

# 1. Product Overview

**Product Title:** Local Waste Service Standards Project

**Product Type:** Proof of Concept

- Local Service Linked Data Standards
- API
- Pilot method of local government collaboration

**Desired Start (mm/yy):** 03/15

**Estimated End (mm/yy):** 12/15

## 1.1 User Needs:

1. **Local authority (LA) needs:** LAs need to be able to deliver digital services as efficiently as possible. Often they are blocked by inflexible suppliers, poorly structured or inaccessible data, and legacy approaches to delivering IT. They are often tackling these challenges in isolation (i.e. without benefitting from the work other LAs have done). They therefore need, as per the recommendation 15 of the November 2014 *Service Transformation Challenge Panel Report*, "...'local digital' standards to enable better use of data, compatibility of digital platforms and to drive 'open source' digital innovation".<sup>[1]</sup>
2. **Supplier needs:** stop building bespoke APIs for each LA customer. This will enable suppliers to deliver more cost-effective products to local authorities
3. **Citizen needs:** Better user experience, offering better value for money digital waste services that are so good that people prefer to use them

## 1.2 Description (including key objectives):

This project will engage with a selection of local authorities to collaboratively develop and share a data model, publishing standards, APIs, documentation and prototypes to enable local authorities to deliver waste services more effectively. The project will:

1. enable LAs to develop high quality citizen-facing waste services efficiently (with the knock-on benefit of reducing call volumes and failure demand)
2. enable LAs to work more effectively together (e.g. neighbouring boroughs collecting bins from 2 sides of the same road)
3. increase transparency around the performance of services, and of suppliers
4. enable LAs to move between suppliers more easily
5. pilot a method of collaborating and sharing service transformation assets across local authorities

6. by fulfilling points 3 and 4 above, enable 'government as platform' services so strongly advocated by the Service Transformation Challenge Panel Recommendations of November 2014.<sup>[2]</sup>

**End User:** All private and public sector waste services providers

### 1.3 Outputs:

**Key Deliverables:** (to be determined by collaborating local authorities as part of the discovery phase of the project)

- A published open data model for waste data (Alpha and Beta)
- A published data publishing standard (Alpha and Beta)
- One or more published API specifications (Alpha and Beta)
- Referencing implementations of APIs (i.e. a proof of concept)
- A demo citizen experience for one waste service
- Supporting documentation for all of the above
- 'Working out loud' blog posts, tweets, other digital records - sharing this pilot method of collaborative local service transformation at a national level, and supporting news and social media activities to drive engagement and future adoption
- Implementation support for minimum of 2 pilot local authorities
- At least 1 local authority using the standard and/or API to enable service redesign and/or service improvements
- Published evaluation of the successes/learnings from the project

### 1.4 Project governance

**Product Owners (Department/s):** DCLG Local Digital

Product owner: Linda O'Halloran

Technical Lead: Paul MacKay

Delivery Manager: Henry Mathes

Service Design Consultant, supporting design of key events and independently facilitating key backlog grooming exercises: Sarah Prag

**Partners Required To Create Product:** Local authorities in the 'Minimal Viable Collaboration' (MVC), their suppliers, LeGSB, LocalgovDigital (see full list of wider stakeholders below)

**DCLG Local Digital Role:** Product ownership (for duration of project), Delivery Management, comms and project documentation and evaluation. DCLG Local Digital aim to design themselves out of every project.

**Communications:** See 3.8 below for an outline of the comms approach

### 1.5 Risks and issues:

1. Main risk is that participating local authorities are not able to implement service improvements by the end of the project (Dec 2015) due to shifting priorities, or technical/skills issues within their organisation or their supplier. The project aims to mitigate this in a number of ways:
  - a. requiring sign off by two senior executives, committing to a firm intention to carry out the work in 2015
  - b. detailed discovery work with each local authority up front which will help to identify potential issues
  - c. extra consultation and the co-design of implementation plans with each local authority that moves into implementation
  
2. There are potential risks around working in collaboration on standards, as there may be contradictory views or priorities within the MVC and amongst wider stakeholders and commentators. Within the MVC this could impact the timeline of the project introducing delays as consensus is sought. More broadly, the project team could end up dealing with a lot of comment or criticism from the wider web, which could be distracting and demoralising. The project aims to mitigate this in a number of ways:
  - a. Using an agile framework for the project with regular reviews and planning sessions which all members of the MVC will be asked to attend (virtually). This should help to make the feedback more predictable/planned as both the project team and the collaborators will have scheduled time to review and discuss deliverables and time will be built into the plan for iterations based on that feedback.
  - b. Having a clear Product Owner who will be responsible for final decisions about priorities and whether a deliverable is “done”. They will share their thought process and the decisions they make openly, via blog posts and an open backlog.
  - c. Ensuring the project team and collaborators have the time, confidence and support to engage in the wider debate. See 3.8 below for comms approach.
  - d. Making it clear from the start that this is a project focused on delivering outcomes, one of which is some learnings about collaborating on standards. i.e. this project is not seeking to come up with the perfect answer that suits everyone, it is seeking to develop tools that can be used by an MVC to test some concepts.
  
3. The potential complexity of the additional data needed alongside bin data in order to deliver a waste service. e.g. data about addresses, residents, payment etc. The project aims to mitigate this by:
  - a. Taking a very iterative approach to developing the citizen facing API specification, informed by the priorities identified in Discovery.
  - b. Keeping integration options/end points as open as possible e.g. allowing for data to be referenced/delivered via email, CSV exports etc. i.e. not specifying the delivery mechanisms or insisting on associated APIs

(Note - the team are keen to do their most detailed/thorough work on address data, as there are wider benefits to other services of examining this. But as with everything the relative priority will be set in Discovery).

4. Local authorities dropping out. It's possible that some local authorities might find it harder than expected to collaborate, or may drop out altogether. The project aims to mitigate this by:
  - a. potentially bring addition LAs on board, if they meet the criteria, and if bringing them up to speed won't cause too much disruption or delay. (This could introduce further risks though, so should be carefully considered.)

## 2. Project Plan

(This section complements a spreadsheet listing all key activities, dates, and deliverables, and costing all people and activities.)

### 2.1 Proposed Methodology Overview:

This project and the products it produces will be delivered using agile methodologies. In summary this means:

- A focus on user need, as established via a Discovery process
- A prioritised backlog and roadmap, with a clear owner
- Iterative development - developing Alphas, testing them, iterating into Betas
- Showing regular progress - sprints of work, sprint reviews, "show & tell"
- Working out loud - the team and wider collaborators opening discussing their progress, decisions and challenges and publishing these online

### 2.2 Project Coordination:

DCLG Product Owner: Linda O'Halloran

DCLG Product Delivery Manager: Henry Mathes

Project Design Consultant: Sarah Prag

Technical lead: Paul Mackay

**2.3 MVC:** the MVC will be selected in March 2015 using the following criteria:

1. Senior buy-in
2. A key contact at your LA who'll coordinate your authority's involvement in the project
3. Plans to revamp waste services this year
4. Ability to share service data with the core project team and collaborating LAs
5. To operate at least 1 kind of weekly bin collection (to quality for the consultancy support package)

The MVC will also be selected to ensure it includes:

- a less technically confident authority
- a technically confident authority
- an authority that delivers its own waste services
- authorities that use multiple different providers of waste services

## 2.4 Stakeholders

It is hoped that this project will attract interest from a wide range of stakeholders and commentators.

The project team have identified a list of **key public sector stakeholders** who will be invited to certain events (see project plan). These include:

- Local eGovernment Standards Body (who intend to test their open standards framework against the products delivered by this project).
- DCLG Waste policy unit
- DCLG Open Data Team
- Cabinet Office Transparency Team
- LGA (ESD, LG Inform)
- WRAP
- Defra
- Environment Agency
- British Standards Institute
- Digital Catapult
- Future cities catapult
- SOCITM
- ODI
- Industry bodies

The project team are also keen to engage **suppliers of both waste and digital services, beyond those associated with the MVC**. They will be encouraged to review all published products and posts, and offer their feedback. They will be invited to at least one discovery event to feed into the standard adopted.

## 2.5 Discovery Methodology:

The Discovery phase will include the following key events and activities:

- > **An in-depth Discovery day with each local authority in the MVC**, attended by key members of the project team, and following a consistent format. This will seek to uncover:
  - their primary business drivers (and current KPIs)
  - the needs of their users (backed up by data/evidence)
  - an understanding of the services they currently offer (policies and business rules that shape these, how they are delivered (contractually, technically))
  - an understanding of their current use of data (models, repositories, APIs etc)
  - an understanding of their current constraints/challenges

- **A follow up Discovery session with external suppliers associated with the MVC, and their client local authority**
  - this will help to validate some of the learnings from the initial discovery day and also flush out any new needs or constraints from the perspective of the suppliers
  - These will be scheduled in consultation with the relevant LA - in some cases they may happen on the same day as the LA Discovery work, or the day after, or at a later date.
  
- **A kick off and Discovery workshop with primary stakeholders**
  - to introduce them to the project, its aims and methods
  - to make them aware of the opportunities to engage
  - to flush out any needs or concerns of stakeholders (via discovery exercises)
  - members of the MVC would also be invited as optional attendees
  
- **A briefing and Discovery session with wider suppliers**
  - to introduce them to the project, its aims and methods
  - to make them aware of the opportunities to engage
  - with exercises that will play back needs identified so far, for discussion
  
- **An analysis and initial prioritisation of the needs gathered** (activity)
  - lead by the Product Owner, with significant input from the Technical Lead and Delivery Manager
  - producing a prioritised backlog and an initial roadmap (for discussion)
  
- **A group workshop for the MVC to review the backlog and proposed roadmap**
  - an opportunity for the MVC to meet each other
  - a discussion of the backlog and the priorities suggested by the Product Owner
  - negotiation of priorities and of the roadmap

The main outputs of Discovery will therefore be:

- A prioritised backlog, understood and supported by the MVC and publicly available
- A roadmap, understood and supported by the MVC, represented on the project page
- A well briefed group of primary stakeholders with their needs incorporated
- Well briefed and engaged wider stakeholders and suppliers

## **2.6 Delivery methodology**

The delivery of the project will have two main phases:

- A. Delivery of Alpha products (data model, publishing standard, API specifications, referencing implementations, a demo citizen experience)

- B. Implementation of some/all of the products by some/all of the MVC local authorities (the Beta phase)

### **The Alpha approach:**

The approach to delivering an Alpha of each product/deliverable will be:

- driven by the needs identified and prioritised during discovery
- based on insight gained during discovery, but with follow up conversations with MVC contacts during delivery when needed
- delivered (usually) by the Technical Lead, with input from the Product Owner, and supported by the Delivery Manager
- shared in a structured way with the MVC, for their review and feedback (option for face to face demo, but online option always available)
- iterated upon based on that feedback
- published as an Alpha, inviting further/wider feedback, but with clear expectations set around the ability to respond to/act on that feedback

### **The Alpha deliverables:**

The project aims to produce Alphas of the following, but the relative prioritisation of these will be decided by the MVC and project team as part of Discovery:

- a data model
- a publishing standard
- an API specification for supplier facing APIs
- an API specification for APIs that support citizen facing services
- a referencing implementation for each API
- a demo for one citizen facing service (note, this is probably a “nice to have”)

The specific events and activities for each deliverable can be found in the project plan.

There will be a face-to-face demo/discussion of the supplier API, attended by the MVCs who have suppliers, and those suppliers. This could be one big group session, or per local authority, to be agreed in discussion with the local authority leads and their suppliers.

Towards the end of the Alpha phase the project team will host an uber show & tell event which will be an opportunity for the MVC, primary stakeholders, wider stakeholders (including non-MVC local authorities) and suppliers to review what’s been produced and offer feedback.

### **Alpha outcomes**

The intention of the Alpha phases is to develop and demo initial versions of each of the deliverables.

Once these have been published (and shown at the uber show and tell) the project team will need to review the feedback they receive (from the MVC, the primary stakeholders, and the wider web (within reason)). They will decide how to respond to this feedback, either:

- responding by making changes to the published Alpha products

- adding changes to the backlog for consideration in the Beta or beyond
- politely ruling out some suggestions, with a written explanation where possible

### **The Beta approach**

During Discovery and the Alpha delivery phase it will become clear which local authorities are the frontrunners for Beta implementation. These will be the authorities with a best alignment of senior buy in, supplier buy in, internal resources etc.

The project team will focus their Beta resources on these frontrunners initially, with the aim of getting changes implemented with them by the end of 2015.

The needs and circumstances of each local authority will be different, which is why the approach includes co-designing a bespoke implementation plan with them, and offering tailored support.

The key events and activities will be:

- a day or two spent with the local authority doing an implementation audit, and co-producing an implementation plan.
- optional strategic and/or service design support to help enable the service design elements of implementation (e.g. helping to brief internal stakeholders or internal teams)
- optional (but very likely) technology support e.g. briefing and supporting internal or supplier teams as they work through the implementation of APIs, user experience etc
- a Beta show & tell towards the end of the project, to demonstrate what has been implemented and discuss what has been learnt. This could also incorporate a discussion about next steps (see Product Improvement Plan in 3.7 below).

### **Beta outcomes**

The intention of the Beta phase is to test the products in a live environment with at least two local authorities.

In addition to delivering service improvements in those authorities, this will also generate a lot of learnings for the project team, the rest of the MVC, and other stakeholders and observers.

Some of these learnings will be reflected in updates to the published products. Ideally these changes would be comprehensive enough for the Product Owner to remove the Beta label from the published products. However, this will depend on the extent of the changes needed and the resources available at this late stage in the project (see below).

## **2.7 Project Evaluation and Product Improvement Plan:**

This is a project to produce products that will live beyond the end of the project.

### **Evaluating the project**



Evaluation criteria TBC but it will be in line with the Public Service Transformation Network evaluation methodology and presumably include:

- how successful was the collaboration: the concept of the MVC (how stable was it?), the level of consensus possible etc
- how successful were the agile ways of working: the role of Product Owner, the use of a backlog, the use of Alpha and Beta phases, “working out loud”
- How successful were the news/amplification activities?
- how successful was the implementation of the products?

### **Product improvement**

Given that the project is due to close at the end of 2015 it is highly likely that only one or two local authorities will have implemented some of the products.

It is hoped that the team will have learnt/tested enough to be able to update the Beta products and remove the Beta label. If this hasn't been possible then a business case may be required to extend the life of the project until this is possible.

During the life of the project the team the MVC and the primary stakeholders should discuss possible models for the ongoing development and management of the products produced by the project. Beyond maintaining the published products they may also want to consider if/how support will be offered to local authorities keen to use them (including any members of the MVC who haven't managed to implement anything by the end of the project).

The project team should recommend a model, and next steps, and contribute to any business case or other process needed to initiate it.

Possible models might include

- Entrusting the products to the open source community, and allowing them to be developed organically
- Identifying a lead local authority who is willing to take ownership of the products on behalf of the sector
- Identifying a national sponsor/owner for the products e.g. GDS, LGA, LocalGovDigital etc.

The approach taken may have implications beyond the specific products produced by this project, as it could be an opportunity to test a new model that could be applied more widely.

## **2.8 Communications approach**

Communication activity around this project and the products it delivers will fall into two broad areas:

### **1. News & amplification**

- Communicating that the project is happening, and why, and who has funded it and what it hopes to achieve etc
- Regular news stories that draw on the project updates, with reference to blog and emphasising key messages. Written by editors.

## 2. Working out loud

- **Product blog on DCLG platform**

- Members of the team, and potentially collaborators, posting about their work, what they are learning etc.
- Contributors will need to let the comms team know in advance that they intend to post, so that this can be reflected in the wider comms grid.
- For first few months someone from comms will run an eye over posts before posting due to increased sensitivity during purdah and potentially in the first months of a new administration.
- The comms team will also be on hand to offer support to anyone less confident about posting.

- **Project page**

- the project will have a page on the Local Direct website giving an overview of the project, and a clear indication of progress.
- Blog posts will be linked to from this page

Team members and collaborators may also be posting on their own blogs and twitter accounts. It is hoped that there won't be contradiction between these and the team blog, but if these emerge they'll be discussed.

In the likely event that there is some heated debate about some of the decisions made by the project the comms team will also be available to offer support, and to ensure that there is a clear blog post laying out decisions made etc which can be linked to from the wider debate.

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[1] Service Transformation Challenge Panel Report, November 2014, p. 8, recommendation 15::

“Government should demonstrate alongside local public services how the use of data and digital technologies might be transformed: it should consult on creating basic ‘local digital’ standards to enable better use of data, compatibility of digital platforms and to drive ‘open source’ digital innovation; that consultation should also consider whether or not to establish a joint national-local capability to promote those standards and help build the necessary technical capacity in places to take advantage of them.”

[http://publicservicetransformation.org/images/2902929\\_ChallengePanelReport\\_acc3.pdf](http://publicservicetransformation.org/images/2902929_ChallengePanelReport_acc3.pdf)

[2] Service Transformation Challenge Panel Report, November 2014: “Government should insist that all regulators and inspectorates encourage and support collaboration and integrated services”

<http://publicservicetransformation.org/service-transformation-challenge-panel>

[3] Government Digital Strategy, December 2013: “This Digital Efficiency Report suggests that transactions online can already be 20 times cheaper than by phone, 30 times cheaper than postal and as much as 50 times cheaper than face-to-face.” <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/government-digital-strategy/government-digital-strategy>

[4] Ibid

[5] Solihull reduced missed bin reports from 2000 to 500 per year by being able to proactively enforce the rules under which a report could be filed. It costs roughly £30 to go back for a missed bin, so they saved £45,000 per year by going digital.

## Summary of key events

Phase	Event	Participants	Suggested location	Suggested dates
Discovery	<b>An in-depth Discovery day with each local authority in the MVC</b> (one per local authority)	MVC local authority lead, other relevant staff from the local authority, the project team	Local authority	May - Early June
Discovery	<b>A follow up Discovery session with external suppliers associated with the MVC, and their client local authority</b> (one per local authority - or several if they'd rather see suppliers individually)	MVC local authority lead, other relevant staff from the local authority and from their suppliers, the project team	Local authority	Could be same or next day as above event
Discovery	<b>A kick off and Discovery workshop with public sector stakeholders</b>	A representative from each stakeholder organisation, and the project team.  MVC local authority leads, also welcome but optional	London	Mid-Late June
Discovery	<b>A briefing and Discovery session with wider suppliers</b>	Representatives from suppliers/private sector organisations with an interest in the project and it's deliverables	London	Mid-Late june
Discovery	<b>A group workshop for the MVC to review the backlog and proposed roadmap</b>	MVC local authority leads, project team	London	Mid-Late June
Alpha	<b>Regular sprint reviews and demos</b> (frequency tbc but probably fortnightly)	MVC local authority leads, project team  Suppliers also invited to demos/discussions involving the supplier facing API	Online/over phone  MVC encourage to sent someone to Face-to-face option at least monthly and whenever there is a	Throughout June, July, August

			significant demo.	
Alpha	<b>Supplier API demo &amp; discussion</b>	Suppliers, the MVC local authority leads they supply to, project team	London - or hosted by relevant local authority	tbc - July-Aug
Alpha	<b>Alpha uber show &amp; tell</b>	MVC local authority leads, , project team, all stakeholders, all suppliers	London	tbc - Aug-Sept
Beta	<b>Implementation audit and planning session</b> (for each of the frontrunner local authorities)	Appropriate staff from the local authority, project team	Local authority	Sept
Beta	<b>Practical implementation meetings</b> (as needed)	Appropriate staff from the local authority, appropriate members of project team	Local authority	Sept - Dec
Beta	<b>Beta show &amp; tell</b>	MVC, project team, all stakeholders, all suppliers	Could be hosted by one of the Beta local authorities?	Early Dec