

LCIOC

Report

Members report on LCIOC meeting, December 2019

January 2020



Suppliers must free councils' data, says Copeland

Local authorities should refuse to work with suppliers that charge them for accessing their own data, the director of the London Office of Technology and Innovation (Loti) told the December meeting of the Local CIO Council (LCIOC).

Eddie Copeland, Loti's director, said that some software providers impose charges of up to £100,000 for access, stymying efforts to share and open access to data. "I was writing about this being unacceptable in 2013," he told the meeting. "We should actively aim to bring an end to it today." He said that a contractual clause requiring suppliers to support open APIs for data should be the standard.

He said that sharing data between London's local authorities is vital to help them understand the full picture in their localities, and that many smarter ways of working depend on joining up data across boroughs. In addition to the behaviour of some suppliers, legacy systems, cultural and legal issues that can get in the way of this.

While at Nesta, he worked on a project with the GLA and 12 London boroughs to use data to help identify unlicensed houses in multiple occupation (HMOs) where it took six months for the boroughs involved to sign an information sharing agreement (ISA). Loti is currently working to standardise the information governance process across boroughs and is looking to adopt systems like the Information Sharing Gateway (which digitises the process of creating ISAs), to avoid the version control issues experienced when multiple IG leads provide feedback via email.

Commenting on London's open data, he suggested if London's boroughs could publish open data on the same things in consistent formats, they may be able to benefit from results similar to Transport for London, whose Unified API now supports around 700 mobile apps created by external developers. Boroughs

publishing open data on their own may find that hobbyists make use of it but large-scale innovation will need access to London-wide data, Copeland said.

He called for similar data standardisation for Internet of Things (IoT) procurement by London boroughs, otherwise the capital risks having infrastructure that cannot link across borough boundaries. Except for personal information, the default should be that stream street infrastructure IoT data is published in standard formats through the London Datastore.

Loti launched in July 2019. The organisation currently has 16 of the capital's 33 local authorities as members. Each pays £30,000 a year with the Greater London Authority and London Councils contributing a further £100,000 a year each. Loti is hosted within London Councils, which represents the 32 boroughs and the City of London. It has six work streams: digital leadership; sharing and reusing; better partnerships; embedding standards; data collaboration; and shared experiments. The last could see boroughs sharing the trailing of new innovations, spreading the risk and reducing the costs of such work.

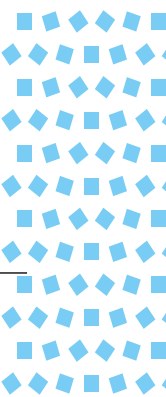
In November, with philanthropic consultancy Bloomberg Associates, the Mayor of London and London Councils, Loti launched City Tools: London, which maps contracts, technologies and skills across London boroughs to help identify options for collaboration on tech procurement. This could allow authorities who have contracts expiring at similar times to jointly procure new services and systems.

Copeland said that Loti has been inspired by the work of similar organisations, such as Scotland's Digital Office, but is starting on a small scale with three members of staff and an operational budget of around £650,000 a year. It has big aspirations, with its first year dedicated to fixing the plumbing. In early 2020, Loti aims to launch some projects that show how real-world public service challenges can be more easily tackled as a result of improving data sharing and procurement.

Read more:

City Tools: <http://bit.ly/36WvHkI>

Scotland's Digital Office: <http://bit.ly/2SaFrn9>



North-west looks at start-ups, East at RPA

Socitm's North-west regional group heard from Tom Quay, founder of Base and chief executive of Passenger Technology, at its most recent meeting held at Media City in Salford. Quay shared his experience of setting up a start-up based in Bournemouth's 'Silicon Beach', helping members to think about how to encourage similar conditions in their own areas. The event also heard from Jacinta Mellenger, service designer for DWP Digital at the Department for Work and Pensions, who helped to run the Blackpool GovJam event in October.

Tony Doyle, head of ICT Services at Blackpool Council and the group's chair, said the next meeting in Preston on 7 February will look at how digital can enable and support the reimagining of the High Street, with the purpose of complementing funding local authorities are bidding for from the Future High Streets Fund and the Town Deals Fund.

A recent meeting of Socitm's East region attracted over 50 people to discuss robotic process automation (RPA), including straightforward examples such as automating the sending of text message reminders for healthcare appointments. "It's a well-proven technique in other industries, but it's just starting in local government," Norfolk County Council's head of information management and technology Geoff Connell said. He added that the region has combined its meetings with those of the local cybersecurity Warp (warning, advice and reporting point), which has helped attendance at both.

Socitm regional events: <http://bit.ly/2PFXAYy>

Cybersecurity centre wants dedicated email addresses

The National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC) wants every local authority to establish a dedicated email address for cybersecurity to ensure it can always contact them, LCIOC's cybersecurity adviser Mark Brett told the meeting. Fewer than half have set up such accounts so far. Those wishing to let NCSC know about such an address should contact nikw@ncsc.gov.uk who will facilitate the contact.

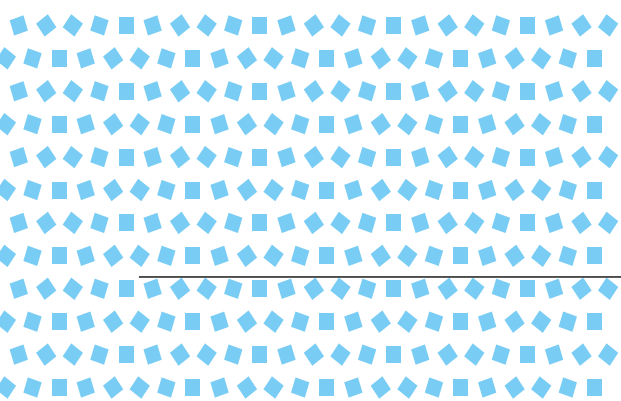
Brett said that he has held two incident response courses as part of the Welsh Government Cyber Security programme through the Welsh Warp. The course tested cyber response and recovery, participants have to make decisions as if they were coping with a local authority's IT system failure. Brett is also running updated Siro (Senior Information Risk Owner) courses as part of the Welsh Government programme of work.

Council signs up to digital humanism

LCIOC agreed to sign up to Vienna Manifesto on Digital Humanism, which Socitm's director of policy and research Martin Ferguson said can be summarised by its statement that: "We must shape technologies in accordance with human values and needs, instead of allowing technologies to shape humans." Among the manifesto's core principles, two with particular relevance to government technology are that automation should support human decision-making rather than replace it; and that practitioners should acknowledge their shared responsibility for the impact of IT. Individuals and organisations can sign up to the manifesto online.

Read more:

Vienna Manifesto: <http://bit.ly/2Q9Dx3y>



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