

# Local Digital Coalition Action Plan | March 2016

*First steps towards realising the joined-up local digital service of the future*

## 1. Introduction

This document outlines the collaborative digital transformation priorities of the English local public sector. It presents a unanimously agreed, first steps road map to deliver the local public services of the future, where local authorities and their partners are equipped with digital infrastructures that allow them to collaborate easily to meet the needs of citizens in their locality. This vision will be further outlined in the upcoming Local Digital Coalition vision document.

## 2. The Challenge

There is currently no mechanism for local authorities to plan and deliver digital collaboration initiatives that could be undertaken once in order to realise collective benefits. Having identified some national and local projects that could help the sector make significant savings and improve services, councils need an agreed and authoritative mechanism to plan and deliver this collaborative work, and to monitor and evaluate its success.

This gains added significance in the current political climate of budget reductions, devolution and City Deals. Councils are already developing new ways to work with neighbours and local partners without the means to agree basic common principles and data standards once. This presents a risk that local authorities will become less joined-up, and instead devise bespoke and isolated solutions to problems that could be better solved with common standards and functions. A single-point mechanism for coordinating digital transformation on a national scale will ensure communication, collaboration and learning around common practical solutions that are already underway. This is a critical time for such continuity.

## 3. Our Response

Establish a federally owned [Local Digital Coalition](#) to help the sector unlock the benefits of collaborative digital service transformation. All local public sector organisations are invited to join the Coalition, by endorsing this Action Plan and a shared vision for the future of local public services. A starter secretariat will be provided by the London Borough of Camden for 1 year. It will convene representatives from Coalition members, including the Local CIO Council, LocalGov Digital, iNetwork, iStandUK, Socitm, Solace, and other relevant groups 6 times between April 2016 March 2017 to work on the below activities and develop its plans further.

Underpinning the Coalition mission are the following principles for collaborative service design:

1. **Design for people, not machines:** understand citizens, and the context in which they are using services.
2. **Collate, communicate and connect:** find out what others are doing and link up.
3. **Transformation over incremental development:** sometimes hard work is required to make things simple; we must not shy away from challenges because things “have always been that way”.
4. **Get things live fast:** iterate with partners, refine based on consistent feedback, and release minimum viable products early.
5. **Be consistent, not uniform:** use common design patterns, language and data protocol where possible.
6. **Do things once:** if a solution works, make it reusable and share across the sector.

By adopting these principles, the basic components of local services will be consistent enough to stimulate innovation, unlock efficiency savings and promote best practise, while councils that need to do things differently for good reasons remain able to adapt their services to meet local needs.

## 4. Key Functions Of The Local Digital Coalition

1. Work transparently with a strong, unanimous campaign element across all Coalition partner channels. Operate accessibly and transparently, following the precedent set by GDS and the Local Digital Programme. This is essential to gain buy-in from all councils, and to help councils plan the integration of these common standards/ products/ services.



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2. Help all parts of the local public sector to understand the Coalition vision for the future of local public services, and the means to realising it, by 'working out loud' around exemplars (e.g. waste standards business case and videos) and promoting skills development programmes. These may be delivered by partner organisations, but should all support the common vision for the future of local public services.
3. Coordinate local authority response to devolution, City Deals, and central government digital work making connections to Coalition exemplar projects where applicable.
4. Ensure that the chosen exemplar projects are designed (with relevant central government project leads where applicable) to:
  - a. make the business case for adopting the standard, product or service in question simple and accessible to business leaders who aren't tech savvy (to help drive national uptake)
  - b. monitor the cost of services before and after the project to support the business cases for collaborative projects and to inform future work
  - c. drive implementation of each project in a minimum of 5 councils over 2 years with a rigorous focus on enabling others to implement soon after by designing to standards, documenting the process clearly and communicating well (starting with a collaboration project page on the [Coalition website](#))
  - d. test and refine delivery methodologies for these types of project with a view to replicating them for other local services and capabilities

## 5. Priority Activities For First Year of Coalition

1. Agree a common vision to be endorsed and promoted by all partners.
2. Agree phase 1 project plans for the 5 exemplar projects below (with relevant central government project leads where applicable), as per point 4d above. The five key projects are:
  - a. [Blue Badge Eligibility Checker](#)
  - b. [DVLA APIs for local government](#)
  - c. [Extension of GOV.UK Verify to local authorities](#)
  - d. [Integrated Care Record Standards Project](#)
  - e. [Local Waste Service Standards Project](#)
3. Agree framework for adopting common data standards and design patterns for local services and business functions.
4. Identify skills and team required to:
  - a. coordinate the campaign and local authority collaborative components of the above priority projects
  - b. lay the foundations for additional functions of the coalition coordination service.
5. Secure resource to deliver the collaborative elements of the exemplars, to run the secretariat and to communicate the coalition and project activities.
6. Agree administration mechanism beyond the 1st year (how to fund, where the base will be, etc).

## 6. Coalition Support

This document was co-authored or endorsed by the below organisations, and we invite all local public sector organisations to join the Coalition and endorse this shared Action Plan and upcoming vision document.

