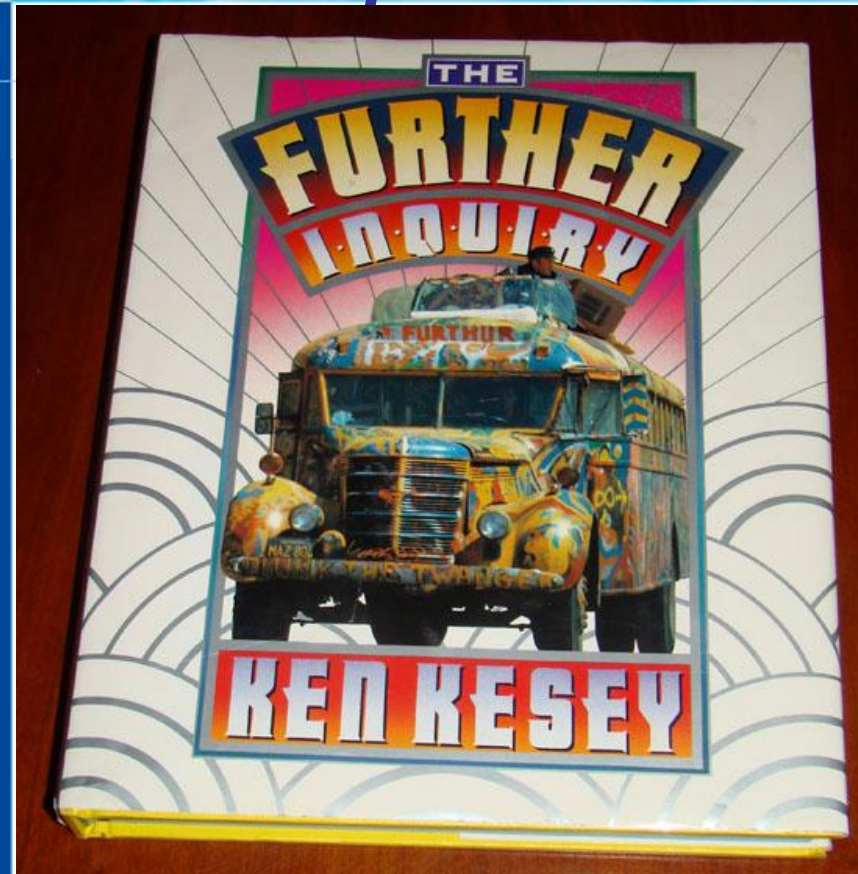


Better than Before

The Improvement Journey



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The report

- Commissioned November 2009
- 13 main case studies
- Focus groups
- Many wider conversations
- Consultancy experience of CT

Looking for common threads

- **Improvement journeys**
 - *From bad to OK*
 - *From OK to good*
 - *From good to great (!)*
 - *From great to better*

Since we started ...

- New government, new priorities
 - *Unplanned housing policy experiment under way...*
- Goodbye TSA, we hardly got to talk
- So long Audit Commission, it's been fun
- Spending cuts start to bite on HCA
- Tough times for tenants, communities and social landlords
- And ... the **BIG** society

Housing regulation

- TSA to become part of HCA
- Most of what it does need to continue, if only to keep lenders happy
- Smart money had been on Audit Commission!
- Framework likely to be largely preserved:
 - *National standards, 'co-regulation'*
 - *Local offer*
 - *New 'Registered Provider' concept*
- But – foot off the improvement gas

Changes to framework

- Will good enough be good enough?
- Reduced emphasis on local offer
- Formal role for tenants, MPs, councillors
- Increased role for Ombudsman
- More self-regulation
- Harder-edge approach to failure

Housing inspection

- Audit Commission is to be dissolved
- LA audit functions to be privatised
- TSA successor still able to commission inspections of Registered Providers
 - *Consultants and auditors*
 - *Continuity Audit Commission survivors?*
- Role for NHF has been mooted
- Quality accreditation systems?

When the going gets tough ...

- **Improvement matters more than ever**
- Stay focused on tenants, services, locality
- Support tenants, communities in tough times
- Govern proactively (remember the Golden Thread)
- Create positive organisational culture
- Achieve real efficiencies, economies
- Innovate, diversify, respond to new agendas
- Don't worry too much about regulatory framework

The report

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Ten top common themes



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1. A strong sense of purpose, vision

- Know your own centre of gravity
- Different vision of the future
- Catalysts for change
 - *Mergers*
 - *Adverse inspection or regulation results*
 - *Change of key personnel*
 - *Moments of truth*
 - *Rationalisation of group structures*
- Why can't we stay where we are?

2. Authentic leadership

- Modern executive leadership
- Less of the charismatic command & control
- More emotional intelligence, engagement
- Informal behaviours – meeting staff, tenants, every week

Board leadership

- The key role of the Board in appointing CE
- Right appointment may need courage
- Asking difficult questions, always
- Do Boards need to up their game?

3. Fearlessness for difficult issues

- Getting the right people to lead change
- Dealing with entrenched interests
- Tackling under-performance
- On the bus, or not?

4. 'Customer first' core ethos

- What matters to tenants?
- What really affects tenant satisfaction?
- Using talent and energy of local people
- Addressing the imbalance of power

5. Integrated performance management

- Defining, monitoring and measuring success
- Real time information
- Getting the systems to deliver
- Building managers' confidence

6. Spirit of enquiry

- The pursuit of truth, new ways of thinking
- Willingness to keep on questioning
- Encouraging innovation
- Moving beyond good KPIs
- Tenants may be too easily satisfied – good scores not always enough

7. Value staff, build their confidence

- Empowerment at the front line
- The critical role of middle management
- Managers learning to let go
- Learning from mistakes

8. Connect and communicate

- Constant communication
- Transparency, honesty
- Hearts and minds
- Building trust and confidence

9. Invest in learning, development

- Heavy investment a common theme
- ‘Leadership academy’
- Talent management
- Identifying gaps, and filling them

10. Face outwards

- Collaboration, benchmarking, learning
- Cross-cutting activity
- Beware the silos
- Broad range of relationships

Models for change

- No standard models for change – many toolkits and resources available
 - *Lean/systems thinking*
 - *Chartermark, Investors in People, Service Excellence*
 - *Balanced scorecard, EFQM, etc*
- “Choose the one that works for you”
- “Keep things simple”
- “Learn from others, not just in housing”

Embedding the positives

- Values and vision
- Putting customers first, always, everyone
- Respecting and valuing difference
- Learning and appraisal
- Performance management and continuous improvement
- Empowering customers and staff

The choice ...

