

Report

Resilient people, communities and places

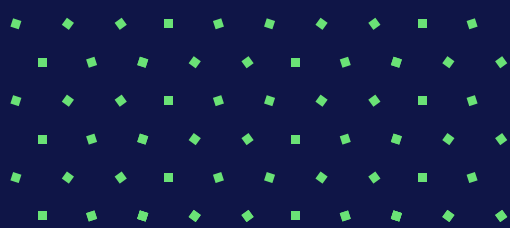
St. George's House consultation

July 2022



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Introduction

The Covid-19 pandemic represented an unprecedented challenge to the United Kingdom's public services. The circumstances of the last two years also constitute what has been described as 'critical juncture for public services'; in effect a once in a generation opportunity to deliver lasting and transformative reform of public services. As a result, the true value of a local authority led, place-based approach has come into sharper focus. Not only has the pandemic impacted directly on the health and wellbeing of people and places, it has also imposed unprecedented shocks on the wider civil society and socio-economic life of people and their communities as a whole.

Insights from Socitm's work, with our network of 2,500 local practitioners enabled us to capture an emerging picture of recovery and regeneration strategies. Strategies demonstrating how local authorities are moving from a front-line response, via local post-Covid recovery initiatives, towards community-focused regeneration.

Alongside these challenges, a growing range of central initiatives, including levelling up, health and care integration, securely connected places, community preparedness and resilience, net zero, and housing and planning reforms have emerged. All these initiatives will impact on how local public services are funded and operated in the future.

These factors, together with wider global disruptions, such as now underway due to the Russian invasion of Ukraine,² highlight that the post-pandemic world remains a challenging and risk laden place. Our societal structures are fragile and demonstrates that nationally and internationally we need to be better prepared to withstand, recover and 'build back better' from major disruptions.³

All of which in turns points to the 'new normal', comprising a rapidly changing and complex environment that needs to be navigated with vision, skill and determination if we are to enhance the resilience of people, communities, organisations and places.

In November 2021, Socitm hosted a St George's House consultation at Windsor Castle to draw these strands together. An expert group of academics, public sector leaders and figures from business discussed the lessons learned and identified key strategic priorities, themes and most importantly how we could strengthen and broaden our support to Socitm's members.

As the following report shows, our discussions at Windsor reinforced what we had heard from our members and partners about the need to build on place-based responses to address the challenges brought about by Covid-19. The content draws on the work of Socitm's leadership, research and advisory programmes, together with wider insights from public, private and academic sectors. It concludes with shared reflections on what works, what needs to change and the next steps that Socitm and its members need to address through innovation, technology and modernisation to help people, places and communities to thrive.



Session 1: Response, recovery and regeneration

This session looked at how the four pillars of reset, reform, renew and resilient that characterised place-based recovery emerged and the how the onward harnessing of digital capabilities, technologies and data can contribute to enhancing the resilience of people, communities, organisations and places.

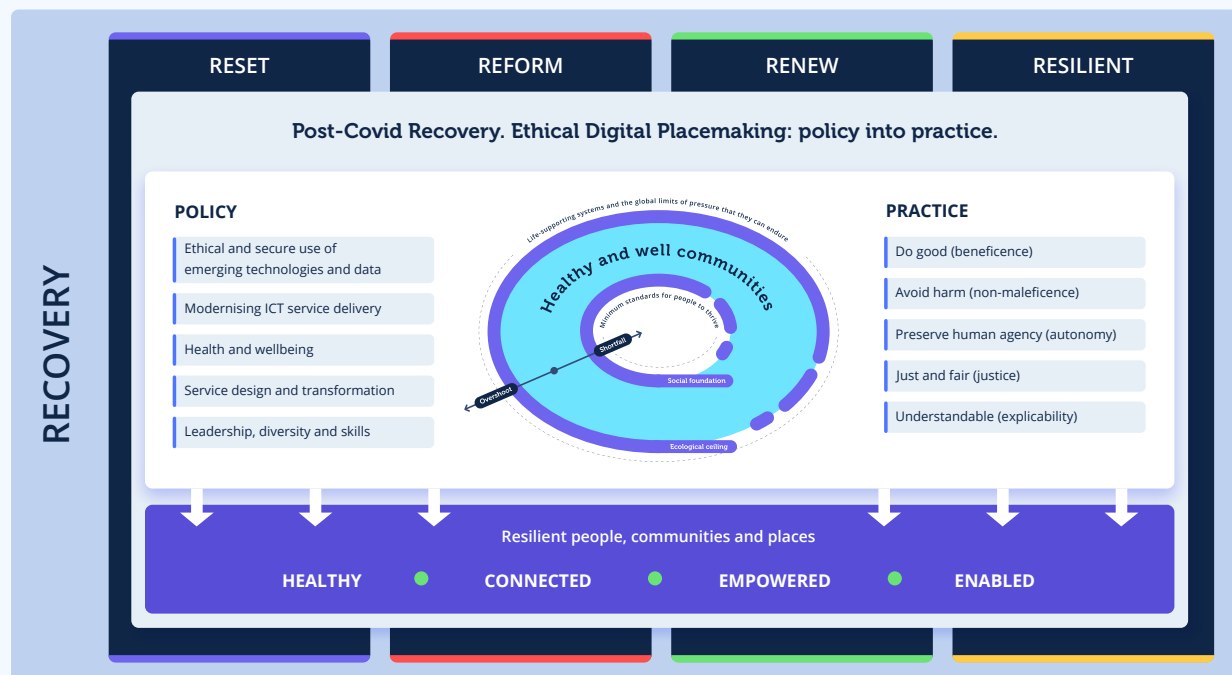
Reset, reform, renew, resilient

Immediate Past President of Socitm, Sam Smith, welcomed participants and outlined how in the face of unprecedented challenges from Covid-19, she had made post-Covid recovery the policy theme for 2021-22, the second year of her presidency. Working with Martin Ferguson, Policy and Research Director at Socitm, they had convened the consultation to look at how Socitm can move forward in supporting its members as they address the issues of recovery and regeneration.

Insights from Socitm's work with our network of 2,500 local practitioners has enabled us to capture an emerging picture drawn from over 200 local authority recovery and regeneration strategies about how local authorities are developing the means to move from a front-line response, via local post-Covid recovery initiatives, towards community focused regeneration. Our findings identify four common pillars, the four 'R's of reset, reform, renew and resilient that broadly characterise place-based recovery and regeneration approaches across the various tiers of local government (see Figure 1).

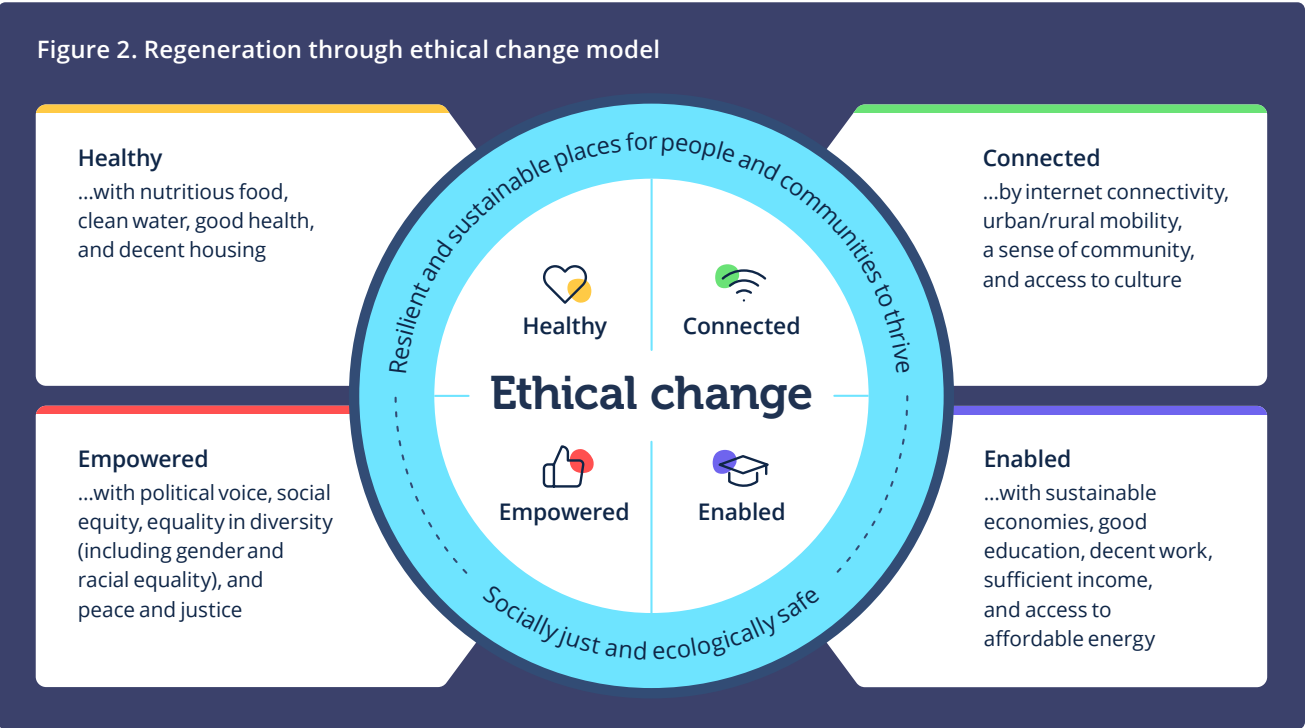
These common pillars provide an initial strategic framework that helped address the issues of place-based recovery through a range of online conferences, webinars and regional workshops and the development of our place-based recovery prospectus,⁴ digital equalities policy briefing⁵ and an associated championing place-based recovery infographic that highlights a range of place-based case studies.⁶

Figure 1. Recovery and resilience model



Research and resources: Digital trends | Covid-19 Digital and ICT impact | Planting the flag #2 | Resource hub collections

Figure 2. Regeneration through ethical change model



Moving on from this perspective, our place-based regeneration infographic⁷ (see Figure 2) highlights how our members' focus has moved rapidly from initial recovery onto issues of regeneration, sustainability, connectivity. These include the wider issues of digital services, integrated care, cyber security and digital identity, as local authorities orchestrate place-based resources and assets to address the most pressing needs of their residents and communities.

This model reflects Socitm's approach to post-Covid recovery based on the adoption of doughnut economics,⁸ which allows public service organisations to consider environmental and societal perspectives, rather than just financial considerations. As the Socitm regeneration infographic highlights some local authorities have already done this, including Bristol City Council, Wigan Metropolitan Borough Council and the London Borough of Barking and Dagenham – which has a borough manifesto with 14 specific targets that cover health, the environment, the local economy, education and crime. Each in their way have reworked their operating model to address the recovery and regeneration issues making data absolutely fundamental to what they do.

Alongside all this there is a growing range of central initiatives from levelling up, health and care integration, securely connected places, community preparedness and resilience, net zero, housing and planning reforms all of which will increasingly impact on how local public services are funded and operate. Taking all these factors together they point to the new normal being an ongoing and rapidly changing and complex environment that needs to be navigated with vision, skill and determination if we are to enhance the resilience of people, communities, organisations and places.

The participants had the opportunity to consider wider perspectives through prerecord presentations (as summarised in Figure 3 on next page).

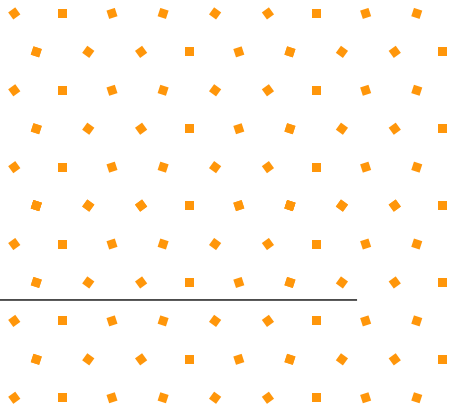


Figure 3. Prerecorded wider perspectives**Wigan Council: BeWigan initiative**

This was a presentation made by Wigan Council's Chief Executive Alison McKenzie-Folan at Socitm's President's Week event in June 2021. She said that the council, which redeployed 900 staff to different jobs during the pandemic, was planning a permanent group of reservists, as well as allowing staff flexibility to work where they want, improved career pathways and the setting up 100 apprentice and graduate roles. McKenzie-Folan said that the pandemic had shown the importance of staff behaving with kindness, with the council adding 'be kind' to three existing BeWigan⁹ behaviours it promotes; be courageous, be accountable, be positive. "It really came to the fore and permeated everything we've done over the past year," she said.

University of the West of England: Cities and communities beyond Covid-19

Robin Hambleton, Emeritus Professor of City Leadership at University of the West of England, told the consultation that local authority politicians and professionals should collaborate with community, business and trade union leaders to create long-term plans for their areas.¹⁰

He said it is vital to involve people from the public, private and third sectors: "These realms overlap and this creates possibilities for bold innovation. Wise civic leadership creates innovative zones that guide and change a place." Professor Hambleton has advised Bristol's directly-elected mayor Marvin Rees in establishing the Bristol One City Approach,¹¹ which has the aims of creating a fair, healthy and sustainable city. Its plan runs to 2050, as opposed to having numerous specific plans for shorter periods. The work is run by a city office and guided by 'city gatherings', twice-yearly meetings of leaders from across the community, with the most recent attracting 400 participants. Such leaders are also able to work within a city office innovation zone

in Bristol City Council's city hall headquarters. Technology is used where useful, including an online volunteering platform Can Do Bristol.

He noted that 'place-less power' such as that wielded by multinational companies often damages localities, and that the UK has eroded the powers of local areas to make their own decisions over many years. Going on to question if the government's policy of levelling up may be a slogan in search of a policy, although the planned white paper may provide more clarity. In conclusion he added that local areas currently have to face four challenges: Covid-19; a resulting economic downturn; climate and ecological threats; and increasing social, economic and racial inequalities. "You can't pick these off one at a time," he said. "You've got to do all of them at the same time. That is demanding, but it is the task facing us."

University of Exeter: Green Futures Network doughnut economics

Peter Lefort told participants that doughnut economics is "a really helpful model to hold the idea of complexity." The model, developed by economist Kate Raworth, is designed to help understand a system or a place that has multiple parameters and cannot be controlled but can be influenced. "The best we can do is get as wide a perspective as we can on what's happening," he said.

The model takes its name from its two circular boundaries, an ecological ceiling and a social foundation, against which numerous parameters can be considered. The ring in between represents "a safe and just space for humanity", for example by providing sufficient food to support a healthy diet for everyone, produced in an environmentally-sustainable fashion. At present, humanity is overshooting the ecological ceiling in several ways and on others the situation is not clear, something the model is able to represent by showing where something is unknown. He noted that doughnut

...continued on next page

Figure 3. Wider perspectives (continued)

economics includes the ideas that economic growth should not be the default choice and that changes are necessary, given that mitigating climate change will require major work. “The risk of not doing anything far outweighs taking an imperfect decision,” he said. The model lends itself to collaboration, as it aims to agree questions to ask rather than reach conclusion on answers.

Doughnut economics has been adopted by Cornwall Council as a decision-making wheel model¹² that is used to assess decisions presented to the authority’s cabinet. This provides a visual representation of whether an option is expected to be positive or negative in the short or long-term on a range of nine environmental and 13 social factors, or whether there are no known impacts, shown in grey. He concluded by noting that including grey areas is worthwhile as it highlights what is not well understood, and that considering negatives as well as positives helps in realistic decision making.

The session then moved on to look at looked at the onward harnessing of digital capabilities, technologies and data can contribute to enhancing the resilience of people, communities, organisations and places the following insights from the Local Government Association (LGA), Socitm’s digital trends research and the techUK Local Digital Capital initiative.

Local Government Association

Susan Attard (Head of Productivity, LGA) and Owen Pritchard (Programme Manager of Digital and Cyber, LGA) outlined the LGA’s thinking on meeting the digital needs of the sector going forward. Key to this was how should we support the transformation and improvement of local government digital services and networks in support of post-Covid regeneration and levelling up.

Susan outlined that the pandemic had called upon local government to work efficiently at pace across an unprecedented set of issues, which combined supporting residents, the most vulnerable and local business together with working with central government and other stakeholders. It had done so seeking to support local communities, whilst having to transforming services and adapt to remote working all in the face of a public health emergency that heightened workforce capacity and financial pressures.

An emerging lesson from this experience was that central to any plans to regenerate, local authority areas have to include the views of local people and negotiate tensions within communities. Building on this point in discussion with Owen, the pair of them outlined how they had seen one unitary authority address this issue through proactively engaging the local community in helping to look at shaping the future.

Research and engagement with people in the borough found they are positive and proud of the area’s green spaces and community spirit – the latter boosted by the pandemic – but frustrated by traffic and litter. The council has developed a set of priorities that include regenerated high streets that are distinctive and serve as community hubs, as well making the most of green spaces. But they noted that there were tensions, including between what the majority of locals want and what a minority of people actually need, and between external and internal organisational issues.

Taking the lessons learnt from responding to the pandemic with looking at how best to respond to the needs and aspirations of local people and communities was seen as key to this was how the sector should

work together to the transformation and improvement of place-based digital services and networks in support of post-Covid regeneration and levelling up.

To support this there needs to be a shared understanding of local government digital strategy and improvement outcomes. The LGA offered a straw-man list of things that needed to be improved as part of a local government's digital improvement, alongside evaluating value for money of such investments.

Subsequent to the consultation in order to standardise the way the local government sector understands what digitalisation comprises of and how it applied to activity. The LGA, Socitm and Solace have reviewed the current landscape of digital support to distil the key components of digitalisation needed to have an impactful outcome for residents, businesses, and communities as follows (see Figure 4 on page 10 for developed model).

Concluding, Owen Pritchard focused on information security, noting that local public services often suffered from an 'unlucky seven list' of vulnerabilities: missing security patches, unsupported software, inappropriate user privileges, weak and poorly-managed passwords, insecure configurations and supply chains and poorly-configured, untested backups. As well as specific measures to address these, he said that regular testing that covers networks, systems and applications is essential, followed by remediation processes that reduce risks that are uncovered.

He noted that the risks involved in local government cyber security have "increased massively" over the last 18 months, and that managing its risks is going to get harder, more complicated and more complex. Stating that regretfully it may well require more security incidents to take place before the topic is given the attention and resources it deserves.

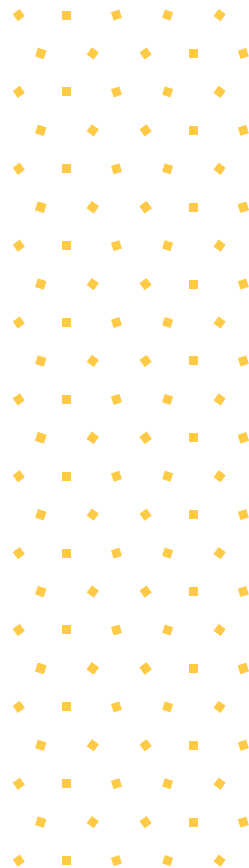


Figure 4.

Local government digitisation outcomes



Connectivity – Residents, council officers and organisations can access both the internet and council services uninterrupted, wherever they are in the community.



Data – The council's data practices are focussed on improving services, facilitating innovation and informing policy making. The council uses recognised data standards,¹³ meets data security requirements, protect residents' rights and ethically manages data as it works toward more efficient and effective data collection, access, use and reuse, sharing and linking, and maintenance.



Democracy – The council makes maximum use of digital technology to improve councillor attendance, increase community engagement and collaboration, improve transparency, and optimise democratic decision making.



Ethics – The council uses digital technology in pursuit of the common good and does no harm; it preserves human agency, is fair, transparent, and environmentally friendly.



Inclusion – The benefits of the internet, digital technologies and digital services are available and accessible to everyone.



Leadership – The council's leaders drive the use of digital technology to achieve both strategic and operational goals, create conditions which facilitate organisational transformation, and are mindful of the opportunities and risks that digital technology brings. They lead an organisational culture that is open, digitally aware, and resident-focused.



Local productivity – The council supports the use of digital technology by local businesses, partners and third sector organisations, and ensures they can access the internet and the capability to benefit from the engagement it enables.



Organisational capability – The council puts digital technologies at the heart of the way it works and trains its workforce in how to use them. It has a culture that values, incentivises, and expects digital ways of working from every member of its workforce. It actively develops its workforce's expertise within the digital, data, technology and cyber professions and has talent pipelines to benefit retention and relieve pressure on recruitment.



Partnership – The council works with public, private and third sector partners to ensure an integrated, cohesive, and resident-focused approach to public sector digital transformation and digital service provision.



Security and resilience – Cyber security risk is minimised, and the council is resilient to cyber attack. The council's networks, infrastructure and services are as secure as possible from the moment of first implementation to decommission. The information and data on them, and located elsewhere, is appropriately confidential, available and of sufficient integrity, and the public can use the council's digital services with confidence and trust.



Services – The council's services are designed around the needs of residents and users, and prioritise them over professional, organisational and technological silos. Services are guided by the government's ten design principles,¹⁴ the Service Standard,¹⁵ the Technology Code of Practice¹⁶ and the Digital, Data and Technology Playbook.¹⁷



Value – The council targets its resources effectively. It harnesses the opportunity of digital, data and technology solutions to ensure they provide efficiencies and savings for local people and public sector budgets.

Socitm's digital trends research

Digital practices adopted during the pandemic will continue after it has ended, and hence no contemporary examination of digital trends could omit the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. Nevertheless, Jos Creese (Associate Director, Digital Researcher and Analyst, Socitm) reported that Socitm's research perspective goes further this year, identifying key trends that lie in the spaces between different technologies and in how these will affect the public sector in adopting digital services. Its findings point to the fact that the public now expects to be able to access services digitally, and that whilst services have improved in many ways there is more to be done. Likewise, organisations are depending on the greater productivity and efficiency afforded by digital services; their use has enhanced collaboration, service improvement and economic, social and environmental strategies now depend on them.

Placing the citizen and service user at the heart of digital design, and the way in which technologies are adopted, must be the starting point. Citizens are not just 'customers'; they are voters, service users, residence, voters, consumers, visitors, and often reluctant customers. Principles of digital design and the way which technologies are exploited are therefore not the same, by definition, as the private sector, whatever some may believe.

During 2022, there will be a recalibration of digital opportunity, with the public valuing digital interactions provided they are in control, and those digital services are truly better than the alternative. Data will be at the heart of IT and digital strategies for public service organisations, with topics such as data democratisation, digital identity and data ethics more commonplace.

In particular, there will be a convergence of technology trends which create new possibilities, such as growing in processing power, data analytics, faster networks, and the use of algorithms. But public trust must be maintained on this journey, and that will come from transparency, user-control, inclusivity, and equality. Digital trends depend on technology, such as cloud,

AI, IoT, 5G networks, and data analytics tools, but it is digital design that will underpin successful IT adoption, more than technology innovation itself.

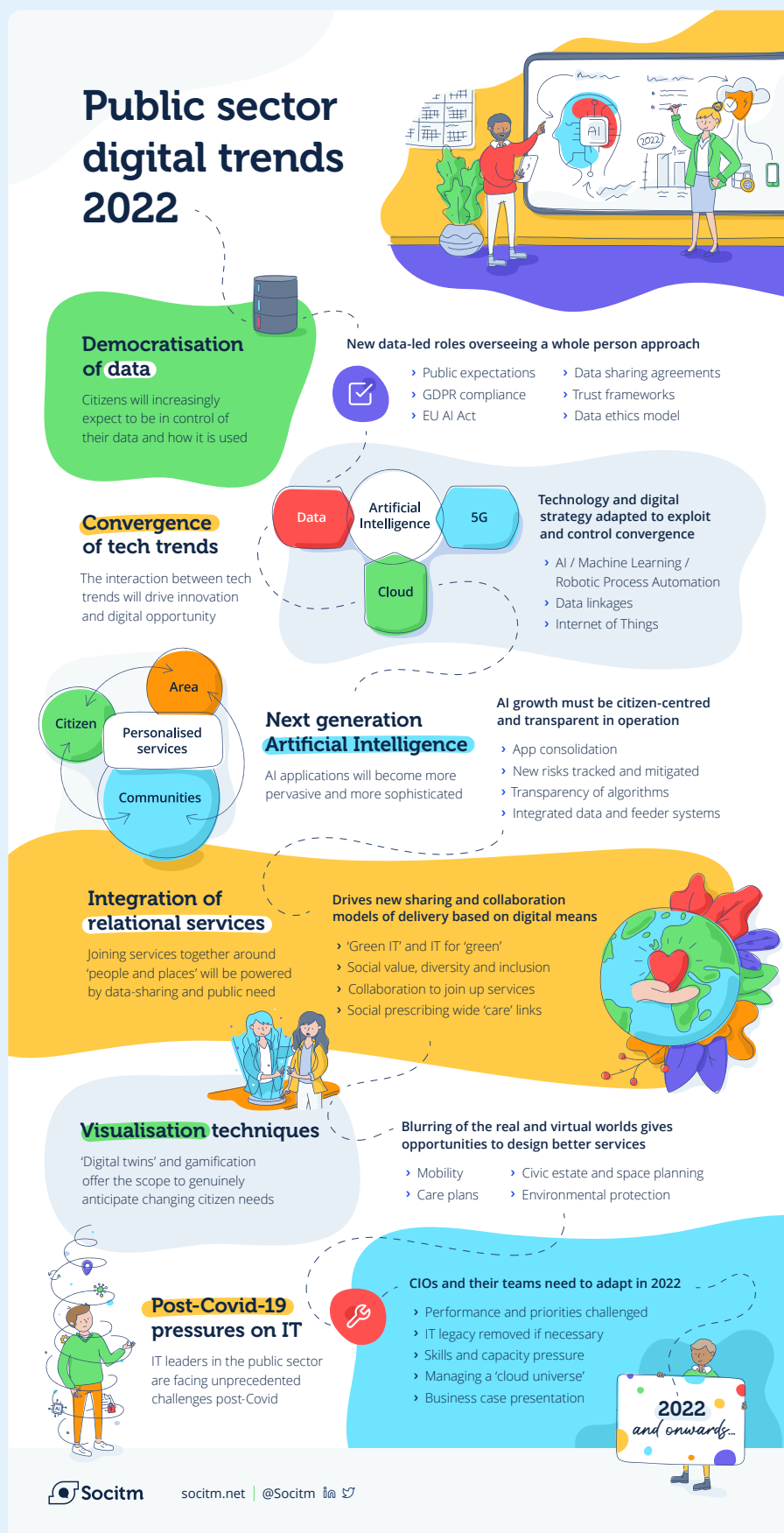
He added that personalised digital services using artificial intelligence are hugely exciting, but will need to be developed with care. He said that responsible use of the technology must include transparency over algorithms, and include triggers for human intervention where needed, with an understanding of risks in data management, bias, and privacy. Digital services in the public sector typically 'go wrong' when they fail to deal adequately with a 'non-standard' user case.

Taken together, the latest digital trends research¹⁸ (see Figure 5 on page 12 for infographic) identifies three main tasks for digital stakeholders within the public sector going forward.

- Prioritising place-based technology infrastructure to support new ways of working and integrated services.
- Understanding the broader context for digital change, including building knowledge in areas such as data ethics.
- Developing new collaborative networks, directly between public service and citizens.

To conclude more widely, he noted that digital and IT leaders will be under growing pressure in the coming year. Technology investments will be expected to deliver more in terms of tangible digital outcomes, linked to higher public expectations, stronger cost controls and greater rigour in deployment. The need to show returns on investments will also put pressure on suppliers, who will need to demonstrate agility and flexibility in responding to this fast-changing agenda, as well as recognising social and environmental value that they can bring beyond technology services. That will be a contract differentiator.

Figure 5. Public sector digital trends infographic



Boosting Local Digital Capital – techUK

Linked to the issue of harnessing local digital capabilities Sue Daley (Director of Technology and Innovation, techUK) had previously submitted a presentation on **Boosting Local Digital Capital**, looking at the building blocks for stronger ethical place-based digital technology ecosystems.

TechUK developed the concept of Local Digital Capital¹⁹ (see Figure 6) from a series of regional dialogues that included more than 260 local businesses, local and devolved government officials, local tech sector representatives, and start-ups, to better understand how the tech sector can help the economic recovery across the UK, solve local problems, and ensure that national and local policy is fit for purpose, reflecting local priorities and experiences.



Figure 6: Local Digital Capital – The concept

Local Digital Capital offers an aggregated view that provides an understanding of the impact of digital technology in a particular area. The eight components that make up Local Digital Capital are a mix of tangible and intangible assets and inputs – much like the concept of human capital.

techUK believe that it offers a new way of assessing the digital strengths of a nation or region, as well as offering a framework to understand tech's key role in levelling up.

- › **Digital skills:** Ranging from being able to access basic public services online, to understanding the most advanced quantum computing.
- › **Digital adoption:** Covering the adoption of digital tech platforms, primarily software, by businesses (e.g., cloud, CRM, accounting, and team management software) – these tools allow businesses to increase productivity, efficiency, resilience, and agility, and enable future innovation and growth.
- › **Data ecosystems:** That provide access to data and datasets allows governments, firms, and individuals to gain greater insights into local economies and societies. This requires better data collection and analysis to provide insight into the design of public services or new products.
- › **Digital infrastructure:** This is about the physical infrastructure that creates the digital world and enables access. Greater speeds and higher levels of access allows more people to access digital tools and services, and weak connectivity and infrastructure can have a severe, highly localised effect.
- › **Finance and investment:** The availability of capital and loans is key to ensure that more ideas are funded and can play a key role in boosting the attractiveness of a location for new businesses.
- › **Research and innovation:** The funding and structure of investment into long-term innovation – to help new ideas and process improvements develop, as well as build towards long-term assets for the local economy like academic institutions and research facilities.
- › **Trade support:** Guidance and information to allow SMEs and other businesses to navigate the complex requirements of exporting products to new markets.
- › **Collaboration and coordination:** Effective collaboration and coordination across and between public and private sector bodies is critical to success. This is key to delivering growth objectives and improving all other aspects of Local Digital Capital.

Following on from those dialogues, techUK wrote one UK-wide report, and one from each of the devolved nations or regions: the North East, West Midlands, Scotland, Yorkshire and the Humber, North West, Wales, and Northern Ireland. Each report examined the state of Local Digital Capital in that particular nation or region, and how to strengthen each of the eight components to support a return to growth.

In support of the LDC initiative, TechUK has worked with Henham Strategy to develop a Local Digital Capital Index (LDC Index) that is intended to be a tool for policymakers, and a way of making the case for investing in regional digital economies as a part of the levelling up agenda. The index will help widen understandings, offer evidence for any disparities between regional digital economies, and help unlock economic growth in areas targeted for levelling up.

The initial LDC Index findings for 2021 included the following recommendations:

- Build data on the strength of local data ecosystems.
- Establish a Chief Digital Officer forum.
- Deepen the understanding of where and how collaboration can support growth.
- Local decision makers to embed the LDC Index into their digital strategies with a commitment to furthering Local Digital Capital in their locality.



Consultation summary discussions from session 1



- Responding to Covid-19 has shown that new policies, emerging technologies and strong leadership alone are not enough to tackle the challenges we face.
- Digital ways of thinking and acting are required that can unlock the opportunities for new business models and approaches to tackling the deep-seated problems facing local communities in their diverse places.
- Organisations are depending on the greater productivity and efficiency of digital services; their use has enhanced collaboration; and economic, social and environmental strategies depend on them.
- To support this there needs to a shared understanding of local government digital strategy and improvement outcomes.
- Support the harnessing of local digital capital capabilities to develop of strong place based digital ecosystems to champion the positive impact of digital technology.

Session 2: Leadership and partnerships to develop new thinking

This session looked at the need to break the public policy impasse and the lessons from front-line practitioners before concluding on Socitm's leadership work and partnership building to help develop new thinking.

Breaking the public policy impasse²⁰

Martin Ferguson and William Barker (Associate Director and Digital Ethics Lead, Socitm) set the scene for this session by outlining how public policy work has been suffering from perma-austerity and persisting deficits, despite increasing needs and demands, along with top-down control, centralisation and the dominance of narrow sectional interests. These conditions are ones in which blame, fake information, extremism and populist ideas find sway, they argued. To add to this, four specific challenges now need to be addressed: the health emergency caused by Covid-19; the economic downturn it caused; global climate and ecological emergencies; and increases in social, economic and racial inequality.

They said that the UK has experienced “system failures” when tackling the pandemic and its consequences, with the head of the National Audit Office Gareth Davies commenting²¹ that the government had planned for a flu pandemic rather than the kind that occurred, and anyway “did not learn important lessons from the simulation exercises it carried out”. It showed fractures on ideology, such as on herd immunity versus lockdowns; on the machinery of government, with tensions between central and local authorities; and on technology, including ‘solutionism’ and confusion over Test and Trace work.

They noted in particular that The House of Lords report, **A critical juncture for public services: lessons from Covid-19**, had called for:²²

- Local services and frontline workers must be given the resources and autonomy to innovate

and improve the delivery of public services, while mechanisms to ensure the accountability of local service providers should be improved.

- Advances in digital technology should be used to increase access to public services, particularly for hard-to-reach groups, but should be applied intelligently. Online services should never replace face-to-face services if to do so would disadvantage the service user.

In response, Socitm sees that ethically-driven practices can help to break an impasse in the development of public policy such as highlighted in their place-based recovery and regeneration studies, which showed local authorities like Bristol, Wigan, Norfolk, Barking and Dagenham developing new thinking on how technology and data can be used with human values such as kindness, compassion and wellbeing.

They concluded by saying that improving public services will require improved co-operation between central and local services, using the better-placed organisations for delivery, treating local providers as equal partners and providing them with resources to innovate and increase in scale. Key to this was the public sector becoming more joined-up with improved data sharing, while those providing services be accountable for these. Citizens should choose digital services rather than be pushed into them and involved in their design and delivery.

The session then took a more detailed look at four examples of where Socitm and its members were proactively responding to these challenges as follows.

Responding to crisis together

Dealing with Covid-19 has been hard graft for the public sector but has also created opportunities in areas including service delivery, working styles and the use of data, Alison Hughes (Assistant Director of ICT, Digital and Customer at Liverpool City Council) told the event.

Having joined Liverpool City Council in January 2020, she said that the pandemic meant her team had to provide the whole council with ICT for agile working, despite some staff having never worked this way

previously, including for contact centre staff. More generally, it had to provide technology at scale and pace to manage new demands and service offers; manage its increasingly important website; run customer services that both responded and reached out to people; and provide data to help inform decision-makers, including on vulnerable residents.

She said that the opportunities arise from a big acceleration in digital service delivery, with a 363% increase in benefits and 85% increase in housing benefits being handled online, as well as more digital engagement and skills development work with citizens. Digital skills development is also an opportunity for staff, along with more use of agile working and property. With supplier relationships, there is the chance to consider social value such as to address digital exclusion. Summing up, Alison said, "We can deliver change at pace, we can work in partnership with our suppliers, our staff are amazing and more resilient than we ever thought."

Enabling integrated care

Russ Charlesworth (Director of Integrated Care, Socitm Advisory) told the consultation, drawing on the work of Socitm Advisory's thought-leadership no reverse gear initiative,²³ that meeting the challenges of England's 42 integrated care systems (ICSs),²⁴ which link local governments and voluntary, community and social enterprises to an area's NHS organisations, will require honesty, transparency and leadership to establish successfully.

He said that citizens wanted to see their care information, which is often inaccurate, incomplete, inaccessible and not shared between organisations, brought into a single trusted source that will provide people with digital access to health and care plans. This will support joined-up delivery of care (as outlined at Figure 7) that can focus on early intervention, prevention and wellbeing for the people covered by each ICS's geographic area. As well

Figure 7. ICS – Making it work in practice

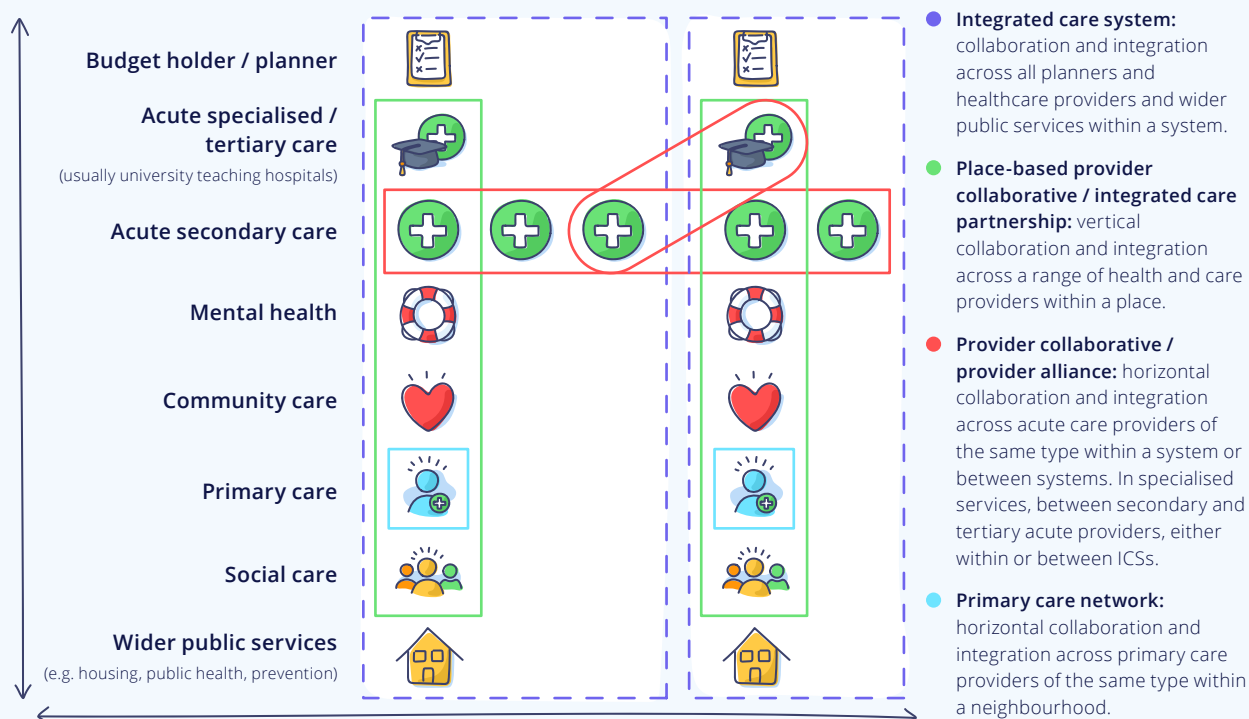
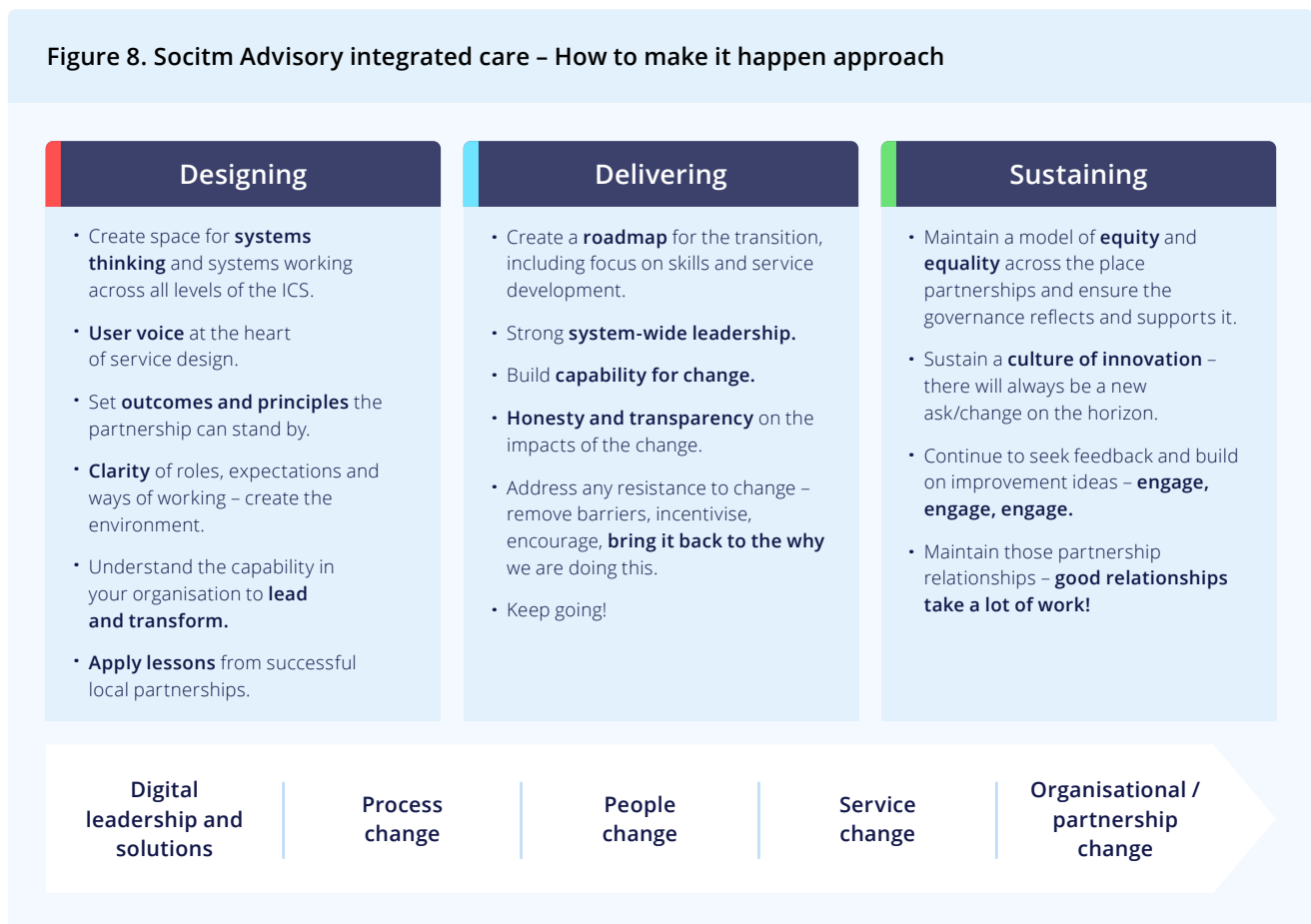


Figure 8. Socitm Advisory integrated care – How to make it happen approach



as primary, acute, mental health and community NHS providers, this also includes social care, public health and other local services provided by local authorities.

Socitm recognises that setting up an effective ICS is not easy, but that good first steps include setting principles along with health and care outcomes that the partnership is trying to achieve. They added that there may be winners and losers, and that honesty is important in building credibility and trust in this way of working. Leadership at all levels, including engagement with individuals, services and the public, is vital, along with seeking and promoting resulting improvements.

In support of this, Socitm Advisory's focus on going forward on enabling **integrated care**, will be applying a three-fold '**how to make it happen**' approach (see Figure 8) that supports current operations and the delivery of future change through

the adoption of digitally-enabled integrated care, including assistive technology, integrated care hubs, care technologies, and data and insights.

Subsequent to the consultation, Socitm has published 'Integrated care – an international perspective'.²⁵ This report is designed to support Socitm's integrated care programme, with a particular focus on analysing international examples of the changing nature of healthcare models and the digital opportunities that they portray. The report comes at a pivotal time for initiatives designed to integrate health and social care in the UK and is aimed at leaders of integrated care and those supporting integration of health and social care. It presents progress and lessons learned from eleven selected examples across the world.



Enabling digital identity

If a national digital identity is to succeed, Whitehall must acknowledge local government's crucial role in creating a new framework following from the past Gov.Verify "problems". Rather than building something nationally then involving local authorities later, Martin Ferguson and Jos Creese told the event it was critical to future success for a completely different approach to be adopted.

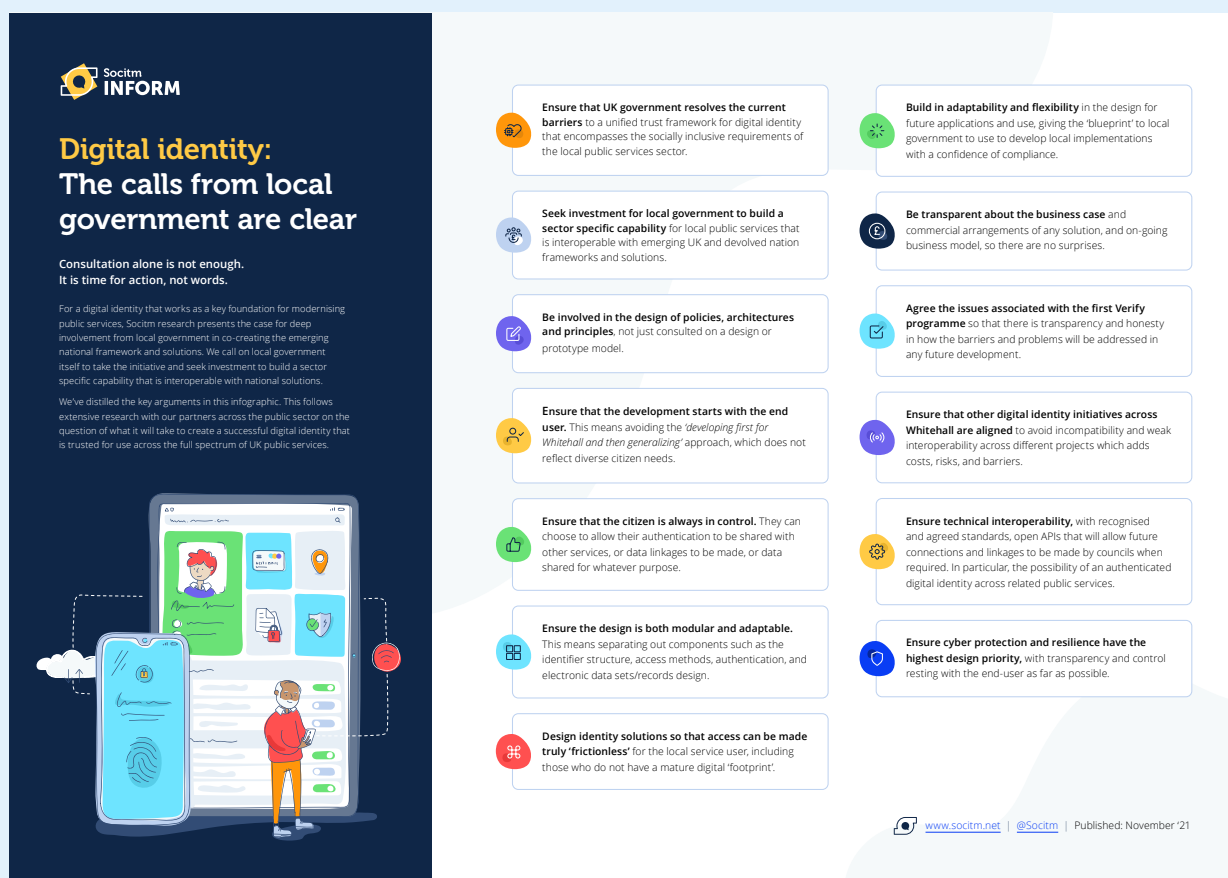
The Government Digital Service (GDS), responding to an online comment in September 2021, said it is focusing on central government in building a new single sign-on system for public services once again. Whilst GDS appears to be well-intentioned, and more consultative, it is still working to meet a limited brief. At the same time, there have been encouraging signs, including the

establishment of a Public Service Delivery Board which includes Local Government Association representation, and proposed legislation that would allow local government to use identity verification services.

In its recent detailed report (November 2021) analysing the risks, opportunities and lessons to be learnt in developing a national digital identity system, Socitm has laid out the approach that it and its partners are advocating, with digital identity frameworks based on four design principles:

- **Operate on a distributed basis**, and not a 'big central database' or single login that could be abused or hacked as a whole, supporting the need for identity portability across the wider public sector.

Figure 9. Digital identity infographic



- **Place the citizen in control of access, data and linkages** – a fundamental design principle and the starting point of all digital identity system developments (and their components).
- **Build on a modular basis** so that the different aspects of access, authentication, identity management and digital records development are separated, to maintain simplicity, protection and adaptability.
- **Make provision for the digitally vulnerable**, understanding and including in the design process those that are digitally excluded. This means ensuring that those who are fearful or less capable of using technology are adequately supported and involved.

A keynote report on digital identity²⁶ and supporting infographic²⁷ (see Figure 9 on previous page) are publicly available. Success will depend on good governance that includes the ability and willingness to admit problems, control slippages and intervene early, along with true engagement outside Whitehall rather than just consultation, with the Scottish Government's collaborate approach providing a model to follow.

The session then moved on to look at at Socitm's leadership work and partnership building to help develop new thinking.

Leadership, culture, people and skills – lessons from Socitm Lead

Leaders need to adapt the ways they work to a volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous (VUCA) world, Nadira Hussain (CEO, Socitm) and Aidan Matthews (Leadership Programme Manager, Socitm) told the consultation. VUCA, used by the US Army from 1991 for extreme conditions in Afghanistan and Iraq, can be countered by leaders who are visionary and innovative; show understanding and curiosity; are courageous and have authenticity; and show adaptability and responsiveness.

Reviewing current trends, they noted that leaders need to focus on people – including inspiring others, empowering teams, building trust and celebrating

success – and on adaptivity, such as helping to change their organisations and planning for economic volatility.

They said that women and those from ethnic minority backgrounds remain underrepresented in technology work, a problem on which there isn't any real progress being made. Different ideas and viewpoints help to ensure that technology is designed for everyone, and a lack of diversity has led to the likes of facial recognition systems that work less well with faces of colour and algorithms that encode biased data. Companies need to make diversity a business priority, they said.

Leaders also need to recognise that the workforce is changing, with the pandemic having accelerated these trends. People have moved from working 9-to-5 in an office using company equipment to working at anytime, anywhere on any device. They are increasingly focused on outputs rather than inputs and on creating their own ladders rather than climbing corporate ones. They quoted Minouche Shafik, Director of the London School of Economics: "In the past jobs were about muscles, now they're about brains, but in future they'll be about the heart."

Socitm supports members in adapting to these changes through reports such as 'From place to person',²⁸ which identified the challenges managers, systems, decision-making and governance structures face in moving to the post pandemic environment with particular focus on:

- **Welfare and homeworking:** There's a risk of isolation, particularly for staff living alone. Many councils are offering mental health support to homeworking staff: Worcestershire have 'mental health first-aiders' who encourage people to take breaks and take part in virtual meet-ups.
- **Managing remote teams:** A holistic change to the way in which we manage and motivate our teams has been established. We need to continue to promote the culture of empowering our staff, manage performance based on outcomes rather than presenteeism, make a concerted effort to illustrate the benefits of wellbeing and ensure that people feel valued.

Figure 10. Reimagining work

Reimagining work offer

Discovery review | Future blueprint | Gap analysis

Peopletoo
it works better with you



Digital – the extent to which you have the right infrastructure, applications, hardware, policies and skills in place to support new ways of working including service delivery, remote working e.g. booking systems, end-user devices, network and security infrastructure and employee engagement.



People – the extent to which the right skills, culture and capability are in place to support the organisation to transition to new ways of working, including technology and workspace adoption.



Performance – the extent to which you have the ability to measure success in this new landscape (e.g. space utilisation metrics) including defining performance metrics and the development of relevant dashboards / reporting.



Place – the extent to which you have right spaces to deliver against your future workforce requirements such as creative spaces, spaces that are shared with partner organisations, drop-in spaces in local towns, spaces that support high quality virtual collaboration.



Policy – the extent to which your HR, Health and Safety, Information Governance and IT policies align with the new ways of working, e.g. in a way that enables remote or home delivery, sharing of information in a secure way etc.



Service design – the extent to which the current service design will enable your future workforce vision. Identify services which may be required to be redesigned to operate within new physical and digital landscape and where appropriate, delivered remotely.

- **The future of the office:** Making better use of places and spaces is a recurring theme. Optimising the way in which we use our offices and assets to improve collaboration and partnership working will pay dividends for our organisations and the sector as a whole. This requires us to build on the cultural shift and the innovative and creative leadership styles that we have experienced over the previous 12 to 18 months.

This analysis has gone on to help shape the development of a reimagining work toolkit (see Figure 10) that includes a review, blueprint and analysis of gaps.

Going forward, Socitm Lead²⁹ is a growing community committed to opening up collaboration more broadly. That facilitates conversations and consultations, not just within organisations but between different local authorities and on the global stage. Socitm Lead helps attract, grow and promote innovative, bold and compassionate leadership within a framework that's supportive, authentic and altruistic.

Continually expanding and forever evolving, the Socitm Lead community is in its relative infancy.

However, it is already improving outcomes for service users and professionals. Being involved in our network at such a pivotal time makes you an important part of a movement towards leadership that is facilitative, flat and more diverse. It also makes you a key component of the development of both Socitm Lead and the public sector of tomorrow.

Subsequent to the consultation, Socitm Lead (in partnership with Microsoft) has inaugurated a Change Agents programme³⁰ with the aim to train at least one person in every public sector service to be a catalyst for change, connecting them with others in similar roles to innovative create communities of practice.

Building research partnerships – Socitm and University of East London

Socitm is working to build partnerships to help produce research that supports local public sector organisations and partners in developing and administering recovery and regenerations following Covid-19, Nadira Hussain told the event.

The intension being that Socitm will work with the University of East London³¹ and its Institute for Government and Public Policy (IGPP)³² to identify and champion recovery work that supports regeneration and ethical change under four headings: healthy (including food and housing); connected (internet, transport, community and culture); empowered (political voice, social equity, equality and diversity, peace and justice); and enabled (economy, education, work, income and energy).

By way of introduction, colleagues from the UEL (Adam Doyle, Rebecca Page-Tickell, Shampa Roy-Mukherjee and Siraj Sait) outlined the work of the University's Royal Docks School of Business and Law (RDSBL)³³ and wider research and outreach programmes. The main areas of activity are focused on: health and housing, education and digital, work and economy together with environment, social and governance (see impact analysis at Figure 11).

Figure 11. RDSBL research directly influencing policy and practice

	Past	Present	Future
Rights – Health and Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Domestic focus on human rights in the workplace • Neighbourhood policing • Women in policing • Transforming land rights for women and disadvantaged groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Newham public health – Self isolation support mechanisms put in place during the pandemic • 50 steps to Newham Health • Housing and accreditation centre for first of its kind unregulated young persons accommodation kite mark • Domestic violence victims • Post Covid resilient cities • Legal Advice Centre 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gig economy workers and healthy ageing • Freedoms in the gig economy • Women in policing • Liberia policy to move slum dwellers facing climate risks • UN Quadrillion report on sustainable development goals • Land and property rights
Education and Digital	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decolonising the law curriculum • Beyond adversity • Care leaver and excluded students provision • AI in marketing • Online child safety • Praxis in education for employability • Facilitated conversations and digital learning journeys 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building belonging through sticky spaces • University in the city • Fin-tech boot camp • Family and child law in Ghana • International students and digital skills for employability • Cyber crime 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaboration to build resilience for disadvantaged students • Building resilience and safety in online and offline communities • Digital dive impact on transitions from secondary school for employability

Figure 11. RDSBL research directly influencing policy and practice (continued)

	Past	Present	Future
Work and Economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gig economy research • Work-life balance in Europe and Africa • Borders of work life management for women in Nigeria • Supply chain management for social good • Technology in performance management • Whistleblowing and justice • Financialisation and its impacts in Nigeria • Forecasting for social good • Contracts for gig workers • Corporate performance and religion • Contract management tools • Islamic finance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AI for recruitment • Organisational practices in Guangdong • Trauma informed education • Enhancing skills of workplace conflict through transformative mediation for restorative practices • Chinese ethics and stress in SMEs (Guangdong focus) • Sustainable destinations for tourism • Trade and pollution reduction • Sustainable energy policy • Inter-organisational collaboration • Governance IOC, public and third sector 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exclusion and tattoos in Nigeria • Restorative cultures to reduce and manage workplace conflict • SME financial resilience post – Covid-19 • Fin-tech regulations • Symbolic approach to legitimacy and environmental reporting • Leadership and gender • International banking and financialisation • Legal aspects of African economic integration
Environment, Social and Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Combatting racism, hate crime and the far right in communities • Criminal justice and LGBTQ • Sustainability in SMEs • Cultural differences and understanding one another • Earnings management • Balkan focus conversation building via Journal of the Balkans and Near Eastern Studies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Royal Dock Enterprise Zone Living Wage Place project • Communities driving change (Tower Hamlets public health team) – health creating in deprived communities • Transgender issues in the criminal justice system • Females in sports • Raising conversations - Reddit conference on the Balkans • International law in the Middle East and conflict resolution 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legal ethics • Fans and fan culture • Law and urbanisation in Ghana • Sustainability in the local economy • SDG human rights and Islamic world

Figure 12: University of East London and Royal Docks School of Business and Law (RDSBL) research

**University of
East London**

University of East London and Royal Docks School of Business and Law (RDSBL) research is underpinned by innovative inter-disciplinary enquiry into emerging areas in business, management, political economy, international relations, law and criminology.

Key programme and activities include:

- **Institute of Government and Public Policy (IGPP)**³⁴ leading influencer and informer in the ongoing public policy development and debate. Covering – health and social care, criminal justice and safer communities, construction and built environment, central and local government, housing and education.
- **Sustainability Research Institute (SRI)**³⁵ UEL's centre of excellence for environmental research. Covering green infrastructure – resource management energy efficiency and the circular economy and sustainable society readaptive governance and community engagement and asset management.
- **Institute for Connected Communities (ICC)**³⁶ focussing on connected offline and online communities exploring contemporary issues including harms, cyber crime, safety, security, health and wellbeing.
- **Continuum**³⁷ – The centre for widening participation policy studies focussing on the critical understanding of widening participation policy and practice through research studies into participation policy – regionally, nationally and internationally.
- **Noon Centre**³⁸ – The Noon Centre supports key collaborative projects in Newham Council, such as 50 Steps to a Healthier Newham and is developing work on the economic impact of Covid-19 in East London. As part of its commitment to promoting a fairer and more inclusive society, the centre provides advice to local businesses and helps to link students with employers through the Elite Scholars programme.

The joint initiative aims to support local public sector organisations and their partners to develop and administer post-Covid recovery and regeneration activities, underpinned by the ethical and secure use of emerging technologies and data. In support of this work Socitm and IGPP and the wider UEL research community (see Figure 12 above) will collaborate with key partners and stakeholders to build a policy consensus, recovery and regeneration capabilities as follows:

- Horizon scan UK and international public sector Covid-19 recovery initiatives and plans, and resilience
- and regeneration responses to establish “what works” and what are the pre-conditions for these to be more widely adopted and scaled-up, as required.
- Collate existing evidence on the effectiveness of programmes and practices – select and use a number of exemplar studies that are underway to expedite the process of Covid recovery and regeneration.
- Identify and highlight emerging ethical innovation in the use of technologies and data.

- Undertake systematic reviews and synthesise findings in high quality, analytical reports.
- Share results and supporting resources in an accessible way.
- Support the creation of relevant content for Socitm and IGPP research, leadership development, events and the improvement of services and sharing of best practice.
- Help to develop of a set of practical tools and curated resources to meet the needs of leaders, policymakers and practitioners to use these findings to inform their decisions and the development of their recovery plans.

The research will include looking at UK and international recovery initiatives; establishing what works and what conditions are required for wider adoption and scaling-up; collecting evidence on effectiveness, including by selecting some exemplars; and highlighting ethical innovation.

The results will be used in Socitm and IGPP research, leadership development, events, service improvements and best practice sharing. It will also be used to develop a set of tools and resources that will help leaders, policy makers and practitioners to develop their own recovery plans.



Consultation summary discussions from session 2



- Covid-19 has highlighted that the public policy impasse has resulted in systemic failures that impact on people, communities and places.
- In the face of this the local public sector has had to fill the gaps and overcome the shortfalls in leadership, preparedness and community support.
- Nevertheless, the unprecedented circumstances of last two years also constitute what has been described as 'critical juncture for public services' in effect a once in a generation opportunity to deliver lasting and transformative reform of public services.
- To do this successfully we need to work in partnership to build up place-based capabilities around digital, data and technology, integrated care and health inequalities.
- Underpinned by stronger digital leadership capabilities the local public sector that effectively champions innovation, technology, and modernisation in support of the people, communities, and places they serve.
- To support this, the Socitm and UEL partnership offers a unique opportunity to link up front-line innovation, detailed place-based research that can develop tools and techniques to support local leaders, policy makers, and practitioners.

Session 3: Situational awareness and systems thinking

This session examined the role of situational awareness around the issues of cyber security and online harms. It then took the opportunity to reflect on how the use of systems thinking can challenge and help reset our approach to digital policy making and service design.

Situational awareness from the cyber perspective

Mark Brett (Director, NLAWARP) described the UK as being in a “new, new normal” on cyber security, having exited the European Union and experiencing the Covid-19 pandemic, with the latter in particular increasing vulnerability to threats given rising technological reliance. He summarised the situational awareness picture seeing the security and resilience challenges as follows:

- › State actors and criminals using the cyber realm for their purposes
- › An externally controlled toxic narrative undermining “trust” in government and institutions affecting citizens and businesses.
- › The reliance on the goodness and ethical intent of algorithms and automation.
- › The proliferation of data generation at a scale and pace never before seen.
- › The energy and climatic implications of these increased technical demands.
- › The N2N Cyber Threat Surface having intensified since the pandemic and our increased reliance on these technologies.

He then went on proposed five ethical ‘A’s of the N2N environment that should guide local organisations and practitioners in honing their security and resilience capabilities:

- › **Agency:** digital products and services must benefit people and do them no harm.
- › **Advocacy:** we should insist that ethical values are baked into products and services.
- › **Awareness:** we should be aware of bias when we find it, challenge it and be ready to change our views in the light of new information.
- › **Attributes:** the new, new normal requires empathy (listening to those who know about an issue), sympathy (helping through engagement or support) and kindness based on tolerance and a willingness to learn and support.
- › **Assumptions:** we should aim never to assume, but should be able to expect that providers of cyber services work ethically, particularly when using artificial intelligence.

Following on from this, Geoff Connell (Director of IMT and Chief Digital Officer, Norfolk County Council) added that protecting the UK against cyber security threats is a “team sport,” both within organisations and between them. Local public services should consider the issue at board level, including its impact on IT, business leadership, business continuity and incident response. They should look at how to respond to an attack or other issue outside working hours, such as through using a round-the-clock security operations centre or automated services. And they should assume that breaches will take place, and plan how to spot these and recover quickly. He added: “It’s still about good cyber hygiene before anything else,” on which organisations have made progress but still have further to go and summarised the desired approach for meeting cyber challenges in the local public sector as follows:

- › Protecting our data, our infrastructure and our people from cyber threats is a collective responsibility.
- › Internally, it’s a board level risk management topic for elected members through to front line staff.

- IT/Digital, business leadership, business continuity and incident response teams all have key roles and responsibilities.
- Externally, working with communities of practice: WARPS, C-TAG, NCSC, LGA, DLUCH, FN4G, Government Security group, etc.
- Our adversaries collaborate, so must we!
- Right now, we have to assume we will be breached. Ensure the basics of good cyber hygiene in place, then detection and recovery.
- We must remove legacy, get onto modern SaaS / hyperscale cloud platforms to benefit from their inherent security (when configured correctly!) This also means modern networking and identity management practices. Our suppliers also have a role to play.
- We should also share assets, skills and capacity, particularly low code/no code and configure based on standards and platforms, +SOCs, etc.
- We also have a duty of care to protect the cyber safety of residents and businesses in our communities.

Concluding, he said that there are now numerous ways for local public services to work together on cyber security, including warning, advice and reporting point (WARP) groups, the National Cyber Security Centre, the Local Government Association, the Cyber Technical Advisory Group (C-Tag) and others.

Supporting generation next – Combatting online harms

As part of joint presentation outlining collaborative work between London Grid for Learning (LGfL) and Socitm on these issues Mark Bentley (Safeguarding and Cybersecurity Manager, LGfL) told the event that much of the legislation that affects children's use of the internet is foreign, focused on data protection or both. US-based companies are likely to apply 1998's Children's Online Privacy Protection Rule (Coppa), which applies only to those under the age of 13. Many others use data protection laws such as the EU's General Data Protection Regulation and China's new laws

in this area, but these are not specifically designed to protect children. He added that the UK's Online Safety Bill, is likely to have a big impact on children's usage but added: "It doesn't scream security."

Specialist providers also have a significant impact on children's internet use and education, he added, such as proof-of-age provider Yoti and children-only social network GoBubble. Finally, technology issues can look significantly different when considering children, with security advocates insisting that end-to-end encryption is essential but child safety experts believing the opposite. There are possible answers to this, such as the use of homomorphic encryption that allows computational processes to be applied to data without it being decrypted, but he questioned how informed debate that could bridge gaps can take place.

Dave Sanderson (Member Services Director, Socitm) concluded by saying that Socitm is exploring ways to use the society as a platform for communicating security messages around these issues through its regular meetings and online platforms. LGfL and Socitm look to moving forward with momentum in this way and will be examining the following areas for future collaboration:

- Providing a platform to collaborate and share.
- Engagement – LAs, health, education, housing.
- Working together to achieve better outcomes.
- Strengthen networks, partnerships and alliances.
- Learning and development.

Systems thinking perspectives

To conclude the session and as follow-up to earlier St George's House/Socitm Global Ethics Day webinar in October, Lisa Talia Moretti (Digital Sociologist, Ministry of Justice) and Paul Waller (University of Bradford and Thorney Isle Research) discussed the links between systems thinking, public sector policy making and technology solutionism.

If technologies are used by people, how people use them must be considered as part of their design, argued Lisa Talia Moretti and Paul Waller. They added that many technologists cause huge problems by failing to consider their work from a socio-technical viewpoint.

They said that technologies and related concepts are often presented as something that can solve humanity's big problems, such as climate change. "We have this idea that technology is going to save us," said Lisa. But they often fail to live up to their hype, with Paul mentioning autonomous vehicles, which are currently only able to operate safely in highly-controlled environments, and concepts such as 'the sharing economy'. "No-one is critical enough to say, wait a minute," he said. In government, Lisa said it is better to see technologies as offering alternative channels that provide new options rather than seeing them as ways to shut existing ones, with the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) preferring to add digital channels rather than remove paper-based ones – noting that. "There are lots of ways to combine digital and analogue processes,"

In contrast, Paul said that the government's intention to make Universal Credit an online-only benefit was an example of 'technology solutionism' where a technology is enshrined as the answer and "the narrative evolves back from that" with policy designed around it. He said that former minister Francis Maude had seen a Government Digital Service (GDS) demonstration of someone applying for the benefit online and had asked how quickly it could be brought into use. The GDS representative had to admit that there was nothing behind the webpage being shown off.

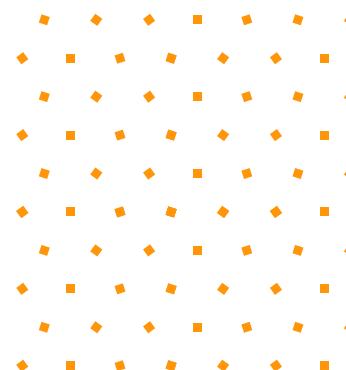
He added that BT chief executive Philip Jansen's October proposal³⁹ for an 888 'walk me home' service that would track users using GPS and raise automated alerts if they didn't reach destinations by expected times, following the murder of Sarah Everard by a police officer, was "technology solutionism gone mad" that would see violence by men answered by putting women under constant surveillance.

Lisa said that Facebook, which has recently renamed itself Meta, should be seen as the antithesis of how to design technology with its famed aim of 'moving fast and breaking things'. This often involves the company and its Silicon Valley peers releasing products and services that cause damage to societies, as they prefer to go on "global sorry tours" to apologise after having done this, rather than considering potential damage first: "When we move fast and break things, we don't design things properly."

She added that moving a little slower allows time to consider how people will interact with technology. When managing the MoJ's work to create a digital process to establish enduring power of attorney, she then moved from two week to three-week cycles, allowing researchers more time to analyse the work of technologists: "You can't do it in two weeks, it's too short a time," she said, but added that such an approach appears to be rare in government.

Paul noted that technologists tend to refer to people reductively as 'users'. Government work should be controlled by laws, not by what technologists want to do, but the latter have introduced the idea of 'digital by default'. Prioritising or insisting on the use of digital channels creates exclusion that would not otherwise exist, he argued, "It's man-made. It's because someone has chosen to put something online."

He concluded by pointing participants to his forthcoming briefing paper Digital Transformation of Government Explained⁴⁰ which will highlight the dangers of how a fixation on web-based processes can lead to wider distortions of the policy making and implementation processes.



Lisa said that technology design must be based on the policies of the organisation, but that often the civil servants responsible for policy have nothing to do with the process. But for the MoJ's development of enduring power of attorney, the policy lead is embedded within the technology design team: "We don't think we're better than policy, policy doesn't think they are better than us."

Which neatly echoed her earlier Global Ethics Day summary of "If you remember nothing else..." which calls upon all those involved in the design and decision-making processes to always recall:

- **Technology is a system** – It's always sociotechnical in nature
- **Design for the many** – Digital is a channel, not the solution

- **The environment is stakeholder** – Incorporate its needs and rights.
- **Be proportional** – You don't need all the data
- **The right to...** – Data rights as design principles
- **Invert the power balance** – Give people the option to own their data



Consultation summary discussions from session 3



- We need to embed a stronger understanding of the cyber security challenges and establish a culture of cyber preparedness across local communities and places so that it is seen as a collective responsibility not just that of the ICT team.
- In effect, protecting the UK against cyber security threats is a "team sport", both within organisations and between them. Local public services should consider the issue at board level, including its impact on IT, business leadership, business continuity and incident response.
- We need to design for the many, not the few, recognising that digital should be a channel, not a solution. We need to acknowledge that human

needs are both personal and social. They will change over time. As a consequence, our services and systems must be responsive and flexible to time.

- Whilst recognising that in the face of "digital by default" linked systemic failures as we have seen from the centre of Covid-19 we need to take care not to go back to adopting a "government as service industry" ethos in service design and policy making.
- A better approach to achieve "digitally-enabled transformation" is to bring the consideration of the potential of technology into the policy design and legislative phases and explore at the outset a variety of technology-enabled policy instruments.

Session 4: Nurturing wisdom – Horizon scanning for practical wisdom

Local authorities must believe they can change, Sam Smith said in summing up the first day of the consultation. She added that this is partly because no-one is going to rescue them, but also because believing you can change is a powerful idea. However, central government will need to support local government in change, by providing access to enough money to support this rather than the 'perma-austerity' currently experienced. Local government needs to build greater trust with central government, she added, while dealing with the fact that councils are inherently political in a way that local NHS organisations are not. This also means that local government officials need to think about how to support elected members in making good decisions.

With that in mind the fourth session looked at tackling digital inequalities and championing social value and moved on to need to build upon the practical wisdom of local authorities in responding to Covid-19. Considering the role ethical change can make in helping to sustain the step changes that local public service providers have taken and how this can inform addressing the levelling up agenda.

Combating the digital equality challenge

Digital exclusion is closely correlated to other kinds of exclusion and can exacerbate these, Kate Lindley (Head of Customer Transformation, Socitm Advisory) told the consultation,⁴¹ with older and poorer people more likely to be affected. She said that 75% to 90% of jobs require digital skills and most are advertised online, with either acting to exclude people from taking these roles. Research by PricewaterhouseCoopers in 2009 suggested that offline households are unable to access savings of around £560 a year on goods and services, and it is often easier to access healthcare services online.

In the hyper-connected world we live in, she noted that it is easy to forget about the millions of people across the UK who still don't use the internet regularly. Office for National Statistics figures released in late 2020 showed that 2.7 million UK adults were unable to access the internet. This can be because people lack computer hardware, not being able to afford or access connectivity, lacking skills, not wanting to use online services or lacking trust in them. The offline services such as high street businesses used by these people are being impacted as the majority moving to online equivalents.

While there's been a significant uplift in the number of people getting online out of necessity as a result of Covid, according to the Lloyds UK Consumer Digital Index 2021, 14.9 million people still have low levels of online engagement. Many may spend some time online, but are not using the internet for essential services. Lloyds estimate that while 1.5 million more people started to use the internet last year, at least 5% of the population remain digitally excluded.

The various statistics clearly indicate that the poorer you are, the older you are and the more disabled you are, the more likely you are to be digitally excluded. Digital exclusion is therefore compounding the impact of existing inequalities for many.

Socitm's research has found that a place-based approach from local authorities can help to tackle digital exclusion. This can include libraries providing people with access to and loans of computer hardware; internet connectivity; and council support for people who themselves support the digitally excluded. Socitm is also working with the Local Government Association on this topic, including on what councils are measuring and what is having the most impact. In particular this work has highlighted that there is a fragmented landscape with lots of activity, but varying degrees of maturity.

While it is a mixed picture across the country, there is evidence that interventions are becoming bolder. In Greater Manchester a Digital Inclusion Taskforce has been set up as a means of embedding partnership ways of working across the public, private and third sectors to maximise impact. Whilst Leeds City Council and the London Borough of Croydon are undertaking DLUHC funded work on developing a collaborative

Digital Inclusion Toolkit that will highlight best practice tools and techniques to support combating digital exclusion from across the local public sector.

Working together in these ways shows there is a significant opportunity to leveraging each other's insights and tools sector-wide and adopting a shared commitment to making change happen. Quoting Helen Milner of the Good Things Foundation, tackling place-based digital exclusion means, "We must work together to ensure everyone benefits from digital – and that the people hit hardest by the pandemic aren't further disadvantaged, as everyday life moves more online." She concluded with "Digital exclusion is a solvable problem. What more can we do?"

Addressing the social value challenge

With regards to social value, ethics needs to be embedded within technology work rather than tackled through gestures such as equipment donations, Mark Lumley (Vice President, Socitm and Director of ICT & Digital, London Borough of Hounslow) told the consultation. Pointing to the Public Services (Social Value) Act of 2013 which requires those who commission public services to consider securing wider community benefits. Which from a local authority context focus around three broad categories of social (activities that promote a united community); environmental (efforts to assist the community in reducing waste or pollution) and economic (training, employment or apprenticeship opportunities for disadvantaged groups). He summarised the challenges of addressing social value as:

- Change from an optional extra / nice-to-have to being embedded into organisations in a meaningful way.
- More externally focussed not just internally.
- Council's embedding into contracts into the community.
- No longer something that companies can just pay lip service to, needs to be embedded into the core of the organisation.
- More and more councils are looking at the

place and thinking about the wider social / environmental and economic impact of everything the public sector does.

Looking more broadly, he noted that the emerging Integrated Care Systems agenda in England offered some helpful insights to navigating the wider social value agenda through the following:

- New partnerships – organisations that meet health and care needs across a place.
- Coordinate services and plan – improving population health and reduces inequalities between different groups.
- Whole system – left-shift, prevention – multi-agency, multi-sector, curation, co-design.
- Wider determinants of health and wellbeing – social value role here to channel investment and engage other sectors such as police, fire, education, housing, and so on.
- Redesign/new operating models – opportunities to rethink and co-create services, enable independent living, harness technologies and data (such as AI, assistive tech, mobile and connected workforce), data sharing and analytics to understand population health and wellbeing, and to target resources).

Another is the Local Government Association's National Themes, Outcomes and Measures (Toms) Framework,⁴² launched in 2017, which offers a template to report and measure social value in a consistent fashion. Linked to this, by applying the Principles of Social Value,⁴³ organisations can become more accountable for what happens as a result of their work, and means being accountable for more than whether the organisation has achieved its objectives:

- Involve stakeholders – Inform what gets measured and how this is measured and valued in an account of social value by involving stakeholders.
- Understand what changes – Articulate how change is created and evaluate this through evidence gathered, recognising positive and negative changes as well as those that are intended and unintended.

- Value the things that matter – Making decisions about allocating resources between different options needs to recognise the values of stakeholders. Value refers to the relative importance of different outcomes. It is informed by stakeholders' preferences.
- Only include what is material – Determine what information and evidence must be included in the accounts to give a true and fair picture, such that stakeholders can draw reasonable conclusions about impact.
- Do not over-claim – Only claim the value that activities are responsible for creating.
- Be transparent – Demonstrate the basis on which the analysis may be considered accurate and honest, and show that it will be reported to and discussed with stakeholders.
- Verify the result – Ensure appropriate independent assurance.

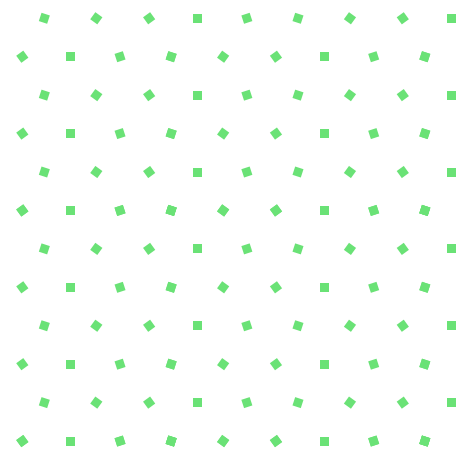
Taken together, this means local public sector organisations and their suppliers building on concepts like ethically based corporate social responsibility and environmental, social and governance focussing how their services and products contribute to sustainable development. Which in practical terms means considering and addressing issues like:

- Social and environmental responsibility – empowering employees to give back to their communities and environment (such as fund-raising challenges, four days per annum allowance for volunteering, and so on).
- Physical and mental wellbeing – actively supporting employees and their families.
- Environmental footprint – hybrid working, working with clients to reduce need to travel, raising awareness amongst employees, cutting out single-use plastics, reusing and recycling IT equipment, encouraging reduction in meat consumption.
- Localisation in delivering assignments – recruiting consultants and external support locally, ensuring reflection of local diversity, local living wage.

- Future consultant programme – training and development, apprenticeships on live projects, mentoring and coaching, leading to permanent jobs at conclusion.
- Diversity and inclusivity – embedded in resourcing, attraction and talent development, equal pay, gender-balanced workforce and leadership, disability confidence.
- Systems – online free-to-use training resource, low-touch HR systems (leave and expenses), employee assistance programme (homeworking).

Concluding, he outlined how Hounslow is addressing the social value agenda⁴⁴ and highlighted a few outcomes that they are looking to build into larger IT contracts such as digital inclusion, digital skills, IoT, education, support for care leavers and other elements of local employment. In addition, Hounslow has been encouraging companies to use any company volunteer hours with local communities and encouraging them offer to communities free as part of their bids.

Going forward, he saw the green agenda/sustainability and climate emergency – will become ever more important and start to be embedded more and more into procurement, along with a tacking wider inclusion and emerging technology issues moving towards social value focused place-based approach to supporting regeneration, sustainability and connectivity.



Doughnut economics and the links to regeneration, levelling up and ethical change

William Barker outlined Socitm's thinking on how the interaction between the regeneration, levelling up and ethical change agendas and how they can provide a means of navigating the nine areas of long-term societal impacts of Covid-19 (see Figure 13) that the British Academy was asked by the Government Office for Science to investigate.⁴⁵



Figure 13. Nine areas of long-term societal impact of Covid-19

1. Increased importance of local communities
2. Low and unstable levels of trust
3. Widening geographic inequalities
4. Exacerbated structural inequalities
5. Worsened health outcomes and growing health inequalities
6. Greater awareness of the importance of mental health
7. Pressure on revenue streams across the economy
8. Rising unemployment and changing labour markets
9. Renewed awareness of education and skills

As a starting point Socitm had been using the Doughnut Economics City Portraits model⁴⁶ piloted by Amsterdam⁴⁷ as a means of identifying how places have used the following key aspects of ethical change and their respective areas of focus that set out a baseline model (see Figure 2 on page 6) as to how to support healthy and well communities and create resilient, sustainable, socially just and ecologically safe places in which people and communities can thrive.

Building on this, our recent regeneration through ethical change infographic (see Figure 14 on next page) illustrates that we are seeing an emerging regeneration-focused ethical change "Velvet Revolution" underway across local authorities. The emerging picture shows that the place-based building regenerative capacity that is shifting from a needs-led approach to public services, to one that works with people before they get into crisis; a prevention rather than cure philosophy.

Looking at the wider levelling up agenda, he noted there was a need to look beyond the government's rhetoric and move to developing collaborative approaches involving local authorities and anchor institutions such as health authorities, universities, and third sector bodies. In this way, place-based partnership could help in the development of scalable "what works" regeneration models that would be suitable for wider adoption and help reduce the need for individual local authorities having to participate in time-wasting competitive bidding or "beauty contest" style negotiations.

He highlighted the following tests for levelling up policy and the new white paper⁴⁸ which echoed the themes addressed in Professor Hambleton's "levelling up – getting beyond the rhetoric" article:⁴⁹

- Does it continue the commitment to tackling place-based inequalities?
- Does it seek to deliver policies across multiple levels of government?
- Does it seek to deliver cross-sector policy making?
- Does it attempt to fix the subnational funding system?

- Does it attempt to strengthen place-based stakeholder partnerships?
- Does it attempt to strengthen public engagement at the local and regional levels?

He then noted that the new levelling up network⁵⁰ of cross-party MPs, councils, businesses, NHS Trusts, and universities has highlighted that the challenge is to move the conversation and practice to what works, what needs to change and how can we respond at pace – both nationally and locally. Its supporting levelling up goals architecture⁵¹ seeks to identify and measure performance across 14 key areas for action – an approach recognising, as do Socitm members, that those working in local government are committed and stretched to the limit on the

front line of delivering and responding to a moving target, innovating whilst running the core business, together with exploring and exploiting what is possible.

To conclude he saw the task now was to build on these experiences to address the issues of regeneration and levelling up through distilling the practical wisdom – the “**Phronesis** effect”⁵² – that has emerged across local organisations and places to support the common good.

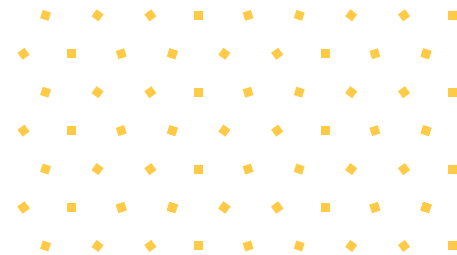
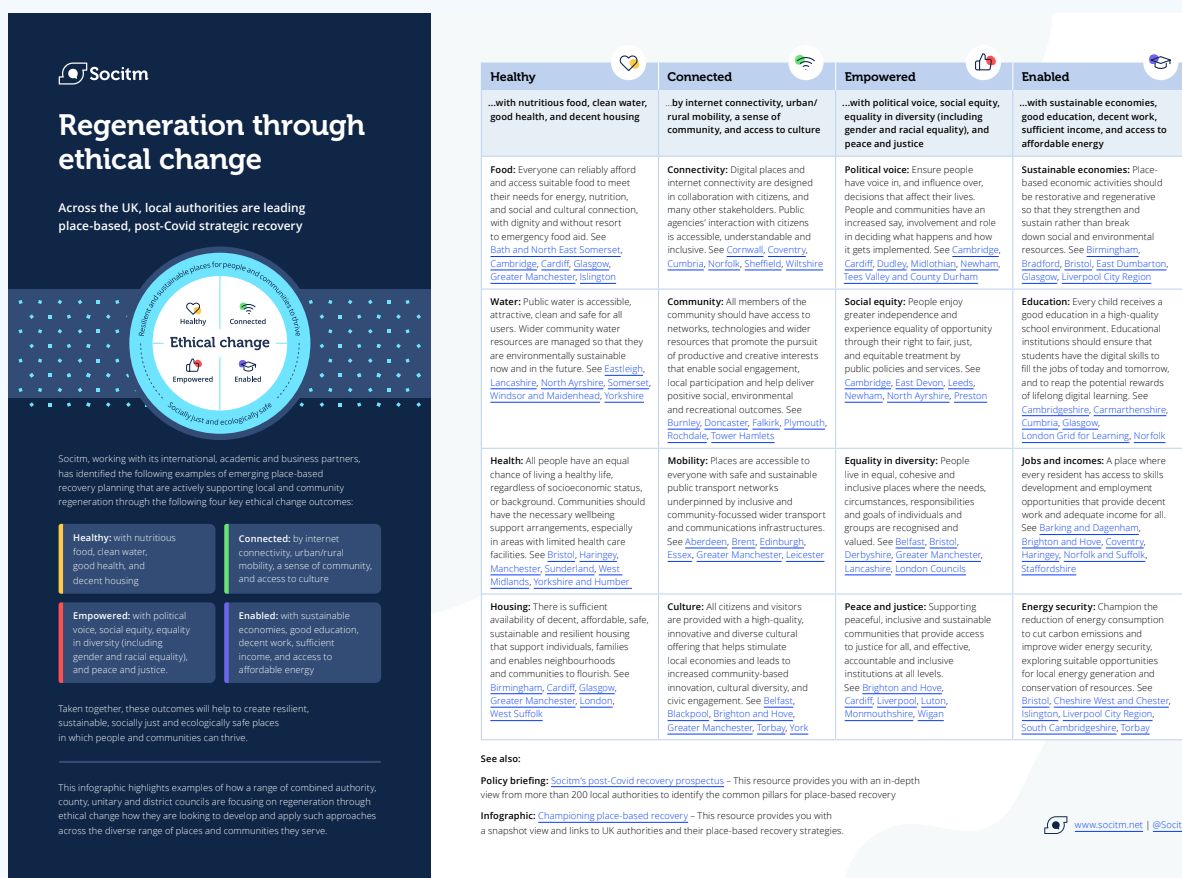


Figure 14. Regeneration through ethical change



Following this presentation, participants took part in a brief Jamboard exercise that asked the question “What does levelling up mean for your community?” which had the following responses:

- › **The ability to raise money** so that outcomes can be delivered locally to meet local need.
- › **To address in-borough / in-region inequalities** – health, social, economic. It can't be right for example that life expectancy varies by a decade within a 10-mile span.
- › **Boost access to education and skills for all** – make sure lifelong educational opportunities are sufficiently comprehensive, diverse and flexible. A high-skill economy will be essential for future prosperity and for people, places and communities to thrive.
- › **Address worsening health outcomes** – combat growing health inequalities and prioritise the importance of mental health- target inequalities in the structure and funding of social care provision
- › **Support a one community approach** – local communities have become more important than ever during the pandemic – they need even more than ever to respond to changing circumstances and challenges by building up local charitable and voluntary organisations to help with place-based regeneration and levelling up.
- › **Combat geographic inequalities attending to these inequalities** – is important because they expose ways in which the combination of geographical location, physical infrastructure and social conditions implies that different priorities may be needed in different types of communities and places
- › **The challenge lies in the current inequality** within an area and between areas. This will result in resources potentially moving away from traditional recipients who are often influential.

Stimulating and distilling practical wisdom

Prof Dr Paul Timmers (Research Associate, University of Oxford), then delivered a virtual presentation looking at ethics and new technology, especially AI in the city. Taking recent examples from Amsterdam smart city, systems to address children at risk in the UK, the labour market in Austria and child benefits fraud in the Netherlands. He outlined the both positives and negatives.

Amsterdam has a long time ambition to become a leading and thriving smart city. Indeed, in 2016 they were awarded the title European Capital of Innovation. They have developed an open innovation approach,⁵³ in a private-public partnership with a large community of innovators and citizens. Any idea goes through a proof of concept. Importantly, they have taken hold of ICT, ensuring that they have the expertise inside the city council with CTO leadership and education

rather than outsource everything. They emphasised transparency, for example with a public AI register. And above all they are value and ethics driven.

But then, sometimes it can also go differently. In the UK we have seen the machine learning system that sets out to identify which children could be at risk and whether such risk could escalate. What Works for Children's Social Care (WWCSC),⁵⁴ found that the models were wrong six times out of ten. Still, local authorities already started piloting the system. No wonder WWCSC calls for more transparency of experiences. Is the AI really up to scratch?

In Austria, a labour market opportunities system was set up. Here AI assesses the probability of integration into the labour market. The system is praised by the government as a promise to combat discrimination against women, people with disabilities and the elderly, but scientists found it simplifies the reality of individuals into a single number. They warn that personalized advice on jobs and work would degenerate into a generalised

approach. Here we see a clash of values around a new technology. Here too there is a call to tread carefully and not be naïve about the promise of benefits.

Turning to the child benefits fraud case in the Netherlands;⁵⁵ since 2011 the Dutch tax authority used a self-learning risk-classification model to detect fraud in claiming child benefits. This touched 26,000 parents and 70,000 children. All this happened in a hardening and politicised mood of tackling fraud. Moreover, combatting fraud was organised as a business, with break-even targets. Parents had to pay back full benefits (under an 'all or nothing' approach). But the model turned out to have discriminatory elements, such as nationality. Some parents lost jobs or homes. Children got placed out of their family.

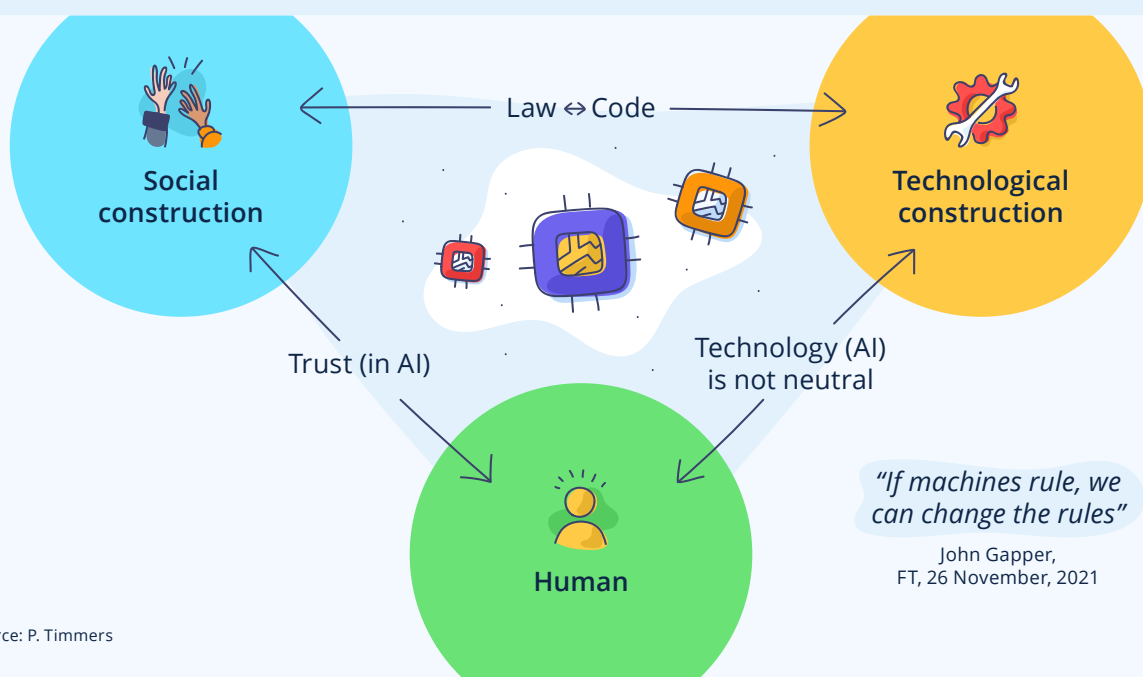
Despite several inquiries into this injustice little corrective action was taken. Why? A parliamentary report used words such as 'tunnel vision'; 'no one taking responsibility'; ignoring the ombudsman who called for 'no powerplay but fair play'. Ultimately, the Dutch government fell over this scandal, earlier this year. Trust in government got a severe hit: 71% of people feel that

this scandal eroded government legitimacy. It shows how unethical it can be to blindly apply the machinery of government with a new and imperfect technology.

These good and bad cases show a match or a mismatch between technology and law. Between AI and values. Between technological and social constructs. Both are man-made. Both also influence, us as individual persons, even change us. He then took the issue of the use of AI to look at the ethical context for the interaction between society, technology and humans.

Moving around the diagram (see Figure 15) he started with the point that social construction of reality is a notion that has become well accepted since the 60s. Our social life, our values, our governance, our laws are all social constructs. But in this day and age we also see that our reality is very much constructed by digital technology. The way we perceive reality is mediated by technology. Baudrillard wrote an essay called 'The Gulf War Did Not Take Place'. He argued that the Gulf War was presented as a video game seen from a cockpit, not at all as it really was, on the ground. Another example: social media technology can dramatically shape the self-perception of adolescents.

Figure 15. Social and technological construction of reality – AI (as an example)



Source: P. Timmers

Early in 2000, Lawrence Lessig, a law professor at Harvard, argued that code is law. He said that the technological construction of the internet, such as the software code, conditions and constrains was helping to establish a new internet “law” or “legal code”. Today, with the rule of law in mind, we need to adapt technology to the law, not the other way round.

On this basis, the diagram suggests that we have the freedom to change all three elements: technological constructs, social constructs, and us as humans. And that these changes must be consistent with each other. Consistent within our frame of values. Let’s apply it to AI. By education we can link trust in AI to our understanding. By lawful certification we can link trust in AI to trust in authority. Both education and certification are social constructs.

Perhaps we have to accept the AI as is. But then, reading John Gapper last week in the FT, if machines rule, we can even change the rules of the game. But let’s not give up. We can also change the technology. AI that is by design transparent. Data that can be verified, confidentially. But let’s keep in mind that AI is never neutral. It influences us, perhaps even changes us. Not only because of what is included in the algorithm and in the data but also by what is not included. Think of the bias challenge of AI. We can insist that AI gets adapted such that it reflects our social construction of trust in AI. We can scrutinize AI, as Amsterdam does, and if needed insist on a different AI. We may not get it, but then at least we are aware.

Keeping this three-fold relationship to construct reality in mind., we can see it as an opportunity: we can change our social constructs like law and values, we can change the technology like AI, and we can change ourselves such that we have ethical and value-driven local regeneration and levelling up in a city, municipality, or community.

Concluding, he focused on two recommendations from this story that will allow us to stimulate and distil the practical wisdom of addressing these challenges. One, asking ourselves who is in control and two, using co-construction to address the challenges and opportunities we face. I call this the “Ethics in the City” approach (see Figure 16) which can be outlined as follows.

Figure 16. Ethics in the city model

1. Who is in control?

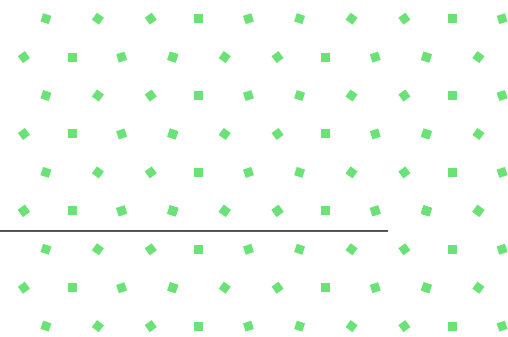
- › ‘City councils taking back control’
- › The ‘let’s take back control’ fallacy
- › Who controls the norms and values to choose from new opportunities?
- › Taking control of value governance

2. The art of co-construction

- › Social, technological, human
- › Regulation and innovation
- › In community
- › Multi-valued

Analysts of smart cities tell us that city councils should take back control. City councils understand what life in a city is about, life that must deliver multiple values. Such as sustainability, inclusion, efficiency, innovation, well-being, etc.

We have to be aware of one fallacy though: perhaps there is nothing to take control back on because we never had control. To quote Jacques St Malo, “baffled by the present and daunted by the future, we may be tempted to turn to the past for answers”. But then there must be something to find in the past. Take back control was fallacy in the Brexit debate on international trade. It is also a fallacy when we aspire to take back control on social media platforms and cloud. We never had control on these at least not in Europe. Better: we look to the future rather than the past.



When looking forward we see a road with many forks. New technology opens up new opportunities. With more city data and ever-smarter AI we see new opportunities in social care, employment, traffic management, business parks, advertising, and so on. New opportunities mean new choices. Sociology tells us that with plenty of choices we need values. What are then these norms and values? Above all, who is in control of determining those values? When we leave it to others

to make the choices, we know what we get: surveillance capitalism or destruction of trust in government. So, we need to take control of value governance.⁵⁶

Finally, we need to do so by co-construction. In community. Reflecting values and the richness or diversity in these. And using our freedom and creativity in social and technological construction of reality and in changing ourselves.



Consultation summary discussions from session 4



- › Covid-19 has highlighted the need to combat digital inequalities and in particular consider if prioritising or insisting on the use of digital channels creates exclusion that would not otherwise exist. We should consider 2021's census in England and Wales which might provide useful information on digital exclusion as a result of the way it was carried out.
- › Extend the social value agenda needs to be seen as not just a short-term response to the levelling up agenda but addressing with social, economic, health and education inequalities as a whole.
- › Public sector organisations should be building services that are co-designed with their communities, rather than creating specifically digital services. The collaborative work with citizens needs to be meaningful, rather than an exercise carried out to tick a box.
- › Local organisations should be aware that the private sector often get things wrong when developing services, and that the public sector often does a good job including on consultation.
- › Using the practical wisdom that emerging from the response to Covid-19 can help us develop "what works outcomes" that focus on creating social and economic wealth; improved productivity and employment; better health and wellbeing of all; and deliver resilient, sustainable and connected places.
- › Recognising that whilst it is possible to build trust in new technologies including artificial intelligence (AI), but this has to involve transparency. Such technologies are not neutral, meaning they must follow the law and communities need to look for ways to exercise control over them, challenge the values they use, and work to change these.
- › We need to cultivate an **ethics in the city** approach that supports public oversight of the norms and values to choose from new opportunities, takes control of value governance and community co-construction of structures, systems and solutions.
- › Take these understandings to help address accountability and scrutiny issues around systems thinking and what needs to change to tackle "public policy impasse", "design, policy and decision making," "inclusion, civility and empowerment" and "fractured public governance."

Session 5: What works and what needs to change

In this final session of the consultation, participants split into three working groups to discuss 'What works and what needs to change'. Each group was asked to come up with 'asks' – things they wanted from other organisations – and 'offers', that their organisations could provide.

Across all three groups, participants took part in the discussions enthusiastically with everyone contributing. Several were frank about the problems they faced, which included local public servants not being trusted to do their jobs; a failure by HM Treasury to consider social value when assessing public spending; the difficulty in paying for technology work when funding is linked to specific projects or issues; and the competitive structure of the NHS in England.

Several felt that cyber security was an area where local government has established significant collaboration both within the sector and with other organisations and that this model could be used more broadly. However, this would have to tackle regional rivalries that exist in local government, with one participant saying that case studies of successful work could work better if organisational names are omitted, as otherwise some on one side of the Pennines will dismiss the victories of those on the other. The collective findings as follows included:

Examples of what had been seen to work well

- › Hospitals, GPs and councils genuinely collaborating and sharing data as with local contact tracing and tactical information sharing to support vulnerable people.
- › Strengthening of cross-cutting team working with regular online team meetings/updates.
- › Place-based economic activities that are restorative and regenerative so that they strengthen and sustain rather than break down social and environmental resources.

- › Supporting digital connectivity that is designed in collaboration with citizens, and many other stakeholders. Public agencies interaction with citizens is accessible, understandable and inclusive.
- › More caring, kind and compassionate approach to people and community with local people working together to support each other; sometimes encouraged by the principal authority, sometimes organic.
- › Improved use of data generally - and explicit permission to share relevant data to address need – has provided rocket fuel to a process that is generally risk averse and 'computer says no'.
- › Communities developing the necessary wellbeing support arrangements, especially in areas with limited health care facilities.
- › Recognising that the best way to address the low and unstable levels of trust in governance is to ensure people have voice in, and influence over, decisions that affect their lives. This means involving those who use/access public services in their design and delivery.

The areas that need to change

- › Local services and frontline workers need the financial/operational resources and autonomy to innovate and improve the delivery of public services, we also need to ensure the accountability of local service providers should be improved.
- › Improve central/local co-operation – more joined-up government – end silos so that we can use the best point of delivery central or local – see local providers are equal delivery partners.
- › Improve public service data sharing so that it can enable integration of services to meet the diverse needs of individuals and communities and enable data driven targeting of initiatives, augmented with localised, contextual knowledge.

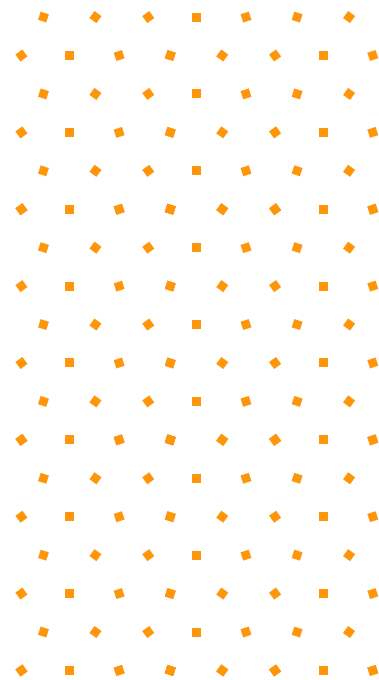
- › Digital by Choice - Inclusion not Exclusion - digital technology should be used to increase access to public services, particularly for hard-to-reach groups, but should be applied intelligently. Online services should never replace face-to-face services if to do so would disadvantage the service user.
- › Build confidence at the front-line in the parish and town council sector to encourage more people to 'do it for themselves'.
- › Truly integrated place-based partnership working – requires a change of mindset and collaborative leadership (egos need not apply!). Longer term thinking – not short-term political horizons.
- › Recognising and addressing the issues that cause the next generation of digital exclusion... easy access, design of digital, mediated access, trust, blended with face-to-face is required. For example, dealing with the numerous 'not spots' in Wi-Fi, mobile and broadband coverage.
- › Whitehall has to up its game and provide leadership rather than simply management - too many competitive funding schemes that don't actually support widescale innovation and scaling-up of what could work. The existing system for managing local economic policy from the centre is dysfunctional – greater local freedom to address community is urgently required.
- › Set a long-term funding formula for local government including place-based budgets with the ability to raise local funding.
- › Reimagine data-sharing agreements, both nationally and locally.
- › Establish proper local engagement, such as on digital identity and citizen-centric services.
- › Evaluate the importance of citizen-held data.
- › Look at how to use NHS numbers in identity management.
- › Set a stronger role for standards, such as through APIs and develop a common applications register.
- › Increase the pace of thinking about NHS integrated care systems in England and help shape 'What good looks like' for social care in terms of the perspective and role of local government.
- › Provide new money to enable local authorities to reduce their carbon footprints.
- › Prior distribution of place-based funding.
- › Provide financial support and information to recreate a national register of software applications used by public service organisations.

Collective asks and offers from participants, implying that the following warrant attention by the appropriate authorities

- › Establish peer reviews to support joined-up central and local decision making.
- › Extend Control of Patient Information (COPI) notices, which allow NHS Digital in England to share confidential patient information with other organisations.
- › Extend or re-establish the ability for councils to host remote meetings.
- › Reconfigure the Socitm "Ecosystem" to support what worked and what needs to change so as to inform future development of membership, advisory, leadership, policy and research offerings to the local public sector.
- › Work with LGA and Solace to develop a common place-based digital taxonomy for leaders, policy-makers, practitioners and influencers to help inform forward policy and delivery of local public services.
- › Develop a connected places model focussing on place-based regeneration, sustainably, and connectivity and drawing key lessons learnt from UK and international partners.

Overall, there was much common ground between the participants, with the strong message that all the organisations serving a locality should work much more closely together. This was emphasised for local authorities and NHS organisations, with calls to make permanent data-sharing arrangements that were set up during the pandemic and wider use of NHS numbers as personal identifiers. But there was also appetite for other types of collaboration, such as using common language and closer working between layers of local government including local town, parish and community councils. The model used for cyber security, where a wide range of organisations serving an area talk through WARPs (Warning, Advice and Reporting Point) could be used more widely.

Participants also felt that central government should involve local public service organisations in policy, such as by using locally-gathered data, and service development, including in beta testing. As part of the process to improve central/local understanding it was suggested that civil servants should be required to work for a stretch in local government. There was a clear call for longer-term, sustainable financial settlements from government, as well as increased funding raised locally or for specific tasks such as to reduce carbon footprints.



Conclusion

Next steps for Socitm

Socitm is grateful for the help and insights of the expert group of academics, public sector leaders and figures from business that joined us at St George's House to discuss the lessons learned to date and identify the key strategic priorities and themes, and most importantly how we could strengthen and broaden our support to members going forward into the future.

The discussions at Windsor reiterated what Socitm had heard from its members and partners that working together we need to build rapidly on the response, knowledge skills and experience of local public sector to Covid-19. As a result of the insights from the consultation and the expertise and experience of our members, our partners and wider activities across the local public sector, Socitm sees the emergence of what we have identified as the following "Strategic priorities of the new normal."

- The need to **build upon** the response of local authorities and the wider public sector to Covid-19.
- The need to **sustain the step changes** that local public service providers have taken.
- The need to **harness digital** – cultures, capabilities, technologies and data – to enhance the resilience of people, communities, organisations and places.

Socitm believes that these can be addressed together as mapped-out in our Socitm Connects – Connected Places model (see Figure 17 on next page) which sets out what we consider are the key areas of focus for enabling place-based digital transformation that can help to enable sustainable and connected places for people and communities to thrive that are socially just, ecologically safe and uphold civility in public life and services.

Figure 17. Socitm Connects – Connected places model



Socitm Connects – connected places model

Regeneration, sustainability and connectivity – Championing place-based regeneration, sustainability and connectivity to address the impact and ongoing challenges of Covid-19. Embedding local public sector innovation, technology and modernisation at the heart of post-Covid recovery so that it will enable the growth and development of resilient people, resilient communities, and resilient places by:



Creating social and economic wealth



Improving productivity and employment



Increasing the health and wellbeing of all



Establishing resilient, sustainable, socially just ecologically safe places in which people and communities can thrive

Infrastructure and public services

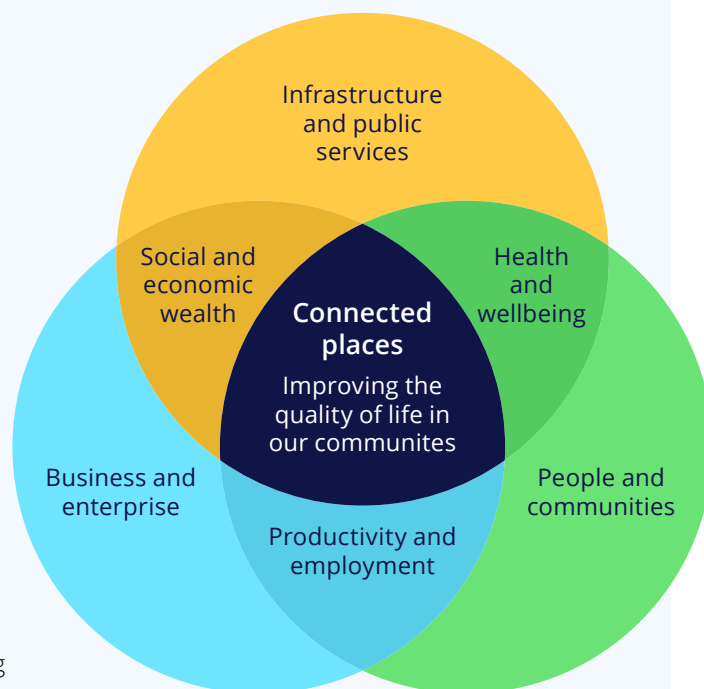
Better integrated, efficient and more effective health, care, welfare, emergency, crime prevention and education services combined with good and affordable housing, modern premises, connected transport and digital tools and solutions.

Business and enterprise

Stimulating a commercial culture which fosters entrepreneurship, investment and innovation to flourish. Attracting, developing and retaining talent, creating good jobs and enterprise and reducing unemployment. Increasing pay, raising household income levels and driving local investment.

People and communities

Engaging people with political and economic processes and decision making that affects their wellbeing ensuring everyone has a meaningful stake in the future of their place and community. Equipping people with the skills and confidence to remain resilient and adaptable in a changing work environment.



The aim is to build up a set of resources that take a harnessing digital approach and support the development of Connected placed-based “**what works outcomes**” that help create social and economic wealth; Improve productivity and employment; Increase the health and wellbeing of all; and deliver resilient, sustainable and connected places – improving the quality of life for people and communities.

In responding to this Socitm looks to do the following:

- **Define:** a series of steps to develop and implement a connected offering in relation to the three priorities of building on local approaches, sustain the step changes and harness digital to enhance the resilience of people, communities, organisations and places.
- **Determine:** the current situation, identify desirable leadership, professionalism policy and research objectives, and design feasible offering (considering information collection and provision, ethical practice, organisational roles, and physical assets) and associated implementation plans.
- **Champion:** the continuing development of high-quality standards, guidance, communications and tools that will strengthen the focus across localities around inter-relations between regeneration, sustainability and connectivity.
- **Collaborate:** with wider stakeholders on the identifying the lessons coming from the St George’s House discussions, wider Socitm partnerships via the Local CIO Council local and academic/public/private bodies.

In support of this and based on the findings of the St George’s House consultation, Socitm’s forward focus will be centred around:

- **Leadership and professionalism:** That will diversify Socitm’s learning and development portfolio, covering the issues and challenges faced by the sector through exploiting opportunities of working with other strategic partners/alliances to co-design and co-create niche/targeted collateral.

- **Research/what works:** That will support the development of practical policy and leadership tools and techniques that focus on what works and the scaling-up of place-based innovation, technology and modernisation that can underpin local regeneration and levelling up through ethical change and smart system thinking.
- **Resources:** That will support the place-based co-ordination and leverage of societal, innovative, technical and modernising resources and assets to support community regeneration and levelling up that proactively addresses the root causes of economic, social and digital inequalities.
- **Ethics:** That will promote the ethical and secure use of data and technologies in line with global standards for public sector leadership and wider social value through the application of machine technology, algorithms and artificial intelligence in local public administration, decision making, service design and wider service provision.
- **Infrastructure:** That will champion the development of smart community-led social and digital infrastructures so that they can strengthen and expand vital place-based services and support structures needed to enhance local connectivity, resilience, regeneration and levelling up.
- **Development:** That will establish a robust framework that can support the wider understanding of the role innovation, collaboration and sustainability, with particular reference to the priority areas of regeneration, levelling up, integrated care, digital identity, cyber security and civility in public life.
- **Opportunity:** That will strengthen place-based learning and development opportunities to empower and enable people and communities and help establish thriving, resilient and sustainable places that are digitally inclusive, socially just and ecologically safe.
- **Partnership:** That will identify partnership models and opportunities that can strengthen central/local and inter-agency collaboration to address

what needs to change and stimulate co-operation between local anchor institutions (public, private, academic and third-sector) to support wider placed-based regeneration and levelling up.

- **Civility:** That will promote wider civility in public life to support the integrity and public trust in democratic and administrative processes and support the drive to improve public safety against online harms so as to allow people and communities to enjoy more safely the benefits that online services offer.

Underpinning this, Socitm intends to strengthen its leadership and professionalism capabilities together with its strategic research and resource activities. Which, in turn, will broaden its support offer to members, stakeholders and external contacts as follows.

Leadership and professionalism

Socitm already offers learning and development programmes through our unique in-house Leadership Academy; initiatives that develop people both personally and professionally. These specialist programmes are each CPD accredited and together with other interventions and capabilities, harness, stretch and promote the skills and talent essential to effective contemporary leadership

Building on the success of the current capability, Socitm is establishing a new partnership model for **Socitm Lead** so as to diversify the learning and development portfolio even further. This enhanced suite of interventions will enable a more proactive and agile response to the issues and challenges faced by the sector through exploiting opportunities of working with other strategic partners and alliances to co-design and co-create niche and targeted collateral.

The aim is to soft launch a new **Socitm Academy** by the end of 2022 that will be a market-leading, high-profile experiential focussed learning and development institution, which will build on the success that the society has already realised in terms of the personal and professional development offer for its members. The new Socitm Academy will be uniquely focused on:

- The psychology of people and managing change effectively
- Leadership and skills
- Delivering place-based outcomes
- Supporting personal and professional development

Bringing together in one place the learning and development, skills and expertise available across the Socitm family, with strong links to Socitm research and advisory capabilities it is our ambition to:

- Diversify the learning and development portfolio to be more holistic, comprehensive and offer practical insight to the issues and challenges faced by the sector.
- Exploit opportunities of working with other strategic partners and alliances to co-design and co-create niche collateral pertinent to the sector.
- Enable access to customised interventions for organisations and clients.
- Support workforce development activity and access to career pathways.
- Strengthen the existing Alumni community of interest.
- Strengthen our approach to diversity and inclusion for under-represented members/communities.
- Formalise the opportunity to create a talent pipeline of future leaders for the sector.
- Development and support of an online portal and communities of practice to enable the sharing of best practice.

Strategic research and resources

Socitm's Inform service enables access to our publications and wider resources to provide insightful, impactful and easy to consume thought leadership, advice, guidance, news, and features relevant to our sector. We generate case studies, share best practice

and gather practical widespread insight through our Socitm Advisory service, which supports the creation of our research and development capability.

We plan to extend this service to establish a more holistic and targeted research capability developing a 'what works' research centre programme, with outputs that will form the basis of wider membership services and learning and development programmes, and will inform Socitm Advisory consultancy offerings. The aim is to strengthen Socitm's policy, research, data and innovation capabilities built around the five key policy themes, so that they can:

- **Generate** evidence on what works in a defined policy area.
- **Translate** evidence for specific user groups in a user-friendly format.
- **Encourage** the adoption and intelligent use of evidence, as well as contributions to the evidence base in the relevant policy area.

Align these to Socitm's horizon scanning on digital trends, integrated care, regeneration through ethical change, levelling up, community wealth building and civility in public life, healthy and well communities and ethical, digital place-making. The extended service would:

- **Identify:** Work with local public service leaders, policymakers, practitioners, and leading policy experts and academic networks to mobilise evidence and meet evidence needs; horizon scan policy developments so we can anticipate future evidence needs.
- **Convene:** Act as a bridge between evidence producers and policy makers/practitioners through working with policy experts to synthesise the best available evidence; look to bring experts and policy makers together to discuss how to apply the evidence and support local practitioners in accessing 'what works' best practice.
- **Communicate:** Share evidence in user-friendly formats that can speak to a broad audience; communicate evidence that supports better place-based policy making and public services; publish evidence reviews, reports

and policy briefings and disseminate evidence through events, blogs, and social media.

- **Advance:** Conduct research on how evidence can inform policy and practice through evaluating how our work makes a difference so we can keep improving what we do; partner with and study how other evidence centres work; proactively disseminate what we learn through the Socitm Ecosystem of awareness, advocacy and advisory.
- **Advocate:** Promote the use of 'what works' evidence by showing how it can support policy makers and practitioners; enable researchers to engage with the local public service community; partner with Socitm Academy and Socitm Advisory to nurture wisdom, share knowledge and build capabilities amongst policy makers and practitioners so that they use evidence to support resilient people, places and communities underpinned by place-based innovation, technology and modernisation.

Supporting Socitm members and partners

Building on these foundations Socitm looks to broaden its support offer to members, stakeholders and external contacts as follows:

- **Members:** Through championing development – Providing (in partnership with keynote academic and training providers) leadership, diversity, inclusivity and skills development built around leading-edge digital, data and technology research, capabilities and tools.
- **Stakeholders:** Through connected partnerships – Building strategic partnerships that provide unique insights, intelligence and situational awareness, into local public sector innovation, technology and modernisation
- **External contacts:** Through advocacy and advisory – Bespoke policy and research development, underpinned by leading edge advocacy and advisory support, focused on what works, what can be replicated and the development of supporting resources, tools and techniques.

Consultation participants

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