first significant attempt to re-organize the NHS was the Griffiths Report in 1983. Sir Roy Griffiths was the Director of Personnel for Sainsbury when seconded to conduct his review. The application of management techniques to process thousands of common items (tins of baked beans et.al) do not necessarily apply when having to process thousands of individual items (patients with unique characteristics). However, the current system seems to ignore this essential difference.

I have benefited from the services of both private medical support and the NHS (Two triple bypass operations, colon cancer and current kidney cancer) and, prior to retirement, been a Governor for Papworth Hospital. Throughout this period I have been able to observe the differences that apply between the private and public sectors.

The main difference I have noted in the public sector is the considerable number of staff with labels that indicate they are administrative rather than medical. I also find it difficult to justify the fact that many of the Senior Management in NHS Trusts are not medically qualified but influence medical outcomes and are paid salaries far in excess of what would apply to comparative posts in the private sector. Quis Custodiet Ipsos Custodes?

One other obvious difference relates to funding. In the private sector the money comes before the required action.

Another area of significant change has been the role of the General Practitioner. I used to have a 'Family Doctor' who brought me into the world, removed my tonsils and later my appendix, all done at the local 'Cottage Hospital'. He knew me and my medical history. At my current Surgery I have no idea what Doctor I will see due to the high turnover of medical staff, partly as a result of the generous retirement packages made available. This ensures that there is no continuity and at each visit to a new Doctor time is taken up reviewing my medical history. It is also noticeable that there is a prevalence to refer patients to a higher authority with consequential longer waiting times for attention.

The many significant advances resulting from medical research and consequential applications to patients' treatment has generated ever increasing demands for medical attention requiring more specialisation within the system with more expensive and complicated equipment. It would be morally indefensible and political suicide for any government to reverse this situation..

Given the foregoing, what are the challenges and opportunities facing the NHS.

First, Staffing. There needs to be a thorough job evaluation conducted throughout the NHS against a background which recognises the primacy of those medically qualified with front line operational responsibilities. Having been involved in such an exercise in industry, I have no doubt that the roles and responsibilities of nursing staff would place them at a much higher salary level than is currently recognised.

Second, There needs to be a strategic review of the processes for delivering medical services. The current set-up where hospitals are expected to cover the full range of medical procedures, from the simplest to the most complex, is not sustainable. The establishment of the Cambridge

Medical Campus combining formerly separate institutions is the way ahead, but requires the provision of a second tier of facilities to deal with more basic procedures. This second tier could be achieved through the amalgamation of separate surgeries within defined areas., in effect the re-creation of 'Cottage Hospitals'. These would provide for continuity and a recruitment resource.

Third, Funding.,the most difficult problem that has to be faced. The present system bears no relation to the required outcomes, and will not be able to provide the funding that future pressures will demand. Whilst the provision of medical services free to all is commendable it removes any sense of responsibility from the recipients of those services. The only was to resolve this is to require those seeking attention to pay a proportion of the cost for access. There are a number of alternative systems to achieve this, what is now required is a commitment to move in this direction.

Fourth, Preventive Action. There needs to be as much attention paid to tackling issues which guarantee subsequent medical problems as has been paid, successfully, to reducing smoking. Such campaigns need to be national, properly resourced and sustained.

As Dickens said...."It was the best of times, it was the worst of times"

There has never been. nor will there ever be again, a better opportunity to make the basic changes that we need to cope with an ever more complex and potentially dangerous future. Tinkering will not serve, we require significant actions. As Lloyd George once said...." Your cannot cross a chasm in two bounds".

ID: 3060-11 - Category: Digital

Over the past year, coronavirus accommodations have led courts and law firms to make a number of temporary changes to the way legal cases are developed and heard. If made permanent, some of these changes could provide economic and legal

opportunity across the UK. Similarly, moving some legal proceedings entirely online – once thought unimaginable – is an idea that looks substantially more reasonable in light of the last year. By creating a system for hearing small civil claims online, the Government could ease the pressure on legal aid resources while increasing equity in representation.

Essay:

During the coronavirus pandemic, technology has made everyday life – or, at least, a version of it – possible. The 'Great Move Online' has kept countless businesses open, offered essential services and allowed us to maintain ties with loved ones, despite months of separation. But while so much is now possible, technology has also revealed its own limits, highlighting the importance of the 'personal touch' in business and government, as well as in our social lives.

This essay considers what opportunities might be presented to Britain's legal system and legal services industry by the technological progress we have experienced over the past year. It argues that technology – and, in particular, the new appetite for digital solutions generated by the pandemic – has the potential not only to radically improve operational efficiency and the rule of law on a national level, but also to help to raise Britain's profile as a global centre for legal innovation and excellence.

The Coronavirus Act 2020 introduced a range of changes to the legal landscape, allowing civil proceedings in magistrate's courts to be conducted via telephone or video and expanding the use of audio and video live links in criminal proceedings. The Supreme Court building closed, but continued to hear cases online. In so doing, it implemented a range of measures that legal academics (most notably, Richard Susskind) had been advocating for some time. Yet, pandemic-related technology proved its value beyond simply keeping courts open. It demonstrated how technology could assemble geographically dispersed legal teams. It proved how file-sharing systems could minimise inevitable administrative delays. And it shows that real-time transcription or recording systems – often built into videoconferencing software – have the potential to improve record-keeping and transparency. It is vital that the government works to keep up this momentum in helping courts to run more efficiently.

Of course, virtual hearings are not going to be appropriate in all cases. As the course of the pandemic begins to slow, all of us are realising those aspects of human interaction that technology cannot replicate, whether that be human touch, eye contact and simply hearing another's voice in person. In some areas of the law – in family or immigration law, for example, where cases involve complex personal and social issues– in-person hearings remain a vital service. However, acknowledging this balance helps to provide a path forward. The

establishment of a robust, digital system for some, more straightforward areas of the law (for example, following the model of Abu Dhabi's virtual small claims court) would introduce much-needed technological efficiency to the legal system, while also freeing up resources for the areas that need them most.

Indeed, this approach could offer a solution to one of the legal systems more pressing concerns: availability of legal aid. Since the introduction of the Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act 2012, legal aid has been radically restructured in the UK, with public funding no longer available for the vast majority of civil, family and immigration cases. Some fourteen local authorities have been classed as 'legal advice deserts'; areas where no applications for civil legal aid were granted. A targeted approach to online hearings could improve efficiency to such an extent that resources could be reallocated, ensuring that everyone receives the legal advice they deserve, regardless of financial standing.

There is also space for online proceedings in commercial law, with international implications. Britain's legal system has long been one of its most successful exports. We are a centre for international arbitration for contracts the world over, and embracing technological innovation in this field is vital if we are to maintain this position. For commercial firms, the launch of virtual arbitral tribunals – which have just passed a year-long stress test – provides a model for moving certain commercial proceedings in public courts online. As other countries around the world, including China, race to establish international digital legal platforms, government support for similar initiatives in the UK should be seen as a core element of maintaining our national advantage.

Finally, a large part of Britain's standing on the international stage stems from its legal system, with the UK having long been the gold standard for the rule of law. These principles include such inalienable rights as equality before the law and the concept of a fair trial, as well as accessibility of legal systems and the power of reason over personal discretion. As the world embarks on a new digital age, the technological quick-fixes that proved invaluable in the pandemic have great potential to reinforce these principles further. The law can be more transparent, more consistent and more accessible with technology. This is undoubtedly true. But technology is not the answer to everything.

Moving forward, I would ask the government to follow a model such as that set out above. I would ask it to harnesses the power of technology, while recognising its limitations. Technology could transform some areas of the law with previously unimaginable efficiency and it could bolster Britain's place on the world stage, but it could also offer a real opportunity to recognise the role that the personal touch plays in all our lives, reallocating human resources where they

are most essential.

ID: 1107-11 - Category: Digital

Mis-information

The minorities in the UK, the BAME community, are not getting the UK government's messages. From personal experience living amongst these communities, the majority are still, to an extent going about their daily business as normal. Even during lockdown. The reason for this, is because your messages are not getting to them. The TV channels they watch are not showing your press conferences nor your Mr Whitty ads. These people are getting their news from whats app, youtube, facebook, which as we all know is false. This is the reason you will also not have many Asians take up the vaccine. It is that simple. The solution to this, is you need to get your press conferences on their channels with their language, interpretation above it. You need to get people from their communities discussing the issue. You need to be where they are. With the right information and understanding you will get people adhering as well as uptake in the vaccine. You can go to as many mosques and temples as you like, maybe a few will trickle in for the vaccine, being forced by their children because they themselves do not understand. The best way to do it, is simply get on their channels. Be present. The British government is way to relaxed, and scared of taking decisive action when it is needed the most.

ID: 1807-11 - Category: Digital

The path to solution for our Climate Crisis, demonstrated by the pandemic.

Global warming is, guaranteed, something everybody is aware of. However, it is rarely properly addressed. For the pandemic, it has been the opposite - impossible to escape. Radios and shows would always include the latest news on COVID-19, adverts would pop up in TV and social media, even conversations with friends or family seemed to ultimately always centre around the virus. This pandemic has constantly been on everyone's minds, subconsciously reminding each one of us how serious it is and how we should be acting. Although sometimes exhausting for this to be all that is talked about, the effect was undeniable: every single person was forced to regard the pandemic with urgency. Even more importantly, there were regular, nationwide addresses to the public on what to do to help. This meant that the feeling of helplessness after hearing increasingly worrying news about the virus was combatted by hope of solution. No matter who you were, or how much the virus had personally affected you, every single person had a clear instruction of action.

Laying these out side by side, it is evident that in order for people to act on the issue of climate change, there needs to be publicity, there needs to be urgency and most importantly, there needs to be clear rules set out by those in charge. People feel hopeless around the climate crisis - they do not know where to start. During the pandemic, a simple act of wearing a mask out in public fuelled hope that as individuals, whilst not personally developing major help such as the vaccine, we were doing what we could and felt positive that, with collective effort, a difference would be made.

As well as these rules, there were provisions put in place to make them possible. For example food packages were sent out whilst we were made to stay at home, educational support was put in place to make sure children could carry on with school in the most normal way possible. This aid needs to be adopted around the climate problem. Often we are informed that our plastic use is having a momentous effect on our world, yet we walk into a supermarket and are greeted with hundreds upon hundreds of packaged foods, with very little alternatives. We are told that our carbon emissions are rising fast, that clean energy is the only way forwards, that cars and planes have a catastrophic effect on the climate, yet in order to travel, in order to go about daily life, fossil fuels are evidently used up and are hard to avoid. Those that want to cut back have to dedicate themselves to the mission, and even then, it is incredibly hard to consistently maintain.

Reducing carbon emissions should be presented to the public as something that is not optional, not just 'good for the environment', but instead as something that is needed to save our world. Supermarkets need to stop selling plastic in the vast amount that they do. There are plenty of alternatives out there, and plenty of ways it can be avoided. The public cannot rise to the crisis if alternatives are not available to us, just in the same way that if masks were in low availability, or near impossible to get hold of, they would not be worn.

Many of us weren't affected immediately by the virus, but we still all believed that we should do all we could to protect others, even though that meant sacrificing social occasions, jobs, education and even financial security. In the same way that we considered stopping the virus as the highest priority, we have to stop seeing the climate crisis as a problem that should be avoided because it will have consequences. Of course there will be detrimental changes to the

way we live our lives, but it is not an option to avoid these anymore. The pandemic has been awful – the effects of climate change, though not immediate, will be far worse. We didn't ignore the pandemic, didn't go about our daily lives as if nothing has changed, this attitude must now be reflected. There is no other solution.

Yes, there are still physical solutions to be discovered to combat climate change. I have not offered a way that carbon can be taken out of our atmosphere, nor a cleaner use of energy or a cheap, eco-friendly material to use instead of a current one. These of course will be the way out eventually, much like the vaccine's place in the ultimate stopping of corona virus. However, in the same way that we all had to change our lives to slow coronavirus, actions must be done in same way regarding our climate. What we can learn from this pandemic is that when told by those in charge that we had a crisis and must all act to stop it, the vast majority of us did. We were forced to act in a way that negatively affected an enormous amount of our society, plummeting our country alone into waves of emotional, industrial, financial stress – yet we carried on in order to save the lives of those around us. This attitude needs to be reflected when we turn to the problem of our world's inevitable future. What is needed to be done by the government and those in powerful, influential positions to kickstart is: to address the situation properly; to lay out rules of what must be done by each individual (with the proper resources available for this to be possible); and to ultimately raise the urgency amongst all, with a plan of action that allows people to think that it can be done and will be done, with their involvement.

Now more than ever, this is not something that we can say is 'impossible' to fix. We are running out of time, but it is not completely up. If an idea of urgency is created worldwide, and if everybody acts, we can slow it. We must slow it.

ID: 1031-11 - Category: Digital
Creating a digital government to help us build back better.
Estonia is frequently recognised as the most digitally advanced society, with 99% of government services accessible online. This provides a level of accessibility and efficiency that countries with digital infrastructure like the UK can only dream of. It also helped their COVID response by allowing them to quickly deploy tools to match volunteers with people needing assistance in the crisis, help companies share the workforce that would otherwise remain idle, and allow people

to manage sick leave. This is one factor that has contributed to their 72nd position in the list of countries with the highest COVID deaths per 100,000 people, significantly lower than neighbouring countries like Latvia and Lithuania, and second lowest in Europe, after Cyprus. Building a digital government that combines the advantages of systems such as Estonia's online services and Israel's digital healthcare system, and pairs them to the strong local and national government, and NHS that we currently have could make one recently overused phrase come true: the UK could be truly world beating.

To fix the problems of inefficient engagement between government and citizens/businesses, the government should create a digital portal as the focal point through which as most government services are accessed. The existing Gov.uk Verify service is a starting point but lacks almost all the services/data that are required to deal with an emergency such as a pandemic. Currently you can only access some tax services, vehicle/driver licensing, some pensions benefits, and a few local government services. A completely different attitude should be taken within government towards digital services to fix this.

Firstly, a unified digital strategy must be developed for the whole of government, including all civil service, NHS, and other governmental agency services. This should unify both front end channels, and back end systems & data. A single modular portal, accessible via mobile apps and web browsers ensures people can access all the resources they need in one place. It could help to reduce fake news spreading online by providing a single source of trustworthy information. A single ID and verification could provide people with an easy way to manage their data and opt into services. An important aspect is that to comply with data regulation individuals must be able to control how their data is used and opt into services.

Once a single application with secure login functionality is created, existing government services such as HMRC & DVLA online services could be migrated to it. However, the real benefits would only be realised when a much wider set of services/data were introduced. Firstly, it should integrate with an EMR system used across the whole NHS. This could give the person's GP, and A&E departments instant access to their medical records (vital during both a pandemic and normal times) whilst allowing the individual to consent to sharing the data with other providers to aid their treatment.

Integrating these services into a single app creates a foundation for the introduction of additional services, e.g. contact tracing could be released on the existing framework. This would speed up the release of new features in an emergency and allow individuals to opt-in to sharing data. This would solve the issue of people being told to isolate by the app not being eligible for financial support. If an individual opted-in to receive financial support, in the event of a close contact testing positive the app could check the individuals tax records to check eligibility for support, and send the application, resulting in an automated process with much less risk of fraudulent payments being made.

There is also the possibility of using a unified digital service to provide more robust checking for financial support such as the furlough schemes. A huge amount of money has been lost to fraudulent claims, but if individuals were asked to login online to a verified account in order to receive furlough payments, and these were then cross referenced with the applications from employers, it would prevent some of the fraudulent claims made on behalf of fake companies or for fake employees. By creating business accounts for registered businesses in the same portal, HMRC would be able to manage the process much more efficiently.

An example of how this service could help in the event of a future pandemic or emergency shows how useful it could be. An individual could complete all the following actions in a single app:

1. Find out about restrictions in their area (central/local government)

2. Enable track and trace (central government)

3. Verify their employers furlough claim, or register for self employed financial support (HMRC)

4. Ensure their medical records are up to date and shared with the right NHS departments in case they are admitted to hospital (NHS) 5. Log any symptoms and receive digital GP appointments to try and prevent deterioration in their condition requiring hospitalisation (NHS)

6. Check that their MOT has been extended (DVLA)

7. Register for any additional benefits or isolation financial support they become eligible for (HMRC/DWP)

8. Apply for emergency financial support from local government or contact council housing teams if they end up in need of emergency housing (local councils)

9. Register to receive a vaccine (NHS)

In normal times the following benefits could also be realised:

1. Save businesses time and money due to easier access to government services e.g. tax and employment

2. Provide easier access 24/7 for individuals to access many government services, especially beneficial to those working long hours or unavailable during working hours e.g. tax/benefits/update personal details etc.

3. Reduced cost of running government services due to increased digital self-serving by individuals and companies.

4. Provide people with more control how their data is used

5. Better use of existing data to guide government policy

6. The opportunity to identify and fill gaps in data gaps required for both operational and strategic policy use

7. More efficient control and use of patient medical records, especially when patients move between different areas

8. Better access to NHS services such as digital consultations.

ID: 1601-11 - Category: Digital

Healing the Division

While the global divisions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic are great, so are the opportunities for connection. As working from home became necessary for many across the globe, people have become more comfortable with online meetings and learning. These online meetings make creating new connections across the globe, allowing people to meet without the need for travel. As technology makes long-distance connections easier, people will be able to share and understand other cultures better.

In addition to the connections formed through business, the pandemic could provide a platform to connect people who may never have met in ordinary circumstances. A scheme could be set up similar to more traditional penpals, but using technology to allow instant exchange of ideas and culture. This scheme could be aimed at children aged 10-16, forming connections between children around the world. The scheme would introduce children to people from cultures they would never typically interact with, showing the leaders of tomorrow that there is more that unites us than divides us. The scheme could also give the children a project, such as creating a business plan or developing an idea that would benefit the environment. This project would teach children to collaborate and overcome problems, such as the difficulty of working online, and navigating language barriers.

The scheme could be run while the pandemic is ongoing, due to it being online, but could still be run online after the pandemic is over, perhaps with a prize allowing the team with the best project to meet in person to develop their ideas further.

This scheme will not be an instant fix to the divisions created by the pandemic, but would allow younger generations to develop a life-long appreciation for the challenges and triumphs of different cultures; as these young people enter the world of business and government this knowledge and understanding would be brought with them. Through cultural exchange, global unity is fostered at an individual scale, which will inevitable follow to the wider world.

ID: 1595-11 - Category: Digital

Planetary guardianship: a vocational approach to social commitment and action for the environment

Covid has accelerated a change that was already happening. Jobs are vanishing: from our high streets, from our factories and distribution centres. Artificial intelligence, together with an increase in mechanisation and robotics is, and will be, transforming the world of work. Many of the jobs that are being replaced are ones that those with less academic qualifications may have taken up. At the same time, we are facing increasing challenges to our environment. The

challenges are stark: increasing unemployment; perceived inequalities of opportunity for our people; and an environment that is clearly under stress. All this against a background of a rapidly changing climate leading to increasing numbers of severe weather events.

I propose the creation of an entirely new strand to our educational and civic life: planetary guardianship. Every school in the country would include a programme of practical environmental education: many already are. But this would feed into a strategic programme of educational and vocational initiatives that would encompass not only local, grass-roots involvement in local projects but also rigorous academic research. That research would provide the data to steer and inspire local activities to ensure that the whole initiative remained 'joined up'.

Our young are scared of climate change, but they are also leading the way. Many are inspired by Greta Thunberg and 'get it' in ways that their parents don't. And they are the very cohort that risks completing their education only to find that the jobs they might have been drawn to in a previous time no longer exist.

So, this is my proposal, starting where it has already seeded: with the very young:

1. For every kindergarten and primary school in the country to 'care' and be responsible for, something in their local environment. It could be a nature strip, a patch of scrub, or an individual tree. What each project would be could be sponsored by the succeeding levels of Guardianship. But whatever it is, and wherever it is, it must contain the essential element of Guardianship: more than caring for, more than 'knowing stuff about...' It must contain threads of care, responsibility and accountability, and be seen as, and linking with, other such projects by other schools.

2 Secondary schools would include Planetary Guardianship on the core curriculum. It would comprise a whole range of allied skills, crafts and knowledge. Practical work would include aspects of best practice horticulture, agriculture, meteorology and sustainable practices. Strands could be incorporated into civics, law, psychology and sociology: topics already on the curriculum. Environmental projects would be chosen in co-operation with local networks and

societies and be of lasting and demonstrable benefit: community fruit orchards; managed scrublands; soft fruits propagated in biology classes, grown on, and planted wherever edible verges and patches would be of benefit to people and wildlife.

3 Universities would provide resources for advanced learning, testing ideas through rigorous research. Without good data it is hard to make good decisions. They would provide the key links with other Planetary Guardians in other countries, who would be working in different climates and environments.

4 In every community there would be a team of Guardians, responsible for co-ordinating projects and for continuous, visible reporting to, and communicating with, people. I don't mean reporting to committees but chatting with, and engaging, all who pass by. Planetary Guardians should be recognised as something special: people whose lives and work are dedicated to making the environment better for all of us. They would also co-ordinate ad hoc local schemes and initiatives, and make sure that these too are incorporated into an overarching strategy.

5 The political dimension. This is a huge initiative, but practical. It addresses issues that are concerning politicians now: how to prevent civic unrest from unemployed and disaffected constituents; how to engage young people who want to take action right here and now rather than wait for others to 'do something'; how to be seen to be taking action on environmental matters. If politicians wish to be seen as 'doing' something, then creating a workforce with pride, purpose and environmental relevance isn't a bad place to start. There will be mutterings of 'we can't afford it'. Yes we can. Many of the jobs previously done by people will increasingly be done at the local level by machines. That will increase. The savings will be considerable. If we re-direct money spent on unpleasant and soulless jobs capable of being mechanised to others involving care for living things there can only be gains: in self-esteem, in civic pride, in environmental knowledge and sustainability.

Summary

My proposal for the post-covid world brings together three challenges: weaknesses in our current educational provision for the less academic; growing unemployment due to increasing use of AI and mechanisation, and on-going concerns for our immediate environment in the UK and for climate change. We human beings are social animals; we don't like to be locked-down away from others; we need to feel valued and to know there is a purpose to our daily lives. Covid has shown us that there are opportunities to be had for making a difference if only we can conceive of them: ways of being together in the world, with each other, doing jobs that are recognised as fulfilling a need. As mechanisation increases we shall need jobs that put us back in touch with the natural world that we are an integral part of, but have chosen to ignore or under-value. If we can initiate an entirely new branch of national focused endeavour, valued, rewarded and respected at every level, we could be well on the way to addressing some of the key challenges that covid has presented us with. The opportunity for Planetary Guardianship to address these challenges in a long term, sustained initiative, is one that we cannot afford to miss.

ID: 1160-11 - Category: Digital

Community laptop recycling banks for school children

The pandemic has highlighted that not all school children have access to a laptop or tablet at home. In terms of Government, they have committed to buying laptop stock to address the immediate issue however this is a long-term issue centred on social inequality. Therefore, this needs a sustainable solution.

One proposal to address this is to consider laptop recycling. Individuals and in particular organisations renew their laptops every year, meaning every year there is significant stock of laptop stock which is perfectly usable but will be disposed of. I would propose a Government scheme- potentially through the Department for Education which would set up a nationwide mechanism for individuals/organisations to be able to donate laptops to regional/local community laptop banks. Local schools would then be able to access these laptops through these local recycling banks. To ensure usability these recycling banks could offer a basic service to ensure the laptops were wiped of previous data and PAT tested. Potentially, these could all be converted to Chromebooks which are known to be very reliable and is a process that can be easily done. In essence, the process would ensure that schools could access laptops that they could give children which would be effective.

In terms of where these recycling banks were located, perhaps this could sit with the Local Authority and they would decide what worked best for them. Similarly in order for schools to access these laptops they would do this online with their Local Authority. In terms of internet availability at home, this is an area where Government could look to retain the existing arrangements they have in place during the pandemic with internet providers. An alternative could be that school children who needed these laptops were provided with internet "dongles" for their use but these would have to be centrally funded.

Clearly, these ideas would need development, however the principles of them, I am convinced are sound as they would; prevent waste, help the environment, allow individuals/organisations to help their communities and most importantly provide a sustainable solution to ensure every child has access to a laptop at home for their education.

I believe this initiative could help improve social mobility and help close the educational attainment gap in our most disadvantaged communities.

ID: 431-11 - Category: Digital

Abolish business rates for retailers

Business rates are an iniquitous tax based upon property and not business generated. Retailers are at a disadvantage to onlne dealers, particualarly Amazon, who do not have retail outlets. The revenue lost by cancelling the rates should be made up by a levy on all internet sales.

ID: 1574-11 - Category: Digital

A progressive replacement for business rates to share the tax burden and encourage entrepreneurs.

Replace the current business rates system with a taxation system that is based on sales/revenue. Create an environment that is more reactive and flexible. It would be more progressive and encourage more people to start up new businesses.

Being tied to performance has multiple benefits.

It would have automatically adjusted to changes in spending during the COVID-19 pandemic. Businesses that were closed would not have to pay as they were not generating turnover. If they were trading at a reduced turnover, then the cost would have reduced proportionally. If a business had seen an increase in sales during the pandemic, they would pay more, but only in line with increased turnover. It would have prevented the need to give blanket rates relief. Which while protecting some businesses it unnecessarily benefitted those that already had an advantage.

A new system that changes the distribution of the tax burden as the economy evolves. Preventing the need to introduce new separate taxes such as the online sales tax. Why not have a single method of taxation that is fair to all. Simpler for businesses to plan and for the government to administer. It would also remove the need to attempt to forecast and balance multiple different taxes. There would be a lag in changes and an unwanted imbalance in the system.

It would encourage new businesses to start up, with the tax being 'pay as you trade', not a fixed amount based purely on location and rent. As a business grows then the contributions follow. In tougher times it would reduce. Encouraging more new start-ups would breathe new life into high streets across the whole country and increase employment. It would be simple to also implement a rate-free amount to support small and new businesses.

It would spread the tax burden proportionally across the economy not just on business with physical locations. For example, turnover generated by online platforms selling advertising in the UK would be taxed the same as an independent coffee shop, which at the moment can shoulder a disproportionate share.

ID: 1516-11 - Category: Digital

Community remote hubs for blending socialising and event access to reduce isolation

Covid-19 has revealed how social exclusion, isolation and loneliness has negatively impacted the nation's mental health. However, the increased use of remote home technology has shown that a blended system of working and studying is possible. This has enabled home-workers and students to connect in live-time with their peers working face-to-face. I propose such systems be extended into the social arena, with monitors and appropriate remote access software, installed in community venues, including sports arenas, pubs, places of worship, concert venues, theatres etc, to enable people confined to their homes to interact with friends, family or peers or to partake in entertainment and the arts. Where events are ticketed, a charge could be made for access, however, for community venues (pubs etc) access should be free. This would enable those who are housebound, unwell, geographically unable to meet, frail/elderly, or who cannot afford portable technology (such as ipads) to attend arts, sports and other community and social events. This idea came about due to the zoom meetings I have had with friends, including one who is rarely able to meet in person due to her role as a carer of her two children who have cystic fibrosis. In the future, when the pubs re-open, I will take an iPad with me, so that this friend can join us remotely. However, this is not an option for everyone. It is cost-prohibitive. Moreover, it would not be an easy option in a concert or sporting event for example, where someone would be obliged to hold up a phone throughout the event, with accompanying fees. Hence a community system of remote access to the arts, sporting and other events, plus social access in pubs and other community venues, will go some way to reduce social exclusion, isolation and loneliness, with a knock-on impact on improving wellbeing and reducing poor mental health.

ID: 928-11 - Category: Digital

Remove ambulance 'hand-over' requirements so they can attend incidents and save lives

The pandemic has forced everyone to change the way we do things. This includes how we communicate with each other. When once we met in person to hold meetings and share information, this is now done remotely using social media systems such as Zoom and Teams etc. These systems are secure, simple to use, reliable and efficient. The systems enable 'multi tasking' including live streaming whilst sharing additional data and information simultaneously. Why can't these commonly accessible and simple systems be used by ambulance teams to provide clear information about their patient details and injuries instead of having to wait hours in queues having to physically pass on this information the hospital staff before they can attend another incident? Using these systems seems a much more efficient and effective use of limited resources. Potentially improving patient safety, reducing ridiculous waiting times, enable targets to be met, lives to be saved and enable emergency responders to respond to emergencies.

I am sure there will be concerns identified due to improving 'hand-over' waiting times eg this will increase the number of patients now in A&E as ambulances become more efficient. Who attends to these patients? Where will they 'be held'? These are the potential symptoms of an improved ambulance service which will require the need to improve and adapt with it?

ID: 3052-11 - Category: Digital

UK Retail - Town Centre Challenge and Opportunity - Retail reality

As we emerge from our final lockdown no-one really knows what the full effect of the pandemic will be. What we do know is that there has been a significant shift to buying online and the pandemic has been a catalyst in this regard. If an average of 30 to 40% of purchases can now be made online and fulfilled from out-of-town fulfilment centres what hope is there for town and city retailers, especially independents, to cover costs and hopefully make a living now that they have endured an on-off year of being open. Many will emerge with landlord arrears, debt and uncomfortably high stock levels. Once these retailers close their doors the risk, and fear, is that these premises will remain empty for years to come.

Unlike a website that digitally disappears when a shop closes in the physical world the premises still remain. There is a considerable risk that the fabric of many towns and potentially certain cities will fray as the heart disappears with each closure. What will be left will be coffee shops and many other services that you can't find or enjoy online.

From this potentially bleak picture could emerge an opportunity. Rather than seeing the digital world as competition embrace it within physical retail to get the best of both worlds.

How can this be done?

Set up a pilot concept of local manufacturers, food producers, independent retailers to sell within one space, probably a closed department store. These merchants will retail their wares around a central café / eatery. Customers can buy certain products then and there but also be shown a full collection online as each merchant will have their own terminal. This will also avoid the necessity to carry and display high inventory of stock. Customers can take pictures of themselves against certain themed walls, designed by local interior designers, and shared via social media. This will put the buzz back into retail. People like local, they like buying from and supporting local creative talent. This is a crucial dynamic in supporting this concept. There is also a move away from the online behemoths such as Amazon who are necessities during lockdown but a large section of society will know that local businesses will need supporting.

Crucially each centre will carefully manage the mix of their tenants to keep the offering fresh and vibrant. As the merchants are not shackled by huge inventory they can be relatively fleet of foot.

Landlords will have an exciting opportunity to embrace this concept and so offer preferential

terms to the company that runs this new venture. Flexible terms, probably turnover related, and exits via breaks will allow the new Company not to be overly stretched and so repeat the onerous fixed costs of many retailers.

This pilot store will provide the template for a nationwide network of stores and allow many merchants to trade cost-effectively in localities where they have never had exposure before and hence helping the country to level up.

If we do not find an original solution to this looming issue then the physical retail world will continue to suffer and so we need a fresh approach to syringe out the best of physical retail and combine it with the huge opportunities that exist in the digital world.

ID: 793-11 - Category: Digital

Maximising the use of online ordering systems for deliveries to vulnerable people

Offering help and support to introduce this demographic to online ordering systems could certainly help, but given the severity of the COVID-19 pandemic right now, I feel the most worthy solution would be for the most popular online distribution channels of essential supplies (the major supermarkets, I largely refer) to provide them with order and delivery priority.

The simplest and therefore lowest potential risk solution is to create a graded categorisation of how important it is that they can get their supplies in this way. For example, to include, as well as those shielding, their carers — professionally or informally, key workers with demanding work schedules and/or with children, and those who already use online ordering in aid of physical or mental disabilities. The criteria could include age ranges and existing health conditions.

It is conceivable that the safest and most effective option would be to simply disallow access to all those not permitted in the times of greatest transmission. This could be a preliminary step, with further access to all others permitted if supply and logistics outstrip demand beyond an agreed margin.

The degree to which it may become restricted to those fulfilling the criteria, I believe, presents the only downside. I think most of us would find it entirely acceptable when considering what

these sacrifices can mean. An obvious challenge is how to inform those identified as eligible and to then administer their orders. Postal letters and follow-up phone calls could well satisfy the former (this could include a list of all participatory suppliers and various user guides); with the most vulnerable groups targeted first. Administrative helpers could satisfy the latter; which could include family, friends, neighbours, volunteers, and possibly paid staff — all of whom could be local or distant, depending on what is needed — which could be ascertained in response to this initial contact. Hence, support teams to collect this information and to thereafter respond to queries, by telephone, email, and website support, would certainly be necessary.

What I love about this solution is that we can use the well-established fruits of what is the difficult part — the order processing and logistics — that has already been developed by the private sector, while its owners would be, I'm sure, happy to oblige. They will continue to receive a return on their investments while helping us all through these challenging times. I genuinely do believe that they care about our society-at-large. Indeed, I would expect that voluntary participation would be all that is required. With a little government support (outlined below), I think they would rush to rally to the call.

The participatory organizations will need to build a little extra logic into their software but this would not be too challenging for their systems engineers; speaking as one who has been one such professional. However, I feel that government support to implement this could be a favorable gesture, and certainly towards the testing required prior to going live.

Also, this solution can be almost entirely, if not entirely, set up and administered by home-working individuals; beyond the home-visits that would be sometimes necessary. It would require a relatively small budgetary investment and could bring enormous benefit to our efforts to protect those who have been identified to be at risk of COVID-19.

I deeply thank you for taking the time to read this and for giving us this opportunity.

I will look forward to hearing from you

Best wishes

Paul

ID: 369-11 - Category: Digital
Sponsor a care home/elder programme
With mental health being at the forefront of everyones minds currently, there are ways that we can all come together as one community. At the start of the pandemic, the sign up to apps such as Next Door and the creation of community Facebook and Whatsapp groups boomed, all in the interest of others helping others.

In the same light as sponsoring an animal in need, there could be a system in place whereby you can sponsor a care home or a person living alone. This could be run through an app/website, and will help join communities together once again. It would be a great way for schools and care home to connect (i.e through a national programme) involving fundraisers, and visits to the residents by the children, as well as letter-writing and other forms of communication. It could also be a way of supporting small, local businesses (i.e sending a cream tea to the elder from a local cafe).

Also, simple things can be run through the app such as groceries pick up, prescription collections etc, whereby members of communities can help their elderly neighbours. A safe and secure payment transfer method could be set up through the app/website to help enable this, with piece of mind for both parties.

Our elders are often forgotten about, and we know there are problems arising more and more every single day, so let's bring communities and young people together to tackle this problem.

ID: 1872-11 - Category: Digital
Public Policies Attributes; bar chart for Businesses
Some businesses have a reputation for good personnel policies, some not, eg John Lewis vs Top Shop ?

The general public has no way of checking these claims or calumnies.

This might apply to many other policies of public interest; green credentials, carbon footprint, fair trade, slave labour, customer satisfaction, profit margins etc.

In much the same way as in the purchase of white goods a bar chart could be displayed at the entrance of the shop or on the company website which displays their rating on many of these attributes, as evaluated by an independent auditor.

Any potential customer might be influenced by a good rating on a particular facet of their activity that is considered important by that customer.

The audit would be done at the expense of the enterprise, similar to "Investors in People" system or ISO 9000 status and any failure to display the outcome might be taken as a negative influence on a customer.

High ratings across the board could be a great motivator for customers and influence the business' recovery significantly.

ID: 1687-11 - Category: Digital

Integrate Alternative Treatments Into The NHS

The NHS has been struggling to cope with demand for years, and the recent Covid 19 pandemic has pushed it to its limit. Sadly, many frontline workers have been left traumatised, exhausted and wanting to leave.

At the same time, superbugs are predicted to become the number one cause of death by 2050. We can no longer rely on antibiotics, vaccines and other drugs alone to deal with this, and as a result we need to drastically reinvent the way we do healthcare. The combination of a failing NHS and the likelihood of further pandemics in the coming decades is a deadly one. This is why I would urge policy makers to consider integrating alternative treatments into the NHS.

Around 2/3 of the NHS budget is spent on treating chronic conditions. Type 2 Diabetes alone costs the NHS £1m an hour to treat, and yet it's a preventable and reversible condition.

Qualified alternative practitioners such as Medical Herbalists, Naturopathic Nutritionists, Hypnotherapists, Osteopaths and Acupuncturists have exactly the right skills to treat these conditions, and are perfectly placed to do so. Virtually all of these practitioners have no choice but to work for themselves, and many lack the business skills needed to sustain their practice. Offering these practitioners an opportunity to work within the NHS benefits everyone. Patients have easier access to specialised treatments which are most likely to help them, Doctors spend less time with patients they can't help, and practitioners have a regular income.

In Asia this has always been common practice. In China, Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) and modern medicine work side by side. It's considered negligent to prescribe chemotherapy without herbs to support, and when Covid patients were treated with herbal medicine the mortality rate dropped from 2% to 0.6%. In the UK Medical Herbalists have successfully treated a number of patients with both Covid and Long Covid over the past year, undoubtedly saving NHS resource in the process. We specialise in treating chronic conditions which accounts for a significant amount of NHS spend. These include illnesses like Fibromyalgia, Chronic Fatigue Syndrome and Long Covid which are not easily treatable within the NHS.

In the mid 1990's a study by the Somerset Trust For Integrated Healthcare looked at how Osteopathy, Herbal Medicine, Homeopathy, Massage Therapy and Acupuncture might help patients with chronic conditions. It found that 85% of patients felt better for having used these therapies, and most did not need referral into secondary care. The cost was no more than that of mainstream care, and patients paid a contribution themselves. Other projects around the country have had similar results, and my personal experience both as a patient and a practitioner supports this.

Other examples of where alternative medicine could support patients include:

- Hypnotherapy being used for pain management, minor mental health problems and addictions.

- Herbal medicine in the treatment of both minor acute conditions such as colds and flu, drug resistant infections, and chronic illnesses.

- Naturopathic Nutritionists to educate, motivate and support people with Type 2 Diabetes in healthy eating. Special diets can be implemented in early stage Dementia too.

- Personal trainers, fitness and dance instructors to help with weight management and mental health through exercise.

- Osteopathy and acupuncture in injury rehabilitation.

Supportive and preventative measures such as healthy eating classes, resilience training, and support groups would also have an important role to play. This would enable larger groups of the population to benefit at the same time.

Taking this pressure off the NHS would free up more resource for areas its best place to work with, such as surgery, emergency medicine, and treatment of more advanced pathologies. Likewise there would be more capacity for dealing with future pandemics. If enough practitioners were available on a daily basis within primary care settings, patients would have fast and easy access to the specialist care they need.

Integrating alternative treatments into the NHS would:

- Drastically reduce pressure on staff and improve their working conditions.

- Drastically reduce the drugs bill.

- Pass more responsibility to each individual for their own health outcomes.

- Offer new job opportunities for qualified alternative practitioners or Doctors/Nurses wanting to leave their profession.

- Improve accessibility of alternative treatments for those who'd like to use them.

- Offer an alternative to those who can't use mainstream treatments, eg, women who need HRT but can't take it for safety reasons.

This is how I would like to see the NHS working over the coming decades, and if herbal medicine could be integrated it would provide further opportunities for farmers and herbal medicine manufacturers as well.

ID: 921-11 - Category: Digital

Carbon portal for delivery optimisation

The shift towards online consumerism has led to the reorganisation of individual behaviour, delivery services, logistics and product packaging. Responding to the number of deliveries now received by individual households, I believe there is an opportunity to reactively shape the patterns of consumption and delivery to increase efficiency and minimise environmental impact.

This would take a twofold approach; (1) initially focusing on reducing consumption of unwanted or unneeded goods, perhaps through informational campaigns, and (2) formulating a centralised algorithmic system to streamline deliveries. I think that a centralised database of orders (or perhaps a platform that users can sign up to and go through when shopping online, like a 'green portal') could allow for existing delivery optimisation technologies and algorithms to be put to best use. In much the same way as Uber offers shared ride services to users along the same route, collaboration across couriers (Hermes, Royal Mail, DPD), supermarket delivery services (Sainsbury's, Tesco, Morrisons, Waitrose) and normal postal services could dramatically reduce the number of individual trips made and (ideally) the excess of packaging materials used. Such a streamlining is perhaps ambitious, but a centralised approach focusing on environmental impact (perhaps run through a government site) could empower consumers to demand this of companies. Potential to add a carbon tracking or plastic tracking element to this 'portal' or platform could allow users to see how much CO_2 prospective purchases and their deliveries might incur (contributing to aim 1; building on product lifecycle footprint analyses) and to see how much they might save through a streamlined delivery (aim 2; focus on both the reduction in emissions from shared journeys and the reduction in packaging materials required).

The idea of a carbon portal could hopefully deliver on both of these aims, alongside mainstreaming the importance of climate conscious consumerism and reducing carbon emissions in the UK to net zero by 2050.

If successful, such an approach could be expanded to include other services, such as prescription and medication delivery for older and more vulnerable people. Similarly, the potential to pick up someone else's streamlined order on your journey could add another element of CO2 saving. Whether this is something that could be adopted by existing service providers, such as Royal Mail, or an entirely new private entity remains to be determined. Capitalising on the new patterns of consumer behaviour in the wake of COVID-19 is vitally important in understanding how to truly 'build back better', and seizing opportunities that allow for environmental efficiencies to be maximised is one way in which the UK can respond to the challenges of the pandemic and create something with positive impact.

ID: 909-11 - Category: Digital

Up-skilling the Workforce Through Amendments to Education and Training Policy

Covid-19 has drastically improved the momentum behind technological change in the UK, which could help produce the UK's much needed productivity growth. However, it appears the UK labour market is not currently equipped with either the specialist or basic skills required to capitalise on this opportunity. Indeed, "some forecasts predict a significant shortage of ICT professionals" (OECD, 2016, p.7) with 39% of UK enterprises seeking ICT specialists reporting difficulties in filling vacancies (ibid, p.9). Therefore, Government should intervene to promote the acquisition of specialist ICT skills in order to address the deficit in the labour market. The UK also has one of the highest levels of daily office software usage at work: over 30% of all workers, of which over a third (10%) lack the necessary basic skills required to use the technology effectively - indicative of a productivity loss. If the UK is seeking to improve productivity to reduce the risks posed by the imminent economic recession caused by Covid-19, we need to address the lack of both specialist and basic digital skills in our workforce.

Government Intervention

A well-regarded approach for governments to meet the changing demands of labour markets is through 'upskilling' the workforce (Eichhorst and Rinne, 2017, p.6). Recently, the UK has acquired a policy focus on investment into education (Cantillon, 2011, p.439). Hence, I will focus on the use of education policy to 'upskill' the workforce. Although Government has already shown decisive action in this area, my recommendations are intended to increase the effectiveness of pre-existing policies. Within this scope, I have identified policies from the areas of education and training.

Education

A fundamental measure for upskilling the future workforce is to teach ICT skills, such as programming, in schools (Eichhorst and Rinne, 2017, p.7). In 2014, the National Curriculum was updated, stating that, at Key Stage 4: "all pupils must have the opportunity to study aspects of information technology and computer science at sufficient depth to allow them to progress to higher levels of study or to a professional career" (DfE, 2013, p.3). This amendment to the curriculum demonstrates the Government's acknowledgement of the importance of these opportunities. However, academies are exempt from following the National Curriculum. In 2019/2020, over 4.4 million pupils attended academies, accounting for 77% of secondary school pupils (Gov.uk, 2020a). Therefore, currently, the Government is not sufficiently ensuring that the majority of the student population are given these technological learning opportunities that will allow them to progress into careers as ICT specialists. Therefore, in the same manner that Government is enforcing that, by 2020, all academies offer Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education (see DfE, 2019a), I suggest that the Government extends this type of policy to include the teaching of ICT skills, such as programming. With more people attaining the correct training, we stand a higher chance of meeting the labour market demand for ICT specialists.

Vocational Training and Apprenticeships

There is a general consensus that the increased uptake of vocational training and

apprenticeships also has a strong role to play in 'upskilling' the workforce (Eichhorst and Rinne, 2017, p.5); such as the Software Engineering Degree Apprenticeship, offered by Jaguar Land Rover (2020). These education programmes promote the acquisition of specific digital skills demanded by the labour market. In 2018, a pledge was made by Government that, by 2020, they would be investing nearly £2.5 billion p.a. in apprenticeships. This is a good start. However, this investment may not take full effect if we do not convince young people to partake in these schemes. In the UK, the number of people undertaking vocational training reduced to fewer than 35,000 (Gov.uk, 2020b) and 742,400 apprentices (Foley, 2020, p.4). Yet, in 2018/2019, a staggering 1,652,675 undergraduate students were enrolled in University (HESA, 2020). This imbalance between the various post-school routes is, in part, due to the fact that vocational training and apprenticeships are "undervalued by parents and students as a viable route into employment, particularly when compared to an academic education gained through university" (British Council, 2018). Hence, if we want to utilise vocational training and apprenticeships as a means to 'upskill' our workforce we must ensure that schools present their students with comprehensive information about vocational training and apprenticeships, alongside enrolment in higher education (Edge Foundation, 2015, p.6), increasing the probability of higher future participation rates.

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ID: 907-11 - Category: Digital

The Earth resources need to be regenerated & its inhabitants protected

The pandemic is pointing to the increasing threat of extinction for not just animals, but humans if we do not wake up to the fact that the Earth is a living system where all life forms exist in an interconnected balance.

Humans have arrogantly plundered the Earth & tried to dominate for too many years rather than understanding this interconnection. Species naturally create an interconnected web and balance when not wiped out or artificially increased . (The re-wilding project is interesting for regeneration).

A long term plan of centuries needs to be put in place - the first decade to incorporate a radical reappraising of how we live and what we value. To urgently make changes - to be a way shower for other economies.

This goal of regeneration of the Earth can be approached in numerous ways and indeed needs to be all encompassing. Some of my ideas include:

Money needs to be a truly reflective token -

The cost of pollution, resources and living pay must be incorporated in pricing if the monetary system is to continue to be central to society. Possibly the collapse of money could be the quickest way to value what is inherently fulfilling and sustainable in lifestyle.

What people need (not want) is truly possible with a different use of resources. Repair, reuse and sharing to become the norm. Sharing resources in communal ways : Pool cars, lending and sharing by more than one household of washing machines, garden machinery, etc

Air travel - a set number of miles issued to each person (ration - sustainable quota) . People can sell or swap for other resources their quota to other people if they wish, but air flight & pollution is reduced & controlled.

Banning of chemicals that destroy the biodiversity of the living world . More small scale, permaculture, organic growing of food. Soil quality improvement. No more loss of land, trees. Better treatment of animals. More re-wilding projects (see Isabella Tree's results).

Buildings being updated for sustainability. No one having more than one home. Furniture, furnishings made to last and possibility of repair & reuse being incorporated into designs.

Using the media to inspire collaboration, educate and give hope of a better future - happier & healthier does not necessarily mean as much consumerism. Most well being information

suggests the components do not include consumerism . Well being comes from learning, belonging, exercise, diet and managing stress.

Health education being implemented in schools. Ecological theory & the true meaning of economy to be taught in schools.

Able unemployed people to help in community projects - cleaning rivers, community growing projects, training others , etc - give them a sense of belonging, self esteem and opportunity for contribution.

Beauty and artistry inspires and fulfils the spirit and less then is more.

Encouragement of changing towns and cities to be inherently more inspiring and beautiful will engage inhabitants in its care, reduce desire to consume, give pride and collaborative focus . Increase community, localised support and collaboration.

(examples ideas : changing shops into reuse, repair, craft spaces, walled gardens, increasing food production areas - indoor & outdoor; in cities increasing community edible gardens; parks and green spaces being increased; bee keeping; community redecoration projects; pairing student and elderly - reduced rent for help). Valuing of ways of living over what money can buy will also reduce crime as money will be less important.

Large scale production and organisation needs to over time be changed to smaller scale . The personal reward of seeing the result and knowing the people involved is a motivation and intrinsic value of smaller scale industry. Local means less travel, pollution and use of resource.

In the shorter term, first decade , a long term stage plan needs to immediately prioritise the most urgent issues and set up self organising groups of people to set these changes in action.

Covid has shown the capacity of the mass public to respond and care . Simply explain what needs to be done and see how people will respond with enthusiasm, focus and energy to be the change we need.

The time is now.

Nothing has ever been clearer - another few more decades in denial and we have no chance at all of making changes in time to address the long term ongoing survival of the inhabitants of the Earth.

ID: 503-11 - Category: Digital

a national celebration of ingenuity and creativity

Question 2. Coming out of CoVID, and beginning BREXIT, our economy and society need ingenuity, imagination and fresh thinking. After WW2 it was noticeable that the experiences of children in wartime Britain, who endured so much disruption and change (being evacuated from their families for years, in many cases), had engendered a postwar generation of inventors, musicians, designers, and politicians who'd look beyond the obvious to create the extraordinary. So many of Britain's post war advances came from the curiosity and ingenuity of that generation. Now we have the COVID generation, who've absorbed lockdowns, school closures & tragedy, yet have in many (but sadly not all) cases, made astonishing gains during lockdown. They've been full of clever ideas, unexpected depth and surprising (often playful) solutions, as social media reminds us daily. Yet those "learning at home" gains are not acknowledged or celebrated. Instead there is much talk of "getting them back to school at any cost". So how to encourage these non-standard gains that we will need so much, going forwards? We have a robust and stable curriculum and don't want to rock that boat, so this needs to happen beyond that curriculum, in the community and elsewhere. The suggestion here is to have a national celebration of ingenuity and creativity - a weeklong focus covered by media, with a badging that includes giants from creative industries, science, engineering, sport... Not a competition as

such, just a week to display and exhibit unexpected ingenuity and creativity - perhaps in shop windows, in libraries, in the street, as outdoor exhibits, whatever. It would be a wonderful national focus and a reaffirmation that smart ieas are valued and needed. It would help the COVID generation to see their value and create a buzz around clever ideas. The challenge would be made to familes, individuals, communities, street of neighbours, companies... any group who wanted to show the ingenuity of their idea. And it could happen almost right away.

ID: 191-11 - Category: Digital
Public data law and advertising standards
I would approach the problem from two angles.

Firstly, I would hold social media platforms account for the spread of information using the same regulations applied to TV broadcasting advertising. If a TV channel is found to broadcast an advert with false claims, they can be penalised. Social media platforms could face similar penalities for publishing false adverts and misinformation.

Secondly, I would introduce personal data usage tax to demonetize targeted advertising to UK IP addresses. It would enforce any revenue generated from targeted advertising that uses someone's personal data to be shared between the host of the data and the person whose data it is. For example, assume even split for ease of explanation, if revenue was generated through targeted advertising using my personal data, 33% would be shared with the owner of the data (me), 33% to government through tax and 33% kept by the host (social media platform). This would empower people to own their personal data while generating a high taxation income for the government. It would also disincentivise the abuse of personal data that we are currently experiencing today.

ID: 14-11 - Category: Digital

Once covid has been finally subdued, rather than dismantle the new testing and tracing capability we have built, we should re-purpose it.

We will have spent a great deal on lighthouse labs, trained technicians, mobile testing capacity, IT infrastructure and QR codes. We have introduced new habits and awareness about how infections spread and how they can be contained, and built analytical capability to 'see' social

networks and contacts. Large numbers of people and businesses have also become used to working from home, and are set up to do so.

There are many other repository and other illnesses that we have all accepted as a fact of life. We should re-purpose the testing capacity to pick up other forms of infectious disease. Whenever someone feels ill, they should be immediately able to get access to a general purpose screening test that would check not just for covid (which may still be lurking, or mutating) but other common infectious illnesses.

People should be able to get such tests without having to be referred via a clinician, such as at workplaces or transport hubs.

Of course, expect for very serious or notifiable illnesses (eg TB) people wouldn't then be required by law to self-isolate. But they could be given v rapid appropriate advice. This could include treatment options, and also behavioural recommendations, such as work at home for the next week.

A scaled back contact tracing service might also be maintained (depending on the cost benefit analysis for savings achieved to the NHS and economy for catching illnesses early). This would involve rapidly tracing those who the person has been in contact with and making recommendations for looking out for the symptoms, staying at home etc.

It might also be possible to use the system to help address less obvious pathogens. Evidence from the (USA) Framingham study showed how suposedly non-communicable illnesses also spread through social networks. For example, it was found that obesity spreads through social networks very much like infectious diseases, albeit on a slower timescales. If your friends get fat, then it is much more likely you will too. We should use the infrastructure of the T&T system to provide more personalised support and advice to similarly contain life-style related illness.

ID: 3049-11 - Category: Digital

Proposal 2: Replace business rates with a sales tax

• The idea of a sales tax on internet sales has already been considered, but seems to prefer international cooperation. However, the elimination of business rates means this is not a internet tax per se, but rather a tax independent of location

Issues:

• Business rates are paid to local councils. It will be necessary to allocate the sales tax to councils, based first on local sales, and then a provision to cover offices, warehouses and manufacturing locations, with any balance going to the government's business rate top up

• While a rate of two per cent has been discussed as the internet tax rate, it should rather be set based on a range of companies' current business rates if this is effectively higher

• Collection will be simultaneous with VAT, so businesses and councils may need to allow for a different timing

Benefits:

• Reduction of the penalty of bricks and mortar. There will still be costs of maintenance and improvement but the choice between having buildings or not will be fairer

• By converting a fixed cost to a variable one it helps start-up businesses and simplifies the calculation of government help during a pandemic

• Council cost associated with valuing business premises will be eliminated

• Internet companies will pay these taxes

ID: 3071-11 - Category: Digital

Common innovation challenge funding and application platform

The government should have a common online innovation challenge fund platform. This platform should be used by all departments and teams in government to run and advertise open innovation/challenge competitions, receive submissions, organise and retain data on submissions, and it should be straightforward and easily findable by members of the public.

For the purposes of this proposal, 'innovation challenge fund' is defined as any competitive process whereby the government sets a challenge and multiple applicants submit proposals with new ideas for solutions. The oldest example of this is the Longitude prize of 1714 - the government offered rewards for anyone who could devise a simple system for determining a ship's longitudinal position at sea. Now, government runs multiple innovation challenge funds and prize competitions - for ODA funding, research funding, through the Small Business Research Initiative, through the Industrial

Strategy Grand Challenges and through Innovate UK competitions.

The increasing use of 'mission-based' and innovation focused challenge prizes to throw open public sector challenges to all-comers is a great thing: the more voices involved in solving a common challenge the better.

But all these competitions - which follow similar processes of explaining a challenge, soliciting submissions, and awarding funding - use different, disparate and often privately contracted platforms and websites to manage the submission process.

This is inefficient, locks up data in silos, and keeps interesting and helpful ideas (even submissions that don't win innovation competitions and challenge funds can be useful) saved on platforms and servers belonging to disparate parts of government, or private sector companies which are not part of government at all.

We are paying repeatedly for the same simple service of running an online innovation challenge and allowing private companies to keep the most precious resource - data, ideas and - crucially - information about people with good ideas who are motivated to help the government.If we had one simple innovation challenge fund platform, hosted on GOV.UK, and

available to any team in government to use to set up and run a challenge fund, then we would cut costs which go to the private suppliers of innovation challenge sites. This UK Aid Direct platform, for example, is run by the supplier Mannion Daniels. The closest thing to a single government platform for this process is the Innovate UK service, which at least collates all their funding competitions in one place, follows a common process, and enables people to find multiple opportunities, but some of these still use email-based applications. This FCDO challenge programme has its own separate website - which the programme says is being left up so that resources and information on the projects it funded can still be found. This is a good thing to do - but it shouldn't be necessary, because all these innovation funding programmes and information about the applicants' ideas and the winners's progress should be stored on a single platform.

If we had one simple innovation challenge fund platform, it could be easy and simple for civil service teams to set up an innovation challenge competition or prize. It would avoid the need to procure a website developer or get a supplier to help run a competition when we could do this in-house, with the help of the Government Digital Service. This would encourage the use of more of these types of competitions. More open innovation funding competitions means diversifying the range of ideas and people who apply for government funding, reducing the likelihood we rely on the same pool all the time.

If we had one simple innovation challenge fund platform, we could standardise processes which we are designing bespoke every time we run a challenge/innovation fund. Applying for funding from the government in an open innovation/challenge competition should be simple, straightforward and similar every time, so new people

don't have to trawl through application information and potentially be put off the process, when we need their good ideas. Competitions/challenge funds could still appear on different front-end websites - different 'shopfronts' can be created from an online platform with a shared back-end, so different audiences can be catered for, logos used, and information presented. But these front-end sites could be easily found from a single directory if they all shared a common back-end platform, enabling potential applicants to find opportunities easily.

A single government platform with a shared back-end would also enable us to keep (with the right data retention agreements in place for applicants) information about who is applying for government innovation funding in one place. This data could be shared and compared, which would enable us to know more about who applies for these competitions and who wins. It would improve institutional memory about which ones departments have run before. We could go back and check old ones to find out whether the ideas were successful beyond the initial funding phase - something which we arepoor at doing. This would lower the likelihood we fund the same ideas repeatedly, ask the same questions repeatedly and, potentially, fund the same people repeatedly. This defeats the purpose of challenge/innovation funding, which is that we open up funding to multiple people and genuinely new ideas.

In one of my roles in government I was in charge of an innovation challenge fund, which is now closed. All the good ideas and organisations who submitted have their information stored on the private server of the supplier we contracted to run the process, beyond our reach. This isn't necessary. We could do this process simply, easily, and as a shared platform in-house. Websites don't solve policy problems - but if they're shared, simple and set up in the right way, they can reduce friction and get out of the way of us getting the good ideas we badly need from the public.

ID: 1114-11 - Category: Digital

Green crowdfunding platform for SMEs

My proposal is for the government to develop a crowdfunding platform that would allow individual savers to invest in businesses that need capital to develop green projects. The proposal meets the challenges and opportunity outlined in question one.

Opportunity for businesses

Interest rates and bond yields are very low. This allows the government and large companies to borrow very cheaply. However, such a privilege does not necessarily extend to smaller companies, who are unable to access wholesale capital markets and must rely on the banking sector. My proposal would give them an additional source of capital for sustainable projects, through using stored up savings.

Opportunity for savers

Individual savers face a tougher task earning a return on savings, with bank accounts paying little or no interest and the National Savings and Investment (NS&I) products paying out less than before. My proposal would allow them to earn a better yield. It also allows them to invest in truly sustainable projects, and those that help local communities, something that taps into the demand among savers and investors for responsible, impactful investment opportunities.

Opportunity for environmental policy

The government is looking to meet its commitment to reach a net zero carbon economy by 2050, and is preparing to host the COP26 conference this year, a chance to showcase progress in the battle to combat climate change. It has also produced a Ten Point Plan for a Green Industrial Revolution, and some of the economic activities identified in the plan could be funded through the crowdfunding platform.

The transition to a net zero economy does not have to weigh down the economy, and the costs of not acting on climate change are higher than those of acting. However, transitioning will have a distributional impact. My proposal gives a greater range of stakeholders buy-in to environmental transformation and to levelling up, as either borrowers or investors.

Some examples of activities that could be financed through the platform are:

• Green building renovation (perhaps along the lines of "C-Pace" in the US, which allows property owners to conduct energy efficiency and renewable energy projects without having to make a large initial payment, and with debt tied to the property, not the owner);

• Green transport operators and companies in the green transport supply chain;

• Retailers selling environmentally-friendly alternatives to common products;

• Companies pledging to protect and enhance the natural environment.

Practicalities

SMEs could request equity or debt investments. It would also be worth exploring the potential of a specific profit participation instrument allowing business owners to avoid taking on more debt, without diluting control of the company. The Association for Financial Markets in Europe proposed a similar idea for the EU in January.

Savers could either invest in specific projects, or in a bundled portfolio of them for diversification. These bundles could be categorised by type, e.g. building renovation or renewable energy. Investors would also be able to trade in and out of holdings via a secondary market on the platform, which increases demand by adding the benefit of liquidity for investors. The platform would only be open to retail investors, and, to be clear, while the government would establish and run the platform, it would not actually be investing itself.

Companies would have to disclose certain financial information onto the platform. They would be able to set the terms of the investment, but with certain default options and contracts suggested by the platform.

The platform would have to be able to handle large flows of money. It would also have to provide quality control, ensuring that the businesses seeking investment would put it towards projects that are not just real but also really green, and in doing this would have to determine what counts as green.

Thankfully, it would have tools for this at its disposal. The government is planning to create a taxonomy to determine which activities are sustainable, and it is also setting up a new infrastructure bank, whose remit is set to include supporting the net zero policy and offering advice to local government on infrastructure; it could also play an advisory role in the platform. The platform could also use specialist private companies that rate projects on green criteria: these firms are already well-established in the investment sector.

The platform could be operational within a year, meaning it would be able to provide support during the recovery phase of the crisis.

Why not the private sector?

Investment and crowdfunding platforms for retail investors do exist in the private sector. However, the government can add value with this platform for the following reasons:

1. It can act as a trusted arbiter of green activities.

2. It can provide scale through a national campaign in a way other platforms do not.

3. Investors would not have to worry about the platform getting into financial difficulty and not being able to meet obligations.

ID: 827-11 - Category: Digital

Local communication in emergencies

There has been an issue throughout the covid emergency in providing a clear message to all the population regarding statistics, rules and policies. In part this is due to less use of mainstream media, and in part due to false information spread largely by social media. There is sometimes a perception that messages are from a distant source, not actually relevant to our own local communities. People listen to information and feel it is not aimed at them, or do not have regular access to the media from which the information comes. Instead they turn to unsubstantiated tweets or rumours, believing their own social group ahead of authenticity.

My idea for alleviating this problem is the appointment of Local Emergency Volunteers (LEV). An appropriate person would be appointed for around every one in one thousand households to act as a communicator to ensure consistent and accurate communication. The person would not be connected to the police but a member of a community who understands local concerns. The LEV would use multiple media tools and have a dedicated email and social media to provide updates and clarifications and answer questions and concerns. Their identity would be known in the small area covered and people would have a local contact. Costs would be minimal as the appointments would be volunteers and only a little training would be needed.

No solution is perfect, but imagine the benefits of messages being given by a respected local community figure in predominantly asian area of east London, or a small Cornish village.

ID: 522-11 - Category: Digital

Alphabet and Facebook are "fair game"; but the private sector needs help from the government...

THE PROBLEM

Everybody knows that there is an imbalance of power and wealth on the internet, skewed massively in favour of the giant internet monopolies; in particular Alphabet and Facebook who dominate, respectively, "search" and "social-networking", and between them, the digital advertising market.

The COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated by many years the digitisation of our world because people have been compelled to avoid physical contact. British internet users now spend on average more than 4hrs a day on the internet and much of this time is either on the applications of Alphabet and Facebook - which include Google, YouTube, Facebook, Instagram and WhatsApp - or accessed through these applications.

Because of the "network effect" - whereby in both search and social-networking the greater the number of users the more attractive the platform - Alphabet and Facebook are effectively "natural monopolies", and yet they are not governed or taxed as such. Whereas they should have more regulation and more taxation than the average "normal" business in a competitive industry, they have far less.

Attempts to regulate and tax them are proving futile, due to a lack of international cooperation amongst lawmakers and regulators and also the vast sums Alphabet and Facebook spend on political lobbying. The idea of "breaking them up" is not suitable because barriers to entry would still be too high for new entrants; and anyway, to really break them up you'd have to break up the internet itself.

However, Alphabet and Facebook are not invulnerable and neither should they be allowed to transcend government; rather, the strength of Alphabet and Facebook - the network effect - is also their vulnerability.

AN AUDACIOUS AND ORIGINAL IDEA FOR FIXING THE PROBLEM

In order to take them on, Alphabet and Facebook must be played at their own game; the "network" should be recaptured from them, and the best way to recapture the network is by financially incentivising the users to switch.

However, returning their individual digital advertising values to the users would not provide a great enough incentive, and instead, the users should be incentivised to switch to a National Search and Social Network ("NSSN") with the lure of free lottery tickets for massive prizes funded by the collected revenues from digital advertising.

Users would receive an equal number of free lottery tickets if they make the NSSN their principal search engine and social-network. Initial prizes should be funded to encourage the switch, however the NSSN will very quickly go viral and then the prizes will be self-funding with the huge revenues from digital advertising.

In 2020 Alphabet and Facebook captured about 80% of the £15bln spent on digital advertising in the UK. Assuming over time the NSSN was able to capture £10bln of revenues and that 10% was used for costs and regulated profits for the operator(s), £9bln would be left. Perhaps half of this, £4.5bln, could be distributed to the government as much needed tax revenues and the other half could be distributed to the users in the form of lottery prizes.

This would amount to a staggering 12 lotteries a day of £1mln! Surely enough to incentivise users to keep using the NSSN?

The regulatory role-model for the NSSN would be the National Lottery, and this is no coincidence, after all the lottery is also based on a network effect; as more people buy lottery tickets, more are inclined to buy tickets because the prize becomes bigger. Currently, without an NSSN, and with Alphabet and Facebook controlling the networks, rather than the users winning the "prize" (vast advertising revenues), the prize is continually won by the platforms. An NSSN would flip the balance in favour of the users and away from the platforms - as befits "natural monopolies''.

The government should launch a public tender - such as it did for the National Lottery in 1994 - and invite different syndicates to form and pitch to create the NSSN, or perhaps a few NSSNs which could coexist. There are many companies which might naturally want to make-up syndicates, across the tmt sectors and also further afield. Perhaps Alphabet or Facebook themselves might pitch?

A thorough investigation would be carried out first - perhaps by the Department of Business - establishing the parameters for the tender and rules for the NSSN. For example: costs and profit margins for the operator(s); data privacy rules; algorithm criteria to protect the general public and especially the young; data storage restrictions so that energy is not needlessly wasted; protection for content publishers; surveillance against nefarious content.

The new Digital Markets Unit which is planned could be the regulator which oversees the NSSN. As it is with the National Lottery, every few years the operator(s) would be reviewed and the NSSN would be up for tender again to ensure ultimate accountability.

The personal data of the users would never be owned by the operators, but would be held in trust by the operators for the users. Algorithms would be totally transparent.

Set-up costs and initial prizes to encourage users to switch could be financed by the issuance of

bonds. This would help publicize the NSSN, and would be paid back easily once the NSSN went viral.

Crucially, all sides of the media would support and promote the creation of the NSSN. After all, Alphabet and Facebook have, unfairly, not been paying publishers for content they have been monetising on a huge scale. The general public would get behind this campaign to "reclaim the network".

The NSSN would be open to anyone from anywhere in the world, and in time there would be a domino effect of NSSNs in different countries connected to each other.

CONCLUSION

An NSSN would be transformational for the economy in terms of redistributing wealth in a way which would also massively free up competition and broaden and increase investment and innovation.

An NSSN would provide an enormous fillip to government finances when we need it the most to help pay for the financial costs of the COVID-19 pandemic.

ID: 1752-11 - Category: Digital
Delivering a localised approach to policy delivery
The Covid pandemic has demonstrated the need for a more localised approach to delivering policies. There have been many examples during the last ten months of situations where local delivery has been shown to be highly effective in addressing specific issues.

One example is the track and trace system. The national system never really effectively took off and was dogged by issues. However, there are examples of how rudimentary and basic local track and trace initiatives have worked effectively. One of these was in July 2020: following the reopening of pubs, a landlady in Somerset kept a list of all customers and their telephone numbers and was able to contact them when another customer informed her that they had tested positive for Covid-19, a simple system that worked effectively.

The devastating economic impact to the local economy could be minimised by adopting a more local approach, for example, keeping open those local businesses that strictly adhere to Covid restrictions. One way of doing this could be the increased use of local council enforcement officers, such as Trading Standards or Environmental Health, who could inspect and enable compliant businesses to continue to trade while shutting down those who are breaking the rules. An initiative like this would enable small businesses that do not attract large numbers of customers in groups or crowds, and which can control the flow of customers by appointment systems, to continue to trade. Dental practices continue to work successfully like this, and so could many businesses that are closed under the present system, like hairdressers, beauticians, bookshops, picture framers, printing and copying services.

The NHS Covid App allows users to "sign in" by scanning the QR code of the shop or service that they are attending or using. If all shoppers and service users were required to "sign in", literally or using the NHS App, then real-time sharing of the data with local public health and District Councils would inform and enable a much more responsive local track and trace capability.

Another example of a poor delivery of a central government policy, combined with the award of national contracts without a robust and fair tendering process, was the sourcing and delivery of free school meals. This was outsourced to a large company for delivery across England; the result was poor quality, unappetising and nutritionally inadequate food delivered to those in society who at this time most need fit-for-purpose nutrition. A more localised approach, using local business and supply chains, including locally sourced produce, could, in this instance, have led to better quality and more nutritional food being delivered to those who needed it, together

with opportunities for local businesses and the development of local stakeholder relationships. Local knowledge and the involvement of local voluntary and statutory agencies could have ensured a targeted approach to reaching those in need.

Local targeted delivery and provision ensure that resources are allocated effectively. There is a gap between policy theory "at the centre" and the delivery of services at ground level, and the intended policy becomes divorced from the reality at local level. Problems and solutions emerge together, not one after the other; policy needs to be more immediately reactive, whereas a more centralised approach can be slow to react, thus reducing the effectiveness of the intended policy. Local areas are different, some rural, some urban, some with high ethnic minority populations, some with elderly populations all with different access to local amenities and transport links, unemployment levels and health requirements to name a few, and a national centralised approach can mean that policy becomes 'lost in translation', with the effects taking time to be seen and materialise. Policies rarely achieve success on their own but are interlinked with other policies which may be easier, and more efficient to deliver at local level. There is more propensity, capacity and capability for joined up thinking and delivery at local level than at national level – so government should capitalise on that, and trust local organisations to serve their communities effectively.

ID: 747-11 - Category: Digital

Country of Origin

Many of us are finally starting to wake up to the fact that if a product is cheap, and if the consumer isn't therefore paying the true price, someone else undoubtedly is, and invariably a far greater one... But despite certain countries being notorious for exploitation and human rights violations, it doesn't appear to be mandatory in the UK for online businesses to declare the country of origin of products.

Post Brexit I'm presuming we have sufficient independence to unilaterally demand that all businesses trading within the UK clearly state the country of origin of their products; ideally with a little flag alongside for visual clarity. Not only would this allow individuals to choose not to buy products from countries renowned for human rights violations, but would also allow those who wished to, to buy British.

With >40% of Amazon's products originating in China for instance, there is growing anger within the UK that China is profiting from the pandemic, despite it's treatment of Uighur Muslims, gradual destruction of democracy within Hong Kong, and imprisonment of those questioning its response to the pandemic.

As this policy suggestion concerns the facilitation of increased consumer control, I wondered if it might fall nicely within the remit of the government's new Digital Markets Unit.

ID: 798-11 - Category: Digital

Revive Retail, Simply!

Retail is dying because both of lockdown and the natural evolution of retail.

Lockdown has hastened the fact that people are moving to shopping online, and increasingly shops are closing both on the High Street and even in villages and secondary shopping places.

My idea will stop this by taking the power of the Internet to give the shopper the genuine retail experience. It's simply this:

The retailer or shopworker wears a headset with microphone, and the shop is equipped with web cameras. Both the headset/s and cameras are linked to a website where the customer logs into and converses directly with the shop-person who uses his/her sales ability to describe and sell the product, which is delivered to the customer in the usual way.

This utilises the setup that is already there, and the shopworkers who are already there and just adds the equipment, marrying the best of retail, and the best of online, simply.

ID: 174-11 - Category: Digital

Regulations and Red Tape

I have spent 15 years working in heavily regulated industries (Medical Devices and Personal Protective Equipment). Recent updates to these regulations have highlighted that whilst going some way to protecting the consumer they go a whole lot further creating challenges, financial burden to, and even the closure of some businesses.

I believe post-Brexit is the ideal opportunity for the United Kingdom to lead the way in global regulatory alignment (harmonisation) similar to that seen within the ISO structure applied to standardisation. We should not be making up another set of rules and regulations but try to drive a global alignment to make business more flexible and reactive getting products to market.

Too many times do we encounter regulatory issues where a single product must adhere to European regulations, US Regulations, Chinese regulations...the list goes on and on all different. It's senseless when that same product, with the same intended use and made up of the same components parts is subject to a plethora of different requirements.