Characteristics of Foundations

Summary of Trustee exercise for 2023 strategy development

Power and Control

Tension	Stabilisers	Modernisers	Transformers
Power and Control Centralised Distributed	 Centralised decision making Outcomes delivered for a community Delivery models prescribed by grant making mechanism Broadcast model for communication from the centre to frontline staff or grant recipients 	 Experimenting with participatory grantmaking Outcomes delivered with a community Some flexibility of delivery and grantmaking models Some decision-making devolved to frontline 	 Decentralized decision making using digital technology Outcomes delivered by a community Flexibility of delivery and grant making models responsive to local needs Peer to peer communications between foundation staff and grantees
Where do you stand?			

Power and Control - takeaways

- ☐ A clear interest in moving away from the more 'traditional' type of grant maker that we have been
- Already dipped our toes into making a small number of grants 'differently' and this appears to be something there is an interest in continuing to do and developing further
- ☐ Flexibility in our approach seems to be common theme across both columns with blue stickers
- ☐ Participatory grantmaking of some kind feels like an important theme to explore further

Diversity

Tension	Stabilisers	Modernisers	Transformers
Diversity Professional experience Lived experience	 Professional and academic experience of foundation staff is prioritized Expert-led Strong influence from the family or founder 	 Efforts to introduce diverse voices and lived experience into decision making Awareness of the importance of diversity at senior leadership and board levels 	 Commitment to mirror the demographics and experience of beneficiaries among foundation staff and leadership Outreach and investment in people with lived experience as staff members and leaders
Where do you stand?			

Diversity - takeaways

- Answers clearly show that there is an appetite to do more in this area and move beyond our current approach
- ☐ Tapping into 'lived experience' is clearly important to people
- ☐ The involvement of experts by experience feels like an important element to build into our long term strategy whether as Trustees or through involvement in other ways
- ☐ Future recruitment of Trustees should prioritise areas where there is under or no representation

Transparency

Tension	Stabilisers	Modernisers	Transformers
Transparency Low exposure High exposure	 Transparency to confirm activity rather than challenge it Compliance with regulatory reporting requirements Little room for challenge or criticism 	 Data and decision making published in an unstructured format Transparency for transparency's sake 	 Data published in a way that is useful and useable Awareness of the limits and risks associated with data-purist approaches Decision-making and strategy is public and open to challenge
Where do you stand?			

Transparency - takeaways

- ☐ This was an area where there was a clear view that we could do more however there also seemed to be an awareness that this is an area that can have high-cost implications
- ☐ Sitting somewhere between holding a moderniser and transformer role appears to be the common consensus and this probably mirrors where we sit currently (with a little bit of stabilizer built in!)
- ☐ We already publish data through 360Giving and hope to use the website more and more to highlight the work we fund and our priorities and our rationale behind this.

Role in public service delivery

Tension	Stabilisers	Modernisers	Transformers
Role in public service delivery Safety net Test bed	 Efforts to plug gaps in public service provision Acceptance of current frameworks offered by the public sector 	Critical friend to the public sector, offering challenges and innovative ideas within existing delivery framework	 Commitment to advance public sector innovation through new delivery models and approaches Desire to change the framework and terms of debate for problems addressed by the public sector
Where do you stand?			

Role in Public Service Delivery - takeaways

- ☐ A clear interest in supporting systemic change is evident in the way that people placed their blue stickers
- A willingness to consider new approaches to finding solutions to problems was also indicated. This could link into us reviewing the balance of proactive grant making (strategic grants that we identify) we undertake against reactive grant making (through open and advertised funding programmes)
- ☐ This also have the potential to link into identifying future social investments

Time horizons

Tension	Stabilisers	Modernisers	Transformers
Time horizons Near-term Long-term	 Focus on immediate needs of individuals and communities Cure rather than prevention 	 Main focus on existing needs of people and communities today Efforts to address structural and systemic change New technology to improve existing processes 	 Anticipation of future problems and focus on prevention Desire to address structural, systemic and political challenges New technology and processes to 'change the rules of the game'
Where do you stand?			

Time horizons - takeaways

- Again, there was a clear interest in supporting work that had a longer term and more systemic approach however balancing pressure on assets against committing to long term relationships was flagged.
- ☐ This also links into anticipating future problems which would align with supporting work that was focused on earlier interventions something we have discussed over the past 12 months.
- ☐ These responses mirror many of the areas highlighted in the role in public service delivery slide so these two areas feel linked

Measurement, evaluation and learning

Tension	Stabilisers	Modernisers	Transformers
MEL Metric-led Iterative learning	 Target-led Tried and tested initiatives 	 Data-driven Continuous improvement through learning and established feedback loops for key metrics Experimentation with processes for more effective data collection and analysis 	 Driven by experimentation and learning Learning and insights prioritized over impact goals Desire to build and share deep knowledge of social change models within the own organisation and beyond
Where do you stand?			

MEL - takeaways

- ☐ Understanding more about the impact that our funding is making is clearly important to people
- Investing in either a new or updated database is a key priority for 2023 and a key objective is to enhance reporting systems to enable better data management around impact and other key measures this will have a financial implication but we have not invested in this area for several years.
- ☐ Sharing knowledge also clearly an aspiration that is supported and is an area that will be named in the new strategy and our theory of change.

Assets

Tension	Stabilisers	Modernisers	Transformers
Assets Maximising financial return Maximising social return	 Focus on sustaining the endowment No social lens applied to investments 	 Mixed strategy of seeking stable financial returns whilst investing with a social mission Divestment from assets that aren't aligned with wider objectives 	 Endowment used to advance social change Strong shareholder activism
Where do you stand?			

Assets - takeaways

- ☐ The ability to use our endowment beyond just generating income has clearly resonated with Trustees
- ☐ Social investing is an area that we will continue to explore, and this route may link into some of the aspirations expressed in role in public service delivery and time horizons
- An Investment Committee will also be able to ensure that the portfolio is more able to be used to advance social change and help further our mission
- ☐ Bringing in experts to advise the Investment Committee was suggested.

Collaboration

Tension	Stabilisers	Modernisers	Transformers
Collaboration Independent action Collective effort	 Can act swiftly & decisively Often works alone Reputation for specific interventions of issues 	 Coalitions and campaigns with likeminded organisations Foundation staff represented on boards or working groups on specific issues Systems-thinking embedded into day-today work 	 Cross-sectoral coalitions and partnerships with unlikely partners to make change happen Use of modern technology to experiment with new ways of collaborating effectively
Where do you stand?			

Collaboration - takeaways

- ☐ There clearly is recognition that working with others is a positive way of making the assets we have go as far as possible
- ☐ Working with other funders is an area that can be explored more broadly, especially if we adopt different kinds of funding models
- ☐ Also, coalitions such as the Corsten Independent Funders Group are a good way of adding our voice to policy debate
- ☐ And our partnership with Cranfield Trust significantly extends the support we can offer grantees
- ☐ However, we need to ensure that we don't work with partners who could damage our reputation

Summary

There is a clear desire to do more but this needs to be balanced with resources and cost
Looking further at how we can help influence systemic change but also how we can suppor impact at an earlier point - alongside meeting immediate needs
Bringing the voices of people who have experienced the issues we support into our decision making
Understanding more about the impact we are contributing to and using that to help us improve what we do and share our learning
Work with others to amplify our impact and make the most of the assets we have

Next steps

- New strategy needs to be agreed at March 2023 Trustee meeting to launch at the beginning of April 2023.
- ☐ A paper on initial thoughts will be circulated prior to the October 2022 meeting for discussion
- ☐ The December 2022 meeting will be primarily used to focus on strategy discussion and will be a longer meeting (as we did in 2021)
- ☐ We will plan an extra meeting in January 2023 if we need more time for strategy discussion