

Alex Swift:

Welcome to the Exchange, the official podcast of Audit Wales. As part of our work on COVID learning and Dynamic Strategy, I interviewed Auriol Miller, Director of the Institute of Welsh Affairs and Dave Snowden, co-author of the EU handbook on managing complexity (and chaos) in times of crisis. I began by asking them what examples they've seen of public services, adapting due to the pandemic.

Dave Snowden:

One of the things that it's important to understand is most of the contingency planning in the UK and elsewhere focused on short-term crises, which would be over soon, nobody planned for a long term. And that's the complexity theory stuff, which we've done with the EU. It basically says you need to have things assembled that you can combine uniquely each time. You don't have a full linear process where you always go through the same structure, you have these things that you can activate. To give an example, one of the things we're working on now is increasing the density of informal networks across silos. Because if you look at, when I've talked with a lot of chief executive officers in Wales and elsewhere in the world, the thing which they all say that mattered was they had informal networks. They could phone somebody up, they already trust each other, they could fix things. And in a real crisis, we know that's key. Once you understand that you can build that in and then plans can be activated within those sorts of frameworks.

Auriol Miller:

I think you're right, Dave. And I think, you know, there are loads of examples of public services adapting quickly. I want to pick up on a few of those sorts of practical things that I think have affected all sorts of different parts of the population. Schools, obviously for children and the impact on children. Things like the staggering start times, dealing with people and families waiting in the playgrounds, the whole shift to home learning, which has been enormous and an enormous undertaking in terms of the capacity and the capabilities of teachers to get on with that, but also children realising how they needed to take charge of their own learning in a very different way. Supporting children on free school meals, different councils in Wales were doing different things to do with either bags

of food that could be picked up from places. Some were delivered by teachers or vouchers. It took a while, I think, until people realized that cash into people's accounts was the best way to address that so families could do what was most appropriate for them. I think another thing that's just changed dramatically has been how GP surgeries have responded to calls for support and a massive leap forward in terms of the telephone triaging that's gone on. And to your point, Dave, about those informal networks, one of the things I've been really impressed to see has been how care homes across Wales have now formed an informal WhatsApp group. They're sharing learning, and examples of innovation straight away between each other and asking for help from each other in a way that previously was mediated by the organization that they worked for. I think there are all sorts of different examples of that, and others will have more to share, I'm sure as well.

Dave Snowden:

And there's something else which is important here. I mean, this has always been the case. I remember when my mother died of cancer up in Gwyneth, Welsh speaking nurses with Welsh speaking district health workers could sort things out in a couple of minutes on a phone call. The formal system couldn't cope. Now, part of the problem we've got is that in a crisis, we use the informal system, but we don't use it on a day-to-day basis, it's not built properly. I think one of the things we're working on now is how do you deliberately stimulate the formation of informal networks that you can activate? Not just based on somebody who happened to be on a course with or happen to work with so we can create more sustainability there.

Auriol Miller:

I think the mutual aid groups as well, that sprung up all over the country, are a good example of that.

Dave Snowden:

I think the issue is how do we scale it? It all links in with the other big thing, which you see when you talk with people is the degree to which they rapidly repurposed existing capability for novel use. Now, that's a key part of biology. If you don't know, it's called exaptation in biology. The cerebellum at the base of your brain evolved to manipulate muscles in fingers. But then in human evolution, it flips to control grammar in language.

This human ability to rapidly repurpose, but again, it comes back to modularity. If you store what you know at the right level of modularity, you can combine and recombine it very quickly for novelty. If you over structure it, and that's been the problem with contingency plans and something doesn't happen in the way you expected, then things go wrong. I think one of these big things we're focused on, and this is a major part of the field guide, is how do we take things that people already did well and scale them? WhatsApp is a good example, right? People were using WhatsApp to share knowledge. Now they're going to get crippled by GDPR compliance. One of the things we were doing on the assessment process is to say, "Okay, what did you do? Can you do it again? Can you scale it?" because if you can do it again, you don't need to focus there. You should focus somewhere else. Final example, I think is important. You see massive relaxation in the NHS in Wales, Scotland, and England. We were working in all three around procurement rules, which lasted for about a month and everything's snapped back. And the issue was, in a crisis you can get rid of all the rules briefly, but you can't stay there. And the danger is if you don't put a better system in place immediately, you'll snap back to the old extreme structure. A lot of this is teaching people how to use a crisis to achieve sustainable change.

Auriol Miller:

Boundaries are important, aren't they? I think at the beginning you need to have a clear line of travel, but be clear about how long those procurement rules, for example, can be relaxed.

Dave Snowden:

And I think that there's three key rules in the field worth repeating. Your role as a leader is to coordinate not to decide, in a crisis. You distribute decision-making fast. Your role is to coordinate, knock heads, put people together. The other one is communicating by engagement. If I look at the work we're already doing with Auriol on citizen sensor networks, you need to engage people in looking at the problem and not just make them passive recipients of information. And that's a big learning from this crisis, you know, the ability to measure attitudes. And then I think the final thing we've linked in is you need to create interactions between people and things in your organization, which can solve

problems you can't yet anticipate, because you need things to be solved much faster than they are through formal processes.

Alex Swift:

On the issue of adaptation, it's worth pointing out that adapting to sudden changes doesn't come entirely naturally to humans. This often causes us to ignore the issue in the hope that it might go away. On an individual or public service level, what can people do to effectively make meaning out of situations that force them to alter their individual ways of thinking or behaving?

Auriol Miller:

I think Alex, both Dave and I are going to push back on 'adaptation doesn't come naturally'. I think change is entirely normal. I think what's difficult sometimes is that people don't recognise when those changes are happening. I think there's a role for a leader to see, to listen and to listen hard and listen well, to take responsibility for that communication and that engagement and to over resource that as well. But I think one of the most important attributes for a good leader in a crisis like this one, is be comfortable holding that space for uncertainty and not knowing the answers or trying to have them either, and just to feel your way forward. Dave, while I agree that your role as a leader is to communicate and decentralize decision making as much as possible, I think there does come a time when you have to say, okay, I have a hunch. My hunch is we need to do this, but that admitting you're not, you don't have the answers and not trying to have them. That whole time is super important because people need to see that there is that, that space for 'these are the options out there. Let's try this'.

Dave Snowden:

Okay. To agree and disagree with both of you, first, human beings are highly adaptive, go and manage a bunch of kids in the playground or a children's party and you will see that human beings have no problem with adapting to rapid change. It's just when we get into organisations, we forget how to do it because we build too much inertia and too much structure. Secondly, we know there's a whole body of natural science, right? How people connect matters more than what qualities they possess. And that's important. You know, focusing on connections is more important than focus on training individuals. It's more

important to have the right connectivity in the system. And I think the point about leaders. I think there's two points where you must get involved. One is right up front. And if you look at the New Zealand prime minister, she was brilliant. She broke the law to give herself more options. The decisive intervention is not to say, I know what we should do, but anything which gives me more options is something I should do. Whereas Britain and Sweden and the US held back until the evidence was there, by which time it was too late. I think then there are other issues about when you've got, for example, you've got conflict between experts. And one of the things we just finished codifying is something we worked on for ages, which is a half day structured dance between multiple experts. The decision maker can observe the interaction and then decide about what way to go forward rather than have multiple meetings going on over a week with the politics coming into play. There are things you can do about the structure, the way you make decisions, which increase resilience in the system.

Auriol Miller:

Really interesting examples that you've observed. I think because I think that is a really, when I've been in the hot seat, making decisions for an organization with 550 staff providing services to hundreds of thousands of people, that ability to watch what's going on and observe it and then reflect on that quickly is a really, I'd never thought of it like that.

Dave Snowden:

We did a lot of this with the US government. Game environments are quite powerful to find novel solutions. We've used counterfactual gains for the US government, for example, in which the south wins the civil war. But then we can find a context in a current policy situation, which maps something in history. Drop the policy makers into that in a half day game and they come up with solutions they will not come up with if they talk about the actual problem. There's an awful lot we can do to make life easier the next time round. And it is when not, if.

Auriol Miller:

I think you're right about the when not if and that scenario planning, I've been involved in that in two different situations. One brought in to be a curve ball in military planning with

non-governmental organizations. And secondly, running my own team where we took a weekend and we just said, okay, if this happens, what do we do if this happens, what we do, and we followed it all the way through.

Dave Snowden:

I think one of the big issues we've got on all of these is, I've, for example, sat in scenario planning exercises with the Singapore government, with a couple of science fiction writers. And we come up with scenarios, three years later, we'd be proved right. But the decision makers wouldn't pay attention to the scenarios when we created them. This is called the problem of abduction.

Auriol Miller:

You need something from outside of that situation to say, this could happen.

Dave Snowden:

It's more than that. It's the mass sense. I mean, the way I normally illustrate this is if you give radiologists a bunch of x-rays and ask them to look for anomalies and on the final x-ray you put a picture of a gorilla, which is 48 times the size of a cancer nodule, 83% of radiologists will not see it even though their eyes scan it. One of the ways we, for example, use an employee sensor network or a citizen sensor network in real time is to make the 17% visible. If you're an executive, you throw the problem to a sensor network, half an hour later, you've got graphical results and you can see the outliers in a crisis, the outliers that you want to find. And again, this is this key thing, you build capability in advance of need. And that's what we need to do coming out of COVID is to build the capabilities into the system, which will be, I describe it as networks for extra ordinary purpose that can then get reactivated for extraordinary need. The other problem we have with crisis planning is we didn't have networks, which we're used to working together, which could then be repurposed. We created new networks and that slows things down.

Auriol Miller:

We used existing networks that were focused on a particular issue or sector or problem rather than that kind of cross sector network. The example that you used before, Dave, of bringing a few people together from across different situations with different expertise is

... I haven't seen that happening in a really good way. I think what we've done has yes, deepened and strengthened existing networks and brought new people into those, but not necessarily cross pollinated across those networks to see, well, if this works, but this sector, what does it mean for this sector over here in a way that means we can come up with new solution?

Dave Snowden:

We are starting something which if people are interested, they can join. This is a combination of the Cynefin center and the Wales Audit Office. We're looking to run the field guide assessment process on three or four Welsh local authorities to reflect on what they did and create the pathways. We genuinely see a chance here for Wales to lead the world in this new way of thinking.

Auriol Miller:

And I think one of the opportunities for Wales is that, I mean, we all know that in crisis situations, it's much better to shorten that chain of command. You're not filtering people's experiences through multiple different layers of, well, I represent this body and therefore I can only talk about this issue kind of stuff. Shortening the difference between citizens perspectives and experiences and decision-makers. And while I think often we say everyone in Wales knows each other, that's not the case. And this is a good opportunity to make the most of both the positives and negatives about that, right?

Dave Snowden:

They are tighter. I mean, I remember I had a problem with one of my managing directors at one point. He was an Australian and he said, 'you've been working with these guys' I won't say who 'for nine months without a contract, how can you do this? We're at risk'. And I said, we're a fellow south Walian if he doesn't sign the bloody contract, nobody will work with them again, because this is the way small countries work. I've spent a lot of time in New Zealand, where it's like that, you do not want people in, in the café talking about how you didn't fulfill an obligation and small countries are good at that.

Auriol Miller:

I think what that illustrates is the importance of trust now, and the professional and the personal linkages being part of overlapping networks.

Dave Snowden:

You can't separate them. The problem here is the problem with an executive and I've talked with three national security advisors on this in the States, and they all said the same thing. People don't compete to tell them what they need to know, they keep compete to give them advice that they know the NSA wants to hear. And you can see that in government, because basically if you say things that somebody in power doesn't want to hear, you tend not to get invited to the next meeting. And this becomes a sort of downward spiral. And when we did the big darpa project, which was actually an all Welsh team in IBM in Washington around nine 11, what we were focused on is how do you get people to do what Auriol's just said, to get rid of the connection. It's called disintermediation. We built things by which the national security advisor could look at raw intelligence reports without any interpretation, or at least interpretation at the point of origin. They could see patterns. And I think this is the key thing. Technology is one of the ways we can remove some of the filtering patterns which are between people and the leaders.

Auriol Miller:

I think that's right. And you also need that really accurate interpretation and analysis by people who know what's going on, on the ground as well.

Dave Snowden:

And that's always the approach that we've adopted is to allow people to interpret their own experiences rather than have them interpreted by an algorithm. I mean, 20, 30 years ago, I remember I was at a conference in Washington, and somebody said, 'what do you think about the future of AI?' and me and John both said simultaneously, 'they're not thinking about the training data sets'. And you know, 30 years later we got Scholastic parrots and Google employees being fired because you basically got algorithms which reinforce cultural anomalies. And I think that's the other thing we need to start to think

about because the danger is big data guys tend to be amoral. They're not immoral, they're amoral. They see everything as numbers. What you really need is this human mediated data, which scales and allows you to see patterns. And it's also key to giving people autonomy. The academic language for this is cognitive sovereignty. If you don't allow your own citizens to have cognitive sovereignty over their experience, and you rely on your experts to interpret their experience, the expert interpretation is part of it, but it's not the whole story.

Auriol Miller:

And I think there's a danger there isn't there Dave, when you've got people involved in decision-making, who aren't necessarily representatives of the communities that they serve. There's a real problem there, particularly looking at race and diversity issues. Even gender issues. That analysis has been done by people who can't necessarily put themselves in the shoes of those who are experiencing it and accept it.

Dave Snowden:

Yeah. I agree. To an extent, you've got to work with it. We did a project, for example, on genetical mutilation in Africa. We've got young girls, who've been subject to genetical mutilation, acting as ethnographers to people at risk of the same horror, which interestingly was better than being counseled. Doing something to stop other people's suffering has more therapeutic value than sitting in circles, showing angst. And once they got that data, they could sit in their villages and say, what can we do to create more stories like this and fewer stories like that? To get the community to engage. We took material, which was interpreted by those girls in the same way, and we presented it to experts in Washington and the Hague and London. And we got them to interpret it the way that they thought the girls would interpret it and it was different. And there were three reactions to that. One which was wrong was, 'oh my god, we don't see it the same way. How can we come to see it?' And the answer is you can't, unless you're prepared to go out and have a brutal operation and be raped, then you might have me understanding. The difference is that's interesting, which is the right response. The worst one we had is they don't understand their own stories and that's often an expert response. One of things you're also looking at in a crisis is if you've got a citizen sensor network established, you can measure attitudes to things like lockdown before you make a decision and you can

say, well, you know, the experts are like this, the citizen story like that. That's a huge difference. Is that good? Or is it bad? And it's that ability for the leader to see things from different perspectives before they commit.

Auriol Miller:

Yeah. I just wanted to highlight some of those things that as a leader, you have to do and keep doing, you know, the basics like checking in with your team, but also and this points today's points back to connections, both setting out and illustrating those connections between issues. As lots of people involved in direct service delivery are head down, focusing on the immediate priorities for which they are responsible. They haven't got time, resources, or bandwidth necessarily to take a step back, put their head up and look around.

Dave Snowden:

There's a key variation I put in on that though. I mean, from a lot of the work we've done with the intelligence agencies, for example, which is very similar, you need peer to peer flow, not flow up and down. You should be identifying now the people in your organization who were good in a crisis because probably, and I saw this in a lot of work I did in Singapore. The people who are good in a crisis often were not the people who have been promoted in other times.

Auriol Miller:

And that's a real problem, Isn't it? When public services are stretched to the bone from a financial perspective, maybe with additional funding and to deal with COVID, there's an opportunity there. But I guess I guess my challenge to Audit Wales and to the Welsh Government is where is that leadership coming from now to put those teams together across different sectors?'

Dave Snowden:

I remember on that, doing a knowledge audit for a nuclear authority. I won't say where because this is deeply embarrassing. They had the big consultancies in, and they reckoned they could rip out two thirds of the engineers. By the time we finished the knowledge audit, we identified that they were one third short of what they needed. We

looked at the experience, natural talent, the heuristics in the system. And I think one of the things we need to start to do in audit is audit for resilience, not just audit for efficiency. And I think that that's what leaders need, because they've got, I mean, they're always going to make decisions on numbers. You can't stop that. You need to give them the right numbers.

Auriol Miller:

It goes back to the problem of, you know, what you measure is what matters, doesn't it? I think we need to unpack the term resilience a bit and think about, think about that. And, you know, the way that I've both been taught and come to use it is around sudden shocks that happen to somebody. Life's shocks, losing a job, losing a loved one, those sorts of stresses that exist in the environment over which you've got no control and uncertainty and inability to plan for the future and adjust yourself accordingly. I think there's some stuff there about how COVID has been a massive and ongoing, you know, hitting us right between the eyes of all three of those different types of things. Normally, when we're talking about resilience, people have to deal with one of those things at a time, not all three of them ongoing in every single area of their lives at home, at work with their loved ones, looking after the people, they have caring responsibilities for, and everybody else around them. It's not just you, it's everybody. I think that, and the kind of enduring nature of this crisis has obviously been what have marked it out as something life-changing for many of us and in many awful ways.

Dave Snowden:

I mean, from a complexity theory, point of view, the way we define resilience is the ability to survive with continuity of identity over time. It's not the ability to stay as you were. It's the ability to survive but changed. That goes back into the measurement. There's one thing we know: wherever people are working for explicit goals, it destroys intrinsic motivation. All the science says that. And where do we have the most amount of explicit goals, education, health, social services, where do we need the highest amount of intrinsic motivation, those areas. This is where you start. It's my point in all that, this is where we start to look at vector measures rather than targets because vectors measure direction and speed of travel for intensity of effort, but they don't assume a goal. And that allows, for example, nurses who provide better outcomes for patients to be rewarded,

rather than nurses who played the game of scorecards. I think, and again, I think this is an important thing for the audit office. We want to have the right measures and the right numbers so that people can make the right decisions.

Alex Swift:

What do you think the role is of communicators during a situation like a pandemic? Obviously, phrases like flatten the curve have helped to explain complex ideas to the public and ways that they could understand the problem, the perspective of getting people to adapt to a crisis. What responsibilities do you think actors like news outlets have?

Auriol Miller:

Communicators could not be more important. They need to be massively resourced straight away. And external insight brought into that for all the reasons we've just talked about in terms of multiple perspectives. Yes, of course, short catchy phrases matter because they're going to need to land in all sorts of different environments, but what matters more is trust and integrity and the person delivering the message that matters. Media outlets, yes, they are important in terms of getting the message out as widely as possible. But what was it? What was tricky was people in Wales still getting most of their news from UK broadcast outlets. Those UK broadcast outlets, not being nearly as evolution aware or savvy as they ought to be. Now that has improved over time. And you're seeing both, with government engagement with journalists improving and the daily, and then the weekly press conferences being much more visible.

People understanding that decisions were made in Wales that affected them on a daily basis. It goes without saying that the data needs to be really good and it needs to be visualised really well. I think there's still a long way to go for that in a way that is consistently and engaging the plan from the beginning in that it lodges in people's brains, but you've seen all sorts of people stepping up and being communicators in their spheres of influence and reaching beyond those spheres of influence, because people have noticed that they're communicating clearly, honestly, with integrity and they can be trusted. And I think that's something that we want to take forward into the future and think about how we use that.

Dave Snowden:

Yeah. I mean, I think there's a couple of things on that. For my many various sins, I had to read Trump's tweets every morning for four years, and I'm now suffering withdrawal symptoms. And part that was that I was working with a couple of American universities on how narrative evolves so that people can't escape. Micro narratives on the internet and on the news become like attractor. It means that, you filter out things you don't want to hear. We we're about to start a big project on post-election peace and reconciliation in the States. And that's based on effectively creating hyper localised networks of communicators rather than central experts. And the message for the center is communicate back with people's own stories. Don't communicate messages you want them to listen to is the other thing. The press will pick up narrative and metaphors, but they won't pick up facts.

Auriol Miller:

And that's because emotion matters.

Dave Snowden:

It's also localised context. For example, I mean, this is the human sensor network. It gives you potentially say across Wales, 300,000 local communicators, who you can link and connect with. And that's a lot more effective than a big communication team punching out messages because you can't compete with international media and Facebook. You have to compete on the parish pump type stuff. And I think that's what we should be rehearsing. And I think, again, it's something you should be auditing, which is the capability of a council to activate its citizens in real time. And the way you change people's opinions is through action, not by messaging. If you can get people involved in doing things with people, they would otherwise hate, things change quite radically.

Auriol Miller:

Yeah. We've seen some egregious examples of action, turning people off from understanding those messages haven't we?

Dave Snowden:

You need something in common. I did one big project working in South Africa and I mean, this is almost like the apocryphal tale of the Welshman, the Englishman in the African that having dinner and after dinner myself and the African got like a house on fire because we were both united in being opposed to the English because they, my grandmother was subject to the Welsh knot, and his grandmother was put in a concentration camp and kind of like after that, we had a bond and we then saw each other differently. And I think that's what you're trying to do in multiple networks is to get people, to see things in common so they can work together rather than reinforce the existing ways that people think.

Alex Swift:

On the issue of COVID learning, both of you have spoken about the need to treat experiences like COVID-19 as learning opportunities. On how goals can be detrimental to harnessing the opportunities that come from those experiences. Some people listening might be a little taken back by the idea in that goals and targets are so built into public life, and a lot of the information we're given on COVID. Can you explain what's meant by a learning-based approach, and are there any situations where goggles are necessary?

Dave Snowden:

I think targets are necessary and targets can be goals or directions of travel. I'm not trying to be brutal about this, but the outcome-based targets in education and health are producing perverse results for patients. And we know that, and the science backs it up. People are ignoring the science on this. Now it doesn't mean you don't measure. And I think that's where the audit office has a responsibility is to introduce new ways of measurement, which reflect the objectives. I mean, there's another thing I'll give you, which is good economics, which basically says any statistical instrument used for policy loses all value. And Marilyn Stratton is a famous British anthropologist. Her variation of that says, when you make a measure a target, it ceases to be a measure because people focus on target achievement, even if that produces perverse results. And I could give you a hundred examples from NHS Wales in which if you get the measurement system wrong you do the wrong thing. We need a big piece of work. And I think Audit Wales could lead

this, of learning when you can have outcome-based targets based on predictability and when you need vector targets based on uncertainty.

Auriol Miller:

I'll talk from a non-theoretical perspective on, on this. I think some of the stuff around we talked about before, earlier in this conversation around learning, by doing, does it work? I don't think, sometimes people are very good at thinking about what do you need to do to make sure this is a learning experience. And I wonder how many local authorities and decision makers and coordinators of organizations have for instance, kept a log of what happened, what the options were and what decisions they took as a result and what the outcome was to keep that in real time.

Dave Snowden:

One of the things which the Wales Audit Office realised early on, which was really powerful is that they had a huge task of forensically trained people who suddenly didn't have a job to do, but they could do something there and then.

Auriol Miller:

Yeah, and there's been times certainly with my own experiences and as a decision maker for organisations when that's been the case, but again, it takes, it takes resources. It takes huge amounts of resourcing to make that happen in a way which can be used by others afterwards.

Dave Snowden:

But I think that's part of the challenge. For example, the stuff we're doing in the States, we're using school children and after school clubs as agents in things that they already want to do. And I think that this is the big stuff I did for the U S government on how do you handle terrorism? And the way you get over the resource issue is you use your citizens as part of your sensor network. And I think that's where we can do initiatives, which can radically transform Wales and other countries, which won't cost the centralised resource. And I say that work is starting to grow. I don't think anybody would have called this before, but it's this hyper localization concept, which people are starting to understand. You must have this highly local engagement. I don't want to get into politics in this so I'll be careful,

but you can see it in the politics between Westminster and Cardiff. When people's narrative wants to change the first person to initiate it, then controls what comes afterwards. Then people get into this spiral of competition and the wrong decisions get made. And I think one of the reasons is we haven't got the right interpretation and the right communication mechanisms at the right levels.

Auriol Miller:

Part of that plays into where those networks existed at a hyper-local level and all sorts of different facets of people's lives. I would argue very strongly that this isn't just something for local authorities, for instance, but it's also for third sector organizations for faith groups, for sports organizations, crossing all sorts of boundaries that are imposed because of either the nature of the organisation or the nature of the funding that supports them because people don't experience those things in their lives, depending on the source of the funding that provides whatever service that is. They need to be much more holistic. And again, that thing around don't kill the messenger, but you will take that message on much more clearly if you trust the messenger, but you also need to trust the messenger to share your experience, not just to receive, and engage with whatever the message is.

Dave Snowden:

Two practical examples of that. I had a call yesterday with a very bright young 16-year-old in Phoenix, Arizona, who's trying to bring Muslims and Jews together at a teenage level. And she's already on to the fact that you need a network distribution, you need micro narratives, you need people to work together. And there's a lot of hope in that because we've just given us the software to actually make that happen faster. I think we need to use our own citizens in a structured way and use the energy which is available in those communities. Rather than doing things for people, we need to do things with people.

Auriol Miller:

Absolutely. Yeah. I just I'd take issue with using systems. I think we should say we enable citizens and support them to do stuff which they know already and get into the places which organizations can't.

Dave Snowden:

Okay. We'll abandon them both and we'll talk about liberate. All right. We can find the right words for this.

Alex Swift:

Thank you for your observations and your insight on this. Just as a last point, a lot of the discourse on the pandemic in these past few weeks, as focused on getting back to normal from my understanding, you'd actually argue that that's not what we should be aiming for the spot entirely. Can you explain why you think getting back to normal as it's used is the wrong approach and what opportunities and changes you would personally like to see carry over into the post COVID world?

Auriol Miller:

I think some of the things that are important to us, all that we want to keep is that sense of community and connectedness with places where we live. And lots of people have got to know the immediate surroundings of where they live in a new and a different way, because they haven't been able to travel. How do we keep that in a way that people buy more locally, support more local organisations, support their neighbors and that sense of community connectedness in whatever shape or form that takes? I think it's not helpful to think about going back to normal. Nobody wants to go back to anything; what people want to certainty and hope for the future. I think what we need to do is define what that future should be for ourselves and think about how do we want it to be and what can each of us do to make that happen? What is our future going to be like? And how is that going to manifest itself in ways which are meaningful? Both for us, our families, our friends, our colleagues, the things, and the places that matter to us.

Dave Snowden:

At this point I'm going to get deeply practical. I think we need to; we can't go back to what happened before. That's impossible. We need to decide what a new normal is. Certainly, in the think tanks I'm in, we're talking about permanent COVID, not long COVID, we need to rethink a bit. And I don't think, I think the big switch we're seeing on complexity is from sort of envisioning a future into understanding the present, understanding what worked

and what didn't work, which is the assessment process we're running with you guys and with local authorities. What worked, what didn't work, what experiments can we run to create more resilience in the system and let the future emerge from those interactions. Different parts of Wales work in different ways. I know that because I lived in all of them, the Northeast of Wales is very different from the Northwest is very different from the south. You need to create solutions. And if you want to go to a hospital in Bangor, there's some travel times which are four or five hours, which is not the same thing in Cardiff. We need to allow these local solutions to emerge within a governance framework. And I think that's where audit has a big part to play.