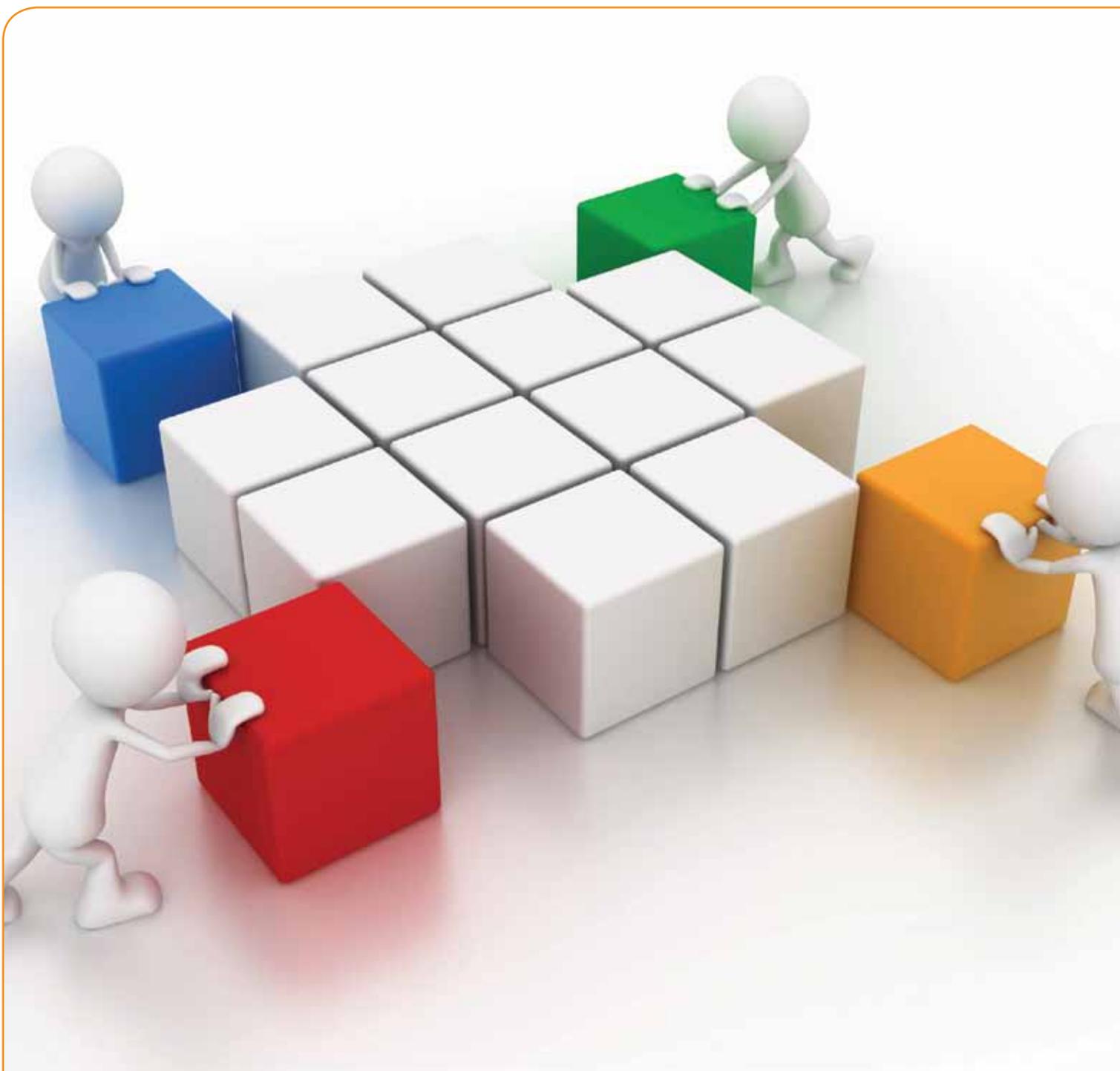


Politicians and personality

A guide for councillors

Third edition



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A guide for councillors to understand difference, work more effectively, and get their message across.

Mike Green

Transitional Space

August 2012

“In a nutshell you need to be prepared to speak out but also to listen; to focus on the here and now as well as the big picture stuff of the future; you need to develop empathy with people and motivate them but check out the business case and press for real outcomes; and you need clarity of thought and clear goals but not be too rigid but be able to adapt quickly to unforeseen circumstances and changes in plan.”

Council leader

All quotations throughout come from leading councillors discussing their type in relation to their work as leading councillors. The Myers Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI®) is a registered trade mark of the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator Trust.

Foreword

The local government landscape is changing at a tremendous rate. Whilst the current and immediate future economic conditions are placing an immense strain on councillors, officers and the services that are provided: requirements of central government such as the Localism Act and local initiatives to increase efficiency and effectiveness such as Shared Services, are making it more important than ever for elected members to take the lead and help shape the future of our communities. In order to do this councillors need to be able to understand difference and diversity; work more effectively with senior management teams and local partnerships; and get their message across with as much impact as possible.

The Local Government Association (LGA) has therefore commissioned this updated edition of the ground breaking research into the personality of local politicians and how that affects their ability to lead across a range of activities. Over one and a half thousand councillors are included in this study together with updated information relating to public sector managers.

Are politicians different from the general population?

Politicians and Personality (Third Edition) suggests that, as a group, the politicians that head up local government differ significantly in their personalities from the rest of us. The LGA has been running the Leadership Academy programme for councillors for over twelve years.

It assists councillors in developing aspects of their personal, organisational, political and community leadership. As part of the programme councillors are asked to take the Myers Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI®) to increase self-awareness and how communication, leadership and change management skills can be enhanced through knowledge of one's own type and those of others.

The collective results of 1510 councillors (2000-2012) have been analysed and we can now conclude that there are significant differences when the population of councillors is compared to the general UK population and also the managerial population (2011). Reading through this booklet will help you understand personality differences; help you identify your personality type; highlight areas of potential strength and weakness; and suggest strategies for extending your communication and leadership styles.

As we continue to address the challenges of these current times with fundamental change occurring we can also use our knowledge of MBTI to good effect. We have addressed familiar themes, through the MBTI lens, such as our understanding of the demands of the Localism Act through to managing change in tough times and also ask the question whether we now need more types of leadership than ever before.

Councillor Peter Fleming
Chairman of Improvement Board, LGA

Part one: are politicians different?

Each individual councillor will have a set of preferences – their Myers Briggs “Type” – which will be more or less similar to that of any one else in the population. However, when you look at the councillors **as a group** there are significant and substantial differences, both compared to the UK population and the managerial population.

Key findings

Councillors are more likely to be extrovert and less likely to be introvert than the population as a whole. That is, they are more comfortable being out and about and engaging in face to face conversations with large numbers of people. They will tend to have a broader range of interests and be energised by the cut and thrust of interaction.

Councillors are much more likely to be future-oriented, see emerging patterns (the wood rather than the trees), and take an overview of the bigger picture. They are more likely to be motivated and inspired by a big vision. And it will be on these terms and with this language that they will communicate.

Councillors will be more likely to take a hard objective look at the facts and generally will not be ruled by their emotions as much as the general population. They would generally be more interested in reaching a solution which was objective and where the “business case” stacked up compared to the majority of the population who would be more concerned with the effect that a decision had on people.

A major difference emerged between the population 39 per cent of whom are relatively traditional and who really do need to know why any change is being proposed (compared to only 17 per cent of councillors) and councillors 35 per cent of whom seem to want to embrace change and what to progress things quickly (compared to only 15 per cent of the population).

One particular type (ESTJ) has twice the number of councillors in it than the general population. (20 per cent of councillors but only 10 per cent UK Population) This type is often seen as the stereotypical leader who respects the hierarchy achieving things within the system. They have a down to earth approach; set clear measurable targets; seek leadership directly and take charge quickly.

Whereas there is a preference amongst the public at large not to want to change things, the councillor population seem to be saying that that is their primary purpose. This is not necessarily change for change's sake, but more that they have been elected on a platform for change and are willing to progress their manifesto on that account. Of course, the population may have elected those people who say they want to change things but when it actually comes to their doing it they are the first people to complain.

The implications

Whatever your personality you will need to adjust the way you communicate if you want to get your message across to other people. So whatever type you are you need to foster self-awareness of your preferences and also be aware of others' preferences. The implications for politicians as a group are that they need to be aware of their tendency to be more of some particular types than others and have more of a preference for thinking and acting in certain ways which the majority of the UK population and public sector managers do not.

On an individual basis the advice is "Know your Type" and on a collective basis the advice is "Know how to communicate and act with other types".

The next few sections will take you through some of the major differences and look at specific examples where difference can lead to conflict or can lead to synergy.

Part two – exploring difference

1. Extrovert or introvert?

“Two ears, one mouth, use them in that proportion.”

Council leader

| Extroversion preference | E or I | Introversion preference |
|--|--|---|
| <p>You draw your energy from the outer world of people, things and actions</p> <p>You have a need to initiate things and involve others</p> <p>You tend to like verbal communication and talking things through with others</p> <p>You can engage others with a natural enthusiasm which needs to be reciprocated.</p> <p>You value communication and want to be heard</p> <p>You prefer action rather than reflection</p> <p>You value breadth over depth</p> | <p>Extroversion or introversion</p> <p>Where we get our energy from and where we focus our attention</p> | <p>You draw your energy from the internal world of ideas, thoughts and concepts</p> <p>You need forewarning and time for reflection You tend to think things through and make considered comments</p> <p>You prefer thoughtful communication and one-to-one discussions</p> <p>You need pauses in the communication to work out what you think</p> <p>You need some time to assimilate changes before taking action</p> <p>You value depth over breadth</p> |
| Extroversion % | Who | Introversion % |
| 70 | Councillors | 30 |
| 52 | UK population | 48 |
| 58 | Public sector managers | 42 |

Councillors, as a group, are more likely to be extrovert (18 per cent more than the general population) and less likely to be introvert than the population as a whole. That is they prefer to be out and about engaging in face-to-face conversations with large numbers of people. They will tend to have a broad range of interests and be energised by the cut and thrust of interaction.

Some of the characteristics of this preference for extroversion is that councillors are quite action oriented and enjoy interaction with people in general. Their style will tend to be energetic and animated and they will respond quickly to situations. They will have a tendency to think out loud and will have a bias for action over reflection.

Implications

Extroverts prefer considerable contact time with others, whilst Introverts need time alone with their own thoughts and reflections. Extroverts can find introverts withdrawn and cool, whilst introverts can find extroverts superficial, intrusive and domineering. However extroverts need introverts to complement them by building in time for reflection and ensuring there's a real depth to the understanding. Likewise introverts need extroverts to make the contact, build the networks and to take action.

2. Detail person or big picture person?

“You need to focus on the here and now as well as the big picture stuff of the future.”

Council leader

| Sensing preference | S or N Sensing or Intuition Where we get are data from and what information we trust | Intuition preference |
|---|---|---|
| <p>You like to know the specifics and details about what exactly is needed</p> <p>You are practical and pragmatic and prefer concrete and realistic things</p> <p>You like to see how what is required now fits with the past</p> <p>You like to focus on the present and the past and need realistic pictures of the future</p> <p>Clarity of objectives, roles, and responsibilities is important</p> | | <p>You like to know the bigger picture and the overall rationale</p> <p>You like working on the abstract, conceptual and theoretical levels</p> <p>You like an outline plan with a general direction</p> <p>You like a vision of the future and the opportunity to help design it</p> <p>Imagination, hunches and original ideas are important to you</p> |
| Sensing % | Who | Intuition % |
| 52 | Councillors | 48 |
| 76 | UK population | 24 |
| 50 | Public sector managers | 50 |

Councillors as a group are significantly different from the UK population in where they get their data and what information they trust. They are twice as likely to be future oriented, see emerging patterns (the wood rather than the trees), and want to view the bigger picture. They are more likely to be motivated and inspired by a big vision. And that is how they will communicate.

The UK population compared to councillors on the other hand are twice as likely to rely on current facts gleaned from the present and the past; they see things in terms of what is rather than what might be, and they require tangible evidence to be convinced of an argument.

So we have many more councillors than the general population having a preference for seeking the bigger picture and future possibility. They are more likely to want to build towards a future state and will think about these things strategically and with a future focus. They are more likely to want to pick up on trends and patterns.

Implications

People who prefer Sensing can sometimes believe people with a preference for Intuition to be somewhat impractical and difficult to follow in their ideas and concepts. The Intuition person might find Sensing people rather bound in the current reality and taking a more pessimistic view on life. So the Sensing person needs the Intuition preference to prepare for the future and to think outside of the box. On the other hand the Intuition person needs the realism and reminder of the facts that the Sensing person can bring.

One of the key differences between the Sensing and the Intuition preferences is how they endeavour to get their messages across. The Sensing person likes all the details and information to be based on reality, whereas the Intuition preference prefers the general picture and some discussion around possible options. So the Sensing person really needs to allow the Intuition person to provide the overall picture first with the relevant details later, whereas the Sensing person needs the relevant detail first, or at least it explained to them that the idea is only, perhaps half-formed or at a high-level.

One councillor recognises that intuitives “could be too fluffy and don’t get the detail. There is always the need for successful outcomes. You need to focus on the here and now as well as the big picture stuff of the future. Make time to get the detail right.”

Another suggests that you “ensure that there are other councillors of the team, who are more able to focus on detail and are used to provide the necessary cover. Have patience with those who require more data and information before arriving at a decision.”

3. Head or the heart?

“A balance of head and heart is needed issue by issue.”

Council leader

| Thinking preference | T or F | Feeling preference |
|---|--|--|
| <p>You need to know the logic, the reason, the business case for making a decision</p> <p>You require clarity in the decision making and planning process</p> <p>Analysing and systematising are important to you</p> <p>You value objectivity and approach things in a very reasonable fashion</p> <p>You value competence in the people you work with</p> <p>Fairness and equity are important</p> <p>You tend to adopt a questioning, fairly critical approach</p> | <p>Thinking or feeling</p> <p>How we make decisions and judgements</p> | <p>You need to know the impact on people of the decision under discussion</p> <p>It's important that people's needs will be addressed</p> <p>Inclusion in the planning and implementing process is important</p> <p>Valuing people and seeking harmony are key concerns</p> <p>It's important to you that managers care</p> <p>Appreciation and support are important</p> <p>You tend to adopt a more accepting compassionate approach</p> |
| Thinking % | Who | Feeling % |
| 71 | Councillors | 29 |
| 46 | UK population | 54 |
| 83 | Public sector managers | 17 |

Compared to the UK population councillors will be more likely to take a hard objective look at the facts and generally will not be ruled by their emotions when it comes to making decisions. They will generally be interested in reaching a solution which was objective and where the “business case” stacked up compared to the majority of the population who would be more concerned with the effect that a decision had on people. Managers have 83 per cent preference for thinking which far outstrips the UK population and indeed the councillor population. Although one can rationalise why managers “should” be logical, rational, and objective it does highlight one potential reason why human factors are often left out of the decision making process, or at least come lower down the priority list.

Councillors fall somewhere in between UK managers and UK population on the Feeling function. In that sense councillors could act as a bridge between the more logical, analytical, “business case” driven world of managers and the 54 per cent of people in the population who are more concerned with the impact that decisions have on people. However it also means that there is the potential for conflict between councillors and managers as their approach to problem-solving and decision-making and communication will be different as two groups. Clearly values and impact on people are much more important to a larger group of councillors than managers.

Implications

The Thinking preference can come across as unsympathetic and critical of others’ views. The Feeling preference can appear as illogical and willing to agree with others too quickly and settle for compromise. The Thinking preference needs the Feeling preference to remind them of the effects their decisions have on people and how appreciation and points of agreement are important components of mutually beneficial relationships. Feeling preference types need to learn from the Thinking types how to include reasons and a rationale for their ideas and maintain a certain objectivity at times in the decision making process.

The Thinking person may well find the Feeling person illogical and overly emotional, whilst in return the Thinking person can come across as insensitive and rather critical. But the two types can complement each other by the Feeling person helping the thinker to seek harmony and empathy and seek reconciliation and mediation. On the other hand the feeler needs to learn from the thinker how to analyse the costs and the benefits up in a more objective fashion.

4. Close down or open up?

“Keep an open mind about new ideas that can be included in the plan.”

Council leader

| Judging preference | J or P | Perceiving preference |
|--|--|--|
| <p>You prefer a clear plan of action with defined outcomes, clear goals</p> <p>You like to have time-frames and adopt a structured organised approach</p> <p>You prefer things to be planned and scheduled with no surprises</p> <p>You like to make an early start on projects and for decisions to be made and things brought to closure</p> | <p>Judging or Perceiving</p> <p>How we deal with the external environment and live our lives</p> | <p>You prefer open-ended plans with flexibility and options</p> <p>You like to have opportunities to gather more information and to adjust plans as the process continues</p> <p>You are open-minded and willing to trust in the process</p> <p>You prefer to allow things to emerge, continue gather information and tend to be pressure-prompted</p> |
| Judging % | Who | Perceiving % |
| 58 | Councillors | 42 |
| 58 | UK population | 42 |
| 66 | Public sector managers | 34 |

The UK population and councillors are relatively well aligned in terms of the proportions of judging and perceiving preferences. Managers as a group, have a tendency to be more systematic, structured and organised, as one would expect from their roles and responsibilities with organisations. Some conflicts can occur when officers want to tie you down to making a specific decision, before you think it necessary.

Major differences between the Judging and Perceiving preferences occur when the two types are working together on a joint endeavour – a project team for example. The Judging person will want plans and time frames and surety that things are being done. They will want everything to be done in advance of deadlines. The Perceiving person will want things to be more open ended and flexible and will get energised by working right up to deadlines and feel “micromanaged” if they get too constrained by structure and plans.

Implications

People with a Judging preference can come across as too rigid and inflexible, the Perceiving preference as too disorganised and irresponsible. The important aim is for both preferences to strive towards adaptability and structure, whilst making room for more information gathering but not totally at the expense of completing the task.

Judging types can appear over controlling by being too structured, organised and needing to close everything down. On the other hand Perceiving people can appear too flexible and adaptable, in their behaviour and their ideas. So the important thing is for Judging people to allow some flexibility when working with people of a Perceiving preference when it comes to meetings, planning and structuring workload. Likewise the Judging preference does need some planning and structure and some clear decision-making process.

Part three – getting your message across

Understanding your own MBTI type and how you might come across to others, can be extremely useful in helping councillors to get their message across, in understanding how that message might be received and in how they approach decision-making. This may be with colleagues within their own council, with their communities or with councillors and officers from other authorities and it can be applied in a wide range of settings. Here we will discuss three areas as examples: Localism, Managing in tough times and sharing services.

Localism

The Government's Big Society was launched in the 2010 and described as "an impressive attempt to reframe the role of government and unleash entrepreneurial spirit". Some of its objectives given are:

- give communities more powers
- encourage people to take an active role in their communities
- transfer power from central to local government
- support co-ops, mutuals, charities and social enterprises.

However there were some interesting comments, from an MBTI perspective, made from within the Government's own ranks:

"it's a brilliant idea in theory" and "We demand vision from our would-be leaders, and here is one who offers a big one, of a society rebuilt from the ground up". Clearly the ideas came from an 'N' (Intuition) preference. There was a shortage of detail and a number of the Prime Minister's close colleagues highlighted the fact that they were struggling to explain the idea to the public – their "big idea" has been seen as "too vague and needs to be scrapped in favour of practical policies."

We can see that politicians are over-represented in the 'N' preference with almost 50 per cent of the sample whereas the population as a whole are over 75 per cent 'S' (Sensing) – they want the specific detail. The challenge for the Government can be seen as a challenge of translation. How does the Big Society actually play out in the individual constituent's street? In the same way people may ask what is and what isn't allowed under the Localism Act?

This is a 'creative tension' and rather than producing a conflict it can actually become a meaningful dialogue between those with some big picture ideas and those who actually want to make a difference on the ground. In addition, when taking into account the Judging and Perceiving preferences as well, one may need to ask what has to be clearly systematised and what can be allowed to evolve?

Managing change in tough times

As a result of the current spending review, upwards of £81 billion of budget cuts (Financial Times 20/10/2010), over the lifetime of the current parliament, with almost half a million public sector workers losing their jobs, Edge, the Institute of Leadership and Management's magazine quoted the chief executive of the local government information unit:

“This is a big leadership challenge for councillors in particular, to get the most out of local authorities, pull together other local services, and get the community involved in making tough choices.” (2010)

Dr Anton Franckeiss, Managing Director from Ask, a leading organisation development consultancy, described the leadership challenge:

“What's needed is a flexible and responsive process for managing change,” he said.

“Ironically, given the apparent insistence of the Chancellor that there is 'no plan B', it is a change management model that is most likely to assist public sector managers in refocusing and equipping their organisations for the months to come.”

Leading councillors will need to step into all of the MBTI preferences to tackle this monumental challenge. They will have to use their Extroversion preference to kickstart the process, summon up the energy and enthusiasm to interact with all the different stakeholder groups. They will need to use their Introversion to think long and hard about their plans and ensure they have well thought through strategies and tactics.

They will need to use their Intuition preference to step into the future and create options which haven't yet been thought of and combine the requirements and the freedoms of the Localism Act with root and branch reviews of existing services. The Sensing preference will be called upon to understand what is currently working and what needs to remain as well as identifying what is wrong and needs to change. The Intuition preference will help with the blue sky thinking and seeing the bigger picture.

Importantly the Thinking-Feeling dimension is crucial. The Thinking preference is needed to ensure a logical, rational, analytic study is undertaken but the Feeling preference is essential to really understand how these measures will impact people. Managing change in tough times is always going to create disquiet and disequilibrium. Access to the Feeling function is necessary to mitigate the difficult decisions.

The public need to see that councillors have a plan and that the changes will follow a certain trajectory in an organised way. However to get maximum engagement from stakeholder groups there needs to be some fluidity and flexibility in the plans to allow for input from people. There needs to be a plan, yes, but there also needs to be a recognition that everything won't be set in stone on day one and some ideas will emerge as the changes take place.

Shared services

The LGA suggests that shared services can mean many things:

“Traditionally thought of as back office arrangements (transactional, operational or professional), councils and other public services are increasingly looking to share senior management, consider joint venture relationships with other public sector bodies and the private sector, and also move to shared front office services such as adults' and children's services.

There is a lot of experience to draw on if you are thinking about closer working with local partners. Experience has shown that trusting partners and common goals are fundamental to working together successfully. The savings can be significant – both financially and in improved services.”

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The MBTI can help enormously in enabling councillors and officers from different authorities to work together effectively. This can happen on two levels:

- each authority will have its own corporate personality (based on the aggregated personality types of its people)
- each cabinet and senior leadership team will also have differing personalities.

We know that for effective team and organisational working there needs to be a variety of types. Similar types may well discuss and agree things quicker but the decisions are not necessarily the optimal ones. Teams and organisations with diversity will take longer to arrive at decisions – with the potential for conflict along the way – but those decisions will be better ones.

In order to maximise the effectiveness of shared services at an individual and cultural level all of the MBTI preferences need to be engaged, both to ensure attention to the overarching purpose but also to build and maintain trust:

There needs to be sufficient thinking through and talking out of both the current situation as well as future scenarios. There needs to be the open sharing of thoughts but due consideration to not being hasty in the decision making process. Whilst respecting individual authorities identity there does need to be ways in which there can be free flow of both operational and strategic communication. Balancing the demands of the individual authorities with the collective goals will be a creative tension.

There is the need for focus and debate on both the day to day tactical decisions together with the creation of a shared service framework within which the partners are operating. It has to have vision and inspiration alongside specific tangible outcomes and benefits. Negotiating a way through the pragmatic and idyllic will be important.

The importance of trust and reputation is critical. On the one hand the reputation of the shared service will be based on competence and a business case and plan which demonstrates credibility. However, equally important will be the attention to ensuring the wellbeing of staff and managers involved. Trust will be built by creating a culture of acceptance and understanding, of seeking win-win solutions rather than developing a conflict-based relationship. Balancing the Thinking and Feeling preferences will be paramount.

Designing and implementing a shared service will, of course, need to be well planned but there needs to be allowances made for unforeseen consequences and potentially adverse impacts. Managing the tension between what has been documented and agreed and the more evolving way of working requires a tight loose structure. Some personality types will want to tie everything down, whilst others will feel that as too constraining.

Part four – conclusion

Communication strategies

As a communicator every individual whatever their MBTI Type will be in the minority. In order to get your message across you will therefore need to step outside your comfort zone (your MBTI preferences) and communicate with people according to their type.

For example, the most common type for councillors is ESTJ which is someone who tends to be decisive, direct, efficient, gregarious, logical, objective, organised, practical, responsible, structured, systematic and task-focused.

| | |
|--|--|
| Extroversion You might hold an impromptu large scale meeting where you tell people about the changes and are prepared to take questions which you answer. It may be that the discussion leads to decision and people are prepared then to take action. | Introversion People will need forewarning of the meeting and what it's about. They may like to read a briefing document beforehand. Having heard what you've had to say they may then like to mull it over and come back to you one-to-one or in small groups some time later. |
| Sensing People will need to know the reasons for the change, what precisely you want to change and how. They will want to know what the evidence is for the change and also what you intend to keep the same. They will want to know how it affects them and their locality. | Intuition People will want to be inspired and motivated towards a future vision. They may not be so interested in the detail but like to get a sense of the bigger picture and have a feel for how your options fits with other ideas. |
| Thinking People will want to know that you've weighed up the costs and the benefits and have constructed a business case which 'hold water' and haven't let your emotions sway your decision. There needs to be a sense of equity and justice to your plans. | Feeling People will want to know how the changes impact people and how they fit with their Values. They will want to know that you have considered people and the impact on people and have taken steps to ensure their needs will be met. |
| Judging People will want to know that you are approaching the change in a planned, systematic way with a sense of organisation and with published timescales. They will want some surety that the plan will be delivered. | Perceiving People will want to know how much time and space there may be for things to be flexed. They will be interested to see how much is planned and how much might be 'emergent' with a preference for the latter. |

But 90 per cent of the population are not ESTJ which means that an ESTJ person has to communicate to the majority of people who are not their type – people with a preference for Introversion, Intuition, Feeling or Perceiving.

By assessing the needs of the different preferences in the table below you will be better able to communicate and get your message across to them.

A different type of leadership needed?

Grouping the MBTI® types into four broad categories we have four types of leadership behaviour, who will be in all organisations, and who will exhibit significant differences in their behaviour. Taking the Extrovert/Introvert (E-I) and Sensing/Intuition (S-N) dimensions we have:

- “Thoughtful Realists” (IS) are concerned with practicalities; they learn pragmatically and by reading and observing; they focus their change efforts on deciding what should be kept and what needs changing; and their motto is “if it isn’t broke don’t fix it”.
- “Action-Oriented Realists” (ES) are concerned with actions; they learn actively and by experimentation; they focus their change efforts on making things better; and their motto would be “Let’s just do it”.
- “Thoughtful Innovators” (IN) are concerned with thoughts, ideas, concepts; they learn conceptually by reading, listening and making connections; they focus their change efforts on generating new ideas and theories; and their motto would be “Let’s think ahead”.

- “Action-Oriented Innovators” (EN) are concerned with new ways of doing things; they learn creatively and with others; they focus their change efforts on putting new ideas into practice; and their motto would be “Let’s change it”.

This edition of *Politicians and Personality* highlights the potential for both consensus and conflict between elected members and public sector managers and with the public at large. So far there has not been a detailed study of the typical MBTI types of Leaders (and cabinet members) and Chief Executives (and senior leadership teams). We do know from recent publications that focus on the shared arena between councillors and senior officers, and between councillors and partnership leaders, that leadership style is crucial and is changing.

We also know that the traditional command and control leader won’t necessarily meet all situations. With the development of more permeable organisational boundaries, more multi-agency and partnership working and more complex the challenges, the more that leaders will be required to flex their leadership styles.

For example local partnerships are becoming non-hierarchical structures requiring facilitative leadership and research that shows that facilitative leadership demands acceptability, the development of a shared vision and the ability to deliver it. This implies a range of skills and relevant qualities, supported by favourable partners and an enabling political environment, with enough time to get it right.

Organisations need all four types of leadership and all four types can complement each other.

A final word

Local politicians differ as a group in a number of significant ways from the UK populations and local government managers. This booklet has highlighted a number of those differences and shown where conflicts might emerge or possible misunderstandings. A number of scenarios have been described with real life experiences drawn from a cross section of councillors and suggestions to mitigate some of the potential pitfalls have been given.

Our personalities contribute to who we are, how we think and how we behave. An awareness of who we are and how we act are important components in becoming as influential and impactful as we can be. Knowledge of others' personality types is also essential if you want to get your message across in a way that can be heard.

“Recognising your own weaknesses is a strength. Be honest with yourself; it allows you to be honest with others. Learn to treat opposing views on their merit. Always be prepared to adapt your own views, and accept the views of others. Never be afraid to ask, when you do not know. The person who does not ask in order to avoid appearing a fool remains ignorant. The person who appears foolish by asking, becomes wiser.”

Council leader

Appendix: exploring personality

Whatever your personality it clearly has an impact on your attitudes and your behaviours.

In our experience many of the conflicts and stresses in life come from personality clashes and differences in communication of the different personality types. This brief introduction to the Myers Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI®) explains how and in what ways people differ in their behavioural preferences. Understanding who you are and how you are different from others is a first step towards establishing mutually beneficial and productive relationships.

The MBTI® is one of the most widely used personality profilers in the world today. Based on initial work by analytical psychologist Carl Jung in the early part of the 20th century, the MBTI was devised by Katherine Briggs & daughter Isabel Myers and has been well documented and researched over the past seventy years.

The MBTI® identifies four different dimensions, giving eight behavioural preferences that we all use at different times (see Table 1). However each person will have a preference for one combination over the other combinations. This generates a possible 16 different 'types' into which we will all fit (see Table 2).

The MBTI® itself looks at:

- where people prefer to focus their attention and draw their energy from
- the way people prefer to take in information and what information they trust
- on what they prefer to make decisions
- how they orient themselves to the outside world.

The tool describes preferences – it describes rather than prescribes – not skills or abilities or competencies. Different MBTI® types will have different attitudes to the level of engagement and interaction with others; different communication styles; different ways of evaluating information and making decisions; and different attitudes to living their lives. This then has an impact on styles of learning, problem-solving and leadership. The philosophy behind MBTI suggests that all preferences are equally important, valuable and necessary.

| | | |
|--|---|---|
| <p>Extroversion preference</p> <p>You draw your energy from the outer world of people, things and actions</p> <p>You have a need to initiate things and involve others</p> <p>You tend to like verbal communication and talking things through with others</p> <p>You can engage others with a natural enthusiasm which needs to be reciprocated.</p> <p>You value communication and want to be heard</p> <p>You prefer action rather than reflection</p> <p>You value breadth over depth</p> | <p>E or I</p> <p>Extroversion or Introversion</p> <p>Where we get our energy from and where we focus our attention</p> | <p>Introversion preference</p> <p>You draw your energy from the internal world of ideas, thoughts and concepts</p> <p>You need forewarning and time for reflection You tend to think things through and make considered comments</p> <p>You prefer thoughtful communication and one-to-one discussions</p> <p>You need pauses in the communication to work out what you think</p> <p>You need some time to assimilate changes before taking action</p> <p>You value depth over breadth</p> |
| <p>Sensing preference</p> <p>You like to know the specifics and details about what exactly is needed</p> <p>You are practical and pragmatic and prefer concrete and realistic things</p> <p>You like to see how what is required now fits with the past</p> <p>You like to focus on the present and the past and need realistic pictures of the future</p> <p>Clarity of objectives, roles, and responsibilities is important</p> | <p>S or N</p> <p>Sensing or Intuition</p> <p>Where we get are data from and what information we trust</p> | <p>Intuition preference</p> <p>You like to know the bigger picture and the overall rationale</p> <p>You like working on the abstract, conceptual and theoretical levels</p> <p>You like an outline plan with a general direction</p> <p>You like a vision of the future and the opportunity to help design it</p> <p>Imagination, hunches and original ideas are important to you</p> |

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|---|---|---|
| <p>Thinking preference</p> <p>You need to know the logic, the reason, the business case for making a decision</p> <p>You require clarity in the decision making and planning process</p> <p>Analysing and systematising are important to you</p> <p>You value objectivity and approach things in a very reasonable fashion</p> <p>You value competence in the people you work with</p> <p>Fairness and equity are important</p> <p>You tend to adopt a questioning, fairly critical approach</p> | <p>T or F</p> <p>Thinking or feeling</p> <p>How we make decisions and judgements</p> | <p>Feeling preference</p> <p>You need to know the impact on people of the decision under discussion</p> <p>It's important that people's needs will be addressed</p> <p>Inclusion in the planning and implementing process is important</p> <p>Valuing people and seeking harmony are key concerns</p> <p>It's important to you that managers care</p> <p>Appreciation and support are important</p> <p>You tend to adopt a more accepting compassionate approach</p> |
| <p>Judging preference</p> <p>You prefer a clear plan of action with defined outcomes, clear goals</p> <p>You like to have time-frames and adopt a structured organised approach</p> <p>You prefer things to be planned and scheduled with no surprises</p> <p>You like to make an early start on projects and for decisions to be made and things brought to closure</p> | <p>J or P</p> <p>Judging or perceiving</p> <p>How we deal with the external environment and live our lives</p> | <p>Perceiving preference</p> <p>You prefer open-ended plans with flexibility and options</p> <p>You like to have opportunities to gather more information and to adjust plans as the process continues</p> <p>You are open-minded and willing to trust in the process</p> <p>You prefer to allow things to emerge, continue gather information and tend to be pressure-prompted</p> |

Table 2 below gives the MBTI table with a two word heading and four key phrases for each type.

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|---|--|---|---|
| <p>ISTJ Planner inspector Thoughtful depth of focus Trust in facts Logical decision-making Planned and organised</p> | <p>ISFJ Protector supporter Thoughtful depth of focus Trust in facts Harmony and understanding Planned and organised</p> | <p>INFJ Foreseer developer Thoughtful depth of focus Open to bigger picture Harmony and understanding Planned and organised</p> | <p>INTJ Conceptualiser director Thoughtful depth of focus Open to bigger picture Logical decision-making Planned and organised</p> |
| <p>ISTP Analysar operator Thoughtful depth of focus Trust in facts Logical decision-making Flexible and adaptable</p> | <p>ISFP Composer producer Thoughtful depth of focus Trust in facts Harmony and understanding Flexible and adaptable</p> | <p>INFP Harmoniser clarifier Thoughtful depth of focus Open to bigger picture Harmony and understanding Flexible and adaptable</p> | <p>INTP Designer theoriser Thoughtful depth of focus Open to bigger picture Logical decision-making Flexible and adaptable</p> |
| <p>ESTP Promoter executor Energised breadth of interest Trust in facts Logical decision-making Flexible and adaptable</p> | <p>ESFP Motivator presenter Energised breadth of interest Trust in facts Harmony and understanding Flexible and adaptable</p> | <p>ENFP Discoverer advocate Energised breadth of interest Open to bigger picture Harmony and understanding Flexible and adaptable</p> | <p>ENTP Explorer inventor Energised breadth of interest Open to bigger picture Logical decision-making Flexible and adaptable</p> |
| <p>ESTJ Implementer supervisor Energised breadth of interest Trust in facts Logical decision-making Planned and organised</p> | <p>ESFJ Facilitator caretaker Energised breadth of interest Trust in facts Harmony and understanding Planned and organised</p> | <p>ENFJ Envisioner mentor Energised breadth of interest Open to bigger picture Harmony and understanding Planned and organised</p> | <p>ENTJ Strategist mobiliser Energised breadth of interest Open to bigger picture Logical decision-making Planned and organised</p> |

Adapted from MBTI table Berens and Nardi (1999) The sixteen personality types Telos, CA



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