

# In Our View



**Main feature:**

How rural innovation is sprouting  
in Shropshire and Norfolk

## Creating better outcomes

through genuine  
transformation in  
the Public Sector





# President's letter

October 2019



## Getting smart

## at events

For those of you reading this in the Met Hotel in Leeds, a warm welcome to our Share National event focused on service redesign and transformation. We have a strong set of speakers hosted by vice-president Huw McKee, ready to share their experiences of how local public services can change the way they work using technology.

One of the event's speakers, Shropshire Council's head of technology Andrew Boxall, has discussed his council's work making social care more efficient for this issue's main feature on transformational work in rural areas ([p12](#)). This also covers how Norfolk County Council is enabling local innovation, such as connecting sensors in fields with its Lorawan network to help farmers decide when to spray crops.

Many local authorities are adopting smart technologies, including Florence and Prato in Tuscany, both of which have worked with local utility companies to do so ([p16](#)). Representatives from the two cities spoke at the Major Cities of Europe conference I and other members of the Socitm team attended a few months ago ([p24](#)). Regardless of developments in national politics, Socitm will continue to engage internationally including through conferences, so we can continue to collaborate with and learn from other countries' public services.

And for those of you who were not able to visit Share Leeds, our events manager Poppy Whelan has provided five reasons for attending a Socitm conference ([p23](#)). I hope you are persuaded to join us at one over the coming months.

**Sandra Taylor**  
Socitm President

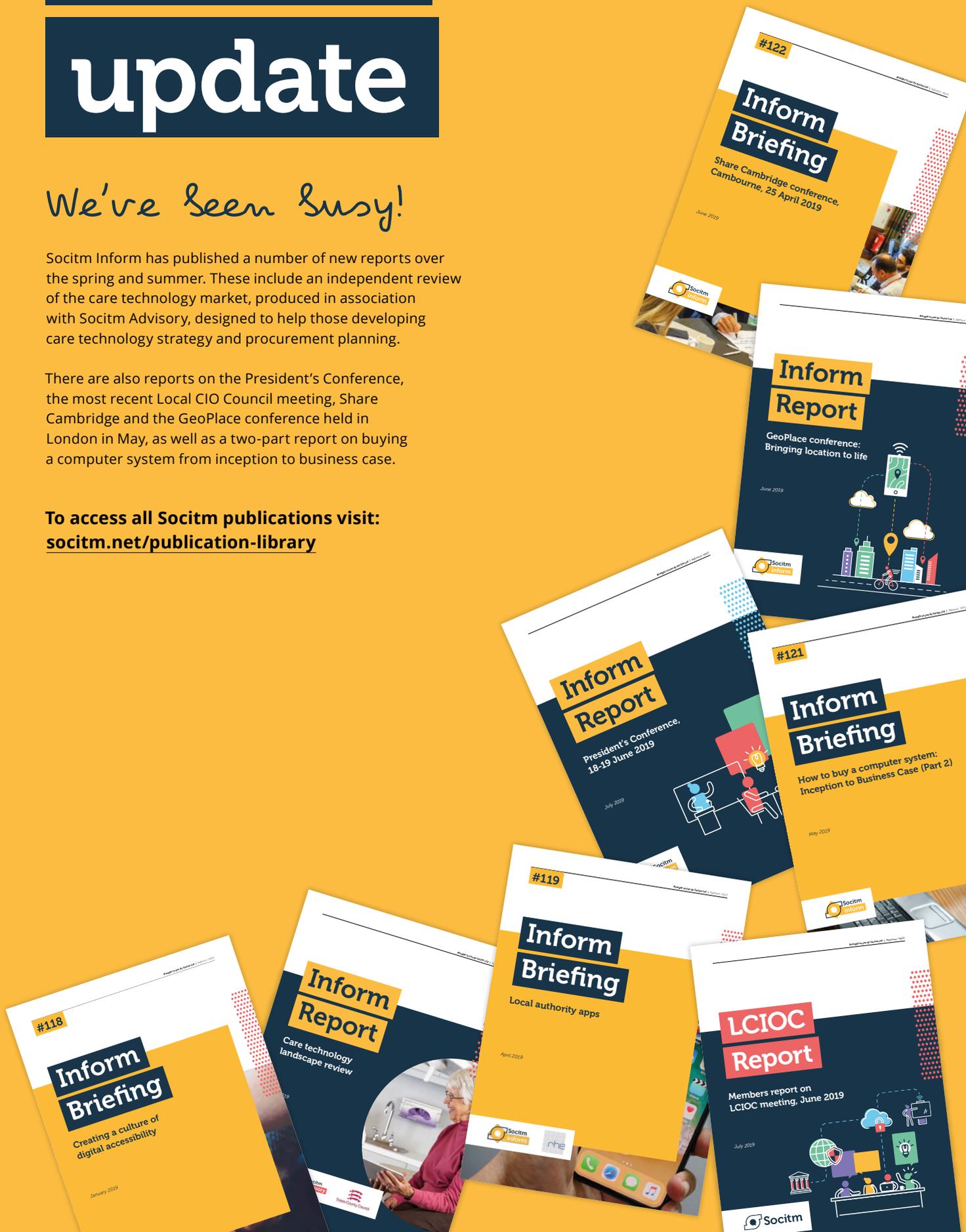
# Inform update

*We've been busy!*

Socitm Inform has published a number of new reports over the spring and summer. These include an independent review of the care technology market, produced in association with Socitm Advisory, designed to help those developing care technology strategy and procurement planning.

There are also reports on the President's Conference, the most recent Local CIO Council meeting, Share Cambridge and the GeoPlace conference held in London in May, as well as a two-part report on buying a computer system from inception to business case.

To access all Socitm publications visit:  
[socitm.net/publication-library](http://socitm.net/publication-library)



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# Stockport family context project leads Local Digital Fund list

A project led by Stockport Council to provide social workers with better information on families will receive a further £350,000 in government funding, as part of a set of awards from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government's Local Digital Fund.

The work, which also involves Leeds and Manchester city councils, aims to give access to better information on children's family context by drawing on other local public services. The ministry said this would allow

children's social workers to make decisions faster, which should benefit families and save money.

The ministry funded a first round of 16 projects in December 2018, including an initial £100,000 for an alpha phase prototype of the family context project. In a blogpost written in July, Stockport Council's Craig Hughes said that it had taken 50 days to complete the information governance – longer than expected – and that it had been hard to find staff time and capacity to undertake work.

But he added that social workers using the tool were saving up to three hours per assessment as they did not have to chase information. "We hope to build on this work and it feels like the project has an exciting future ahead," Hughes wrote, in advance of the funding announcement.

The Stockport-led project took nearly half the £753,000 awarded to the second round of projects getting money from the Local Digital Fund, announced in September. Two projects focus on housing services, with a Lincoln-led project developing improved online reporting and management of repairs and one run by Worcestershire using death registrations to better manage social housing availability.

Others look at making planning more efficient and transparent through user-centred application systems; work on income management and electronic payments; and open directories of local support from public and third-sector organisations.

The ministry plans to publish its decisions on a third round of bids in mid-October. Lead authorities for projects must be in England but councils elsewhere in the UK can be partners.



## Second round Local Digital Fund projects

**1.** Stockport (lead), Leeds and Manchester: £350,000 for providing social workers with better information to cut the time and cost of child referrals.

**2.** Buckinghamshire (lead), Adur and Worthing, Croydon and Leeds: £50,000 for prototyping an open community directory of support services.

**3.** Southwark (lead), Hackney, Greater London Authority and Surrey Heath: £100,000 for exploring how to make the planning process more efficient and transparent.

**4.** City of Lincoln, Southwark, South Kesteven and Greenwich: £100,000 for developing a better online housing repairs system.

**5.** Barnsley (lead), Allerdale, Cherwell, Huntingdon, North East Lincolnshire, Sheffield and South Northamptonshire: £80,000 for exploring income management and e-payments.

**6.** Worcestershire (lead), Redditch and Bromsgrove and Suffolk: £73,000 for providing registrations data to local authority housing services.

Read more

Local Digital Fund  
<https://bit.ly/2kSD1LO>

Stockport-led family context project: <https://bit.ly/2lZa5lD>

Stockport blog on project: <https://bit.ly/2m20bzK>

# Fibre and 5G could boost rural areas say reports

Rural local authorities could see particular benefits from their areas adopting full-fibre and 5G networks, according to reports from the Broadband Stakeholder Group and the Scottish Government.

The Broadband Stakeholder Group, made up of telecoms and media companies as well as public-sector bodies, commissioned its report from consultancy Oxera. It says that all areas should benefit from encouraging use of faster networks, but these will vary between areas, adding that it is harder to calculate those deriving from much faster mobile 5G networks given it is a new technology.

The report evaluates the potential economic benefits of moving to full-fibre or 5G connections for different types of locality, and says these vary based on factors including population density, business sizes and industries. Rural areas with low population density are likely to have a larger proportion of slow connections at present, as speed and reliability through copper wire are highest for those closest to telephone exchanges, so would benefit more from full-fibre or 5G.

Areas with many smaller employers are likely to benefit disproportionately from better networks, as many larger organisations already have fast corporate connections, and knowledge-intensive sectors such as education and health are also more likely to see greater benefits.

The report also looks at specific case studies, including the 5G RuralFirst element of the 5G Testbed and Trials programme run by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport. This includes projects on how better connectivity can benefit agriculture, such as by supporting autonomous tractors and drones, with test sites in Shropshire and Somerset. It also looks at how local authorities can become more efficient, such as how City of York Council introduced a full-fibre network in 2010 which it now uses for city centre wi-fi, connections for CCTV cameras and transport management systems.

Separately, the Scottish Government has published a strategy for adopting 5G networks which sees significant economic benefits. "Significantly, 5G also has the potential to help sustain remote and rural areas, allowing all of Scotland's citizens and communities to embrace the technology and reap its benefits," writes minister Paul Wheelhouse in the foreword.

The strategy says that social care, healthcare, education and employment training in remote rural areas are likely to see particular benefits from the introduction of such networks, including through further development of existing remotely-delivered education services. 5G could also be applied in sectors including oil and gas extraction, fishing and aquaculture, with the RuralFirst projects including work on salmon health monitoring in Scapa Flow in Orkney.

## Where to find Brexit advice

The situation on Britain's departure from the European Union has been changing rapidly over the last few weeks. Rather than publishing specific advice, Socitm recommends that members seek the latest information and guidance from the government and the Information Commissioner's Office.

Government advice for organisations on Brexit:  
<https://bit.ly/2QhNQAM>

ICO advice on Brexit:  
<https://bit.ly/2D2ouTS>

The Scottish Government is planning to develop specific resources for local authorities including an infrastructure mapping portal, a procurement toolkit and best practice guidance, to help them become '5G ready' in areas including procurement, commercial, cyber resilience, planning regulations and asset management. On the last, it is planning a state-sector register of state-sector assets, which should make it easier for mobile network operators to approach local authorities.

*For more on how rural areas can benefit from technology-led transformation, see [main feature on p12](#)*

### Read more

Broadband Stakeholder Group report: <https://bit.ly/2m5NG5S>

56 RuralFirst:  
<https://bit.ly/2kLqs55>

Scottish Government 5G strategy:  
<https://bit.ly/2kwiVqC>

# Southwark brings in digital NHS check-up as Hancock considers wider use

Southwark Council is introducing a digital version of the NHS Health Check service offered to adults aged 40-74. The move, which the London borough claimed as a first, came as health secretary Matt Hancock included greater digitisation in a review of the service.

Almost half of Southwark's residents have ignored invitations to the standardised check-ups over the last five years, which aim to spot early signs of heart disease, stroke, kidney disease and type two diabetes. The proportions are similar across England, with nearly seven million people having used the service following more than 14 million invitations. The Department of Health and Social Care believes the check-ups have identified more than 700,000 people at high risk of cardiovascular disease and have saved an estimated 500 lives each year.

Southwark's new system uses online responses to questions on health and lifestyle to assess the risks of developing cardiovascular disease. A trial carried out since January involving more than 300 people found that 10% gave answers suggesting they are at a high risk of cardiovascular disease. They were encouraged to make an appointment for a face-to-face check, with all users given advice on how to reduce the risk of developing such disease.

"As a council we pride ourselves on leading the way when it comes to innovation and this is another

example of how we are working to make taking care of yourself as easy as possible," said Cllr Evelyn Akoto, Southwark Council's cabinet member for community safety and public health.

In mid-August, Matt Hancock announced an evidence-based review into NHS Health Check, focused on personalising checks through factors including age, location and genetics. The review will also consider special check-ups for those approaching retirement as well as extending their range to cover musculoskeletal problems and hearing loss.

"Personalised, preventative healthcare is mission critical to the future-fit healthcare service we want to build. We must harness the latest technology and techniques to move away from the one-size-fits-all approach of the past," said Hancock.

The department will explore digitisation of health checks in some cases, such as for those who are at low risk of cardiovascular disease, although it said it recognised that digital services are unlikely to work for those with mental health problems.

Digital health checks could also fail to appeal to some older patients, with nearly a quarter of those aged 65 and above making little or no use of the internet (see next page). And recent research in Scotland suggests that many are reluctant to use digital technology for healthcare.

A survey of 2,000 people in Scotland carried out by market researcher Opinium in May and June found that 25% did not want to use digital technology to contact healthcare professionals. However, 47% of respondents were willing to use video services – something the NHS in Lanarkshire is currently trialling – 43% online chat, 20% a virtual reality nurse or doctor and 17% a smart assistant service.

The survey, commissioned by Capita on behalf of the Scottish Wide Area Network, found that the number who did not want to use digital channels for healthcare rose to 34% in the Highlands. Given its low population density and long travel distances the area has strong potential for remote delivery of services, but NHS Highland said residents may be put off by poor internet connectivity.

## Read more

Southwark's digital Health Check:  
<https://bit.ly/2ISam9D>

Hancock announces personalisation:  
<https://bit.ly/2z408GU>

Survey on Scottish willingness to use digital health:  
<https://bit.ly/2ILQKEi>

NHS Lanarkshire trials video GP consultations:  
<https://bit.ly/2kdoiuv>

# Offline elderly could limit digital channel shift

Millions of older people continue to make little or no use of the internet, lessening the potential for councils to shift services to digital channels.

Recent research by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) found that 24% of those aged 65 and over have not used the internet in the last three months, while just 61% use it daily. By comparison almost everyone aged 44 or less uses the internet every day.

The data, released in August and based on telephone surveys of 3,076 people between January and April, revealed that older people living alone are particularly likely to be offline. There is little difference between the 93% of all households that have an internet connection and the 89% with two adults where at least one is aged 65 or above. But just 73% of those aged at least 65 and living alone are connected. The research also showed that older people are less likely to interact online in specific ways with the public sector (see table).

Separate research published by the ONS in May and based on 41,000 households found that the majority of women aged 75 and above do not use the internet regularly. Just 41% had used the internet in the last three months, compared with 54% of men in this age group.

Local authorities have made increasing use of 'channel shift' to save money, encouraging citizens to access services online rather than by phone or face to face. In a report published in August the Local Government Association said that 21 channel shift projects carried

Source: Office for National Statistics

Age group	16-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+
<b>Frequency of internet use by age</b>						
Daily / almost every day	100	99	98	93	83	61
At least weekly	0	1	1	4	5	10
Less than weekly	0	~0	0	1	1	5
Not in the last 3 months	0	0	1	2	10	24
<b>Use of internet to interact with public authorities by age</b>						
Submitting completed forms	44	61	59	55	44	34
Obtaining information from websites	40	41	51	50	43	27
Downloading official forms	43	46	46	45	35	26

out in 2018-19 had saved councils £1.69 million, with Scarborough Borough Council gaining efficiencies of more than £250,000 in its waste management service and Rochdale Borough Council more than £182,000 in a range of services.

While older people staying offline does not remove the financial rationale for channel shift, it means that local authorities may need to offer additional support and potentially non-digital alternatives for years to come.

However, some are failing to do so according to Age UK. In a 'mystery shopper' exercise carried out last year with 100 English local authorities, the charity was told by 41 councils that housing benefit and council tax reductions could only be claimed online. While most were willing to provide help face to face in doing this, 14 were not.

"The shift to our routine transactions and interactions with public bodies taking place online is becoming so pronounced that the question arises as to whether we need new legal duties to ensure they continue to offer alternative methods of access," said Age UK's Caroline Abrahams.

## Read more

August ONS research on internet usage: <https://bit.ly/2m3d38N>

May ONS research: <https://bit.ly/2Wv1Z4V>

LGA report on channel shift: <https://bit.ly/31G1wf8>

Age UK research on online-only services: <https://bit.ly/2kGRSj1>

Socitm policy briefings, 'Digital by choice: Bridging the digital divide': <https://bit.ly/2lxj7Gt>

# New membership packages:

## take a look inside

Become part of a network of digital leaders who advance and improve service delivery through shared best practice and collaboration. Membership unlocks access to to exclusive opportunities and content.

<b>Essential</b> £1,895	<b>Essential+</b> £2,395	<b>Enhanced</b> £5,995	<b>Executive</b> £9,995
<b>01</b> x15 individual memberships	<b>09</b> x20 individual memberships	<b>18</b> x25 individual memberships	<b>30</b> Unlimited individual memberships
<b>02</b> Share Local events	<b>10</b> Share Local events	<b>19</b> Share Local events	<b>31</b> Share Local events
<b>03</b> x11 Webinar Wednesdays	<b>11</b> x11 Webinar Wednesdays	<b>20</b> x11 Webinar Wednesdays	<b>32</b> x11 Webinar Wednesdays
<b>04</b> Website accessibility testing	<b>12</b> Website accessibility testing	<b>21</b> Website accessibility testing	<b>33</b> Website accessibility testing
<b>05</b> <i>Inform</i> subscription: access our resources	<b>13</b> <i>Inform</i> subscription: access our resources	<b>22</b> <i>Inform</i> subscription: access our resources	<b>34</b> <i>Inform</i> subscription: access our resources
<b>06</b> x1 Leadership Academy place	<b>14</b> x2 Leadership Academy places	<b>23</b> x2 Leadership Academy places	<b>35</b> x3 Leadership Academy places
<b>07</b> x1 President's Conference ticket	<b>15</b> x2 President's Conference tickets	<b>24</b> 20% off additional Leadership Academy places	<b>36</b> 20% off additional Leadership Academy places
<b>08</b> x3 Share National events*	<b>16</b> x2 Hotel accommodation for the President's Conference	<b>25</b> x2 President's Conference tickets	<b>37</b> x3 President's Conference tickets
<i>Savings: £4,500***</i>	<b>17</b> x3 Share National events*	<b>26</b> x2 hotel accommodation for President's Conference	<b>38</b> x3 hotel accommodation for President's Conference
	<i>Savings: £7,000***</i>	<b>27</b> x3 Share National events*	<b>39</b> x3 Share National events*
		<b>28</b> Annual meeting with a senior manager	<b>40</b> Annual meeting with a senior manager
		<b>29</b> x1 Improve module**	<b>41</b> x2 Improve modules**
		<i>Savings: £8,000***</i>	<b>42</b> x1 on-site training day
			<i>Savings: £10,000***</i>

\*Scottish members also benefit from two tickets to Share Scotland

\*\*Choose from Estate, Performance, User Satisfaction or Service design maturity assessment

\*\*\*The savings are based on a price comparison between buying as a package and paying for each service separately



# Nations and regions news

To pass on local authority IT news, email [inourview@socitm.net](mailto:inourview@socitm.net)

## Scotland

**Glasgow City Council** has started issuing nearly 70,000 pupils with iPads, under a plan that will see all above P6 level aged 9-10 receiving their own device by 2021. The project, carried out with CGI, also includes faster broadband and wi-fi in classrooms.

<https://bit.ly/2mslmer>

## Wales

**Neath Port Talbot Council** believes it is the first local authority to adopt robotic process automation in some of its back office processes, working with outsourcer Arvato initially on human resources processes including Disclosure and Barring Service requests.

<https://bit.ly/2mqyRLB>

## Northern Ireland

**Belfast City Council** is introducing a support programme for 320 businesses with fewer than 50 staff, helping them to acquire digital skills for managing information, communicating, transacting and problem-solving.

<https://bit.ly/2kKjcq6>

## Yorkshire and the Humber

**Leeds City Council** has introduced an online system that maps the city's 21,000 tree preservation orders and 79 conservation areas for trees.

<https://bit.ly/2m5ApKA>

## North-west England

**Greater Manchester Combined Authority** is working with the Greater Manchester Health and Social Care Partnership on a £14.3 million digital transformation programme to share information on patients, initially for those with dementia or who are frail.

<https://bit.ly/2kw5uqG>

## West Midlands

**Birmingham City Council** is in the process of installing automatic numberplate recognition cameras to enforce its city centre clean air zone, with live testing underway and full implementation over the next year.

<https://bit.ly/2kLddRV>

## East Midlands

**Leicestershire County Council** is planning to spend £150,000 on an app to help residents manage their weight, following its integration of the NHS Leicestershire Nutrition and Dietetic Service.

<https://bit.ly/2kuz8fW>

## East of England

**Dacorum Borough Council** is planning to appoint a supplier to trial robot process automation in two yet-to-be-identified operational areas, as part of a council-wide change programme.

<https://bit.ly/2kqT9Uv>

## London

**Transport for London** has commissioned a new £6.5m control system for road management from Sopra Steria, with the aim of using data from multiple sources to respond more quickly to incidents and keep traffic flowing.

<https://bit.ly/2kpq63G>

London's chief digital officer **Theo Blackwell** has called for a new government approach to sharing data, including easing access for local authorities, a common approach to applications for central government data and managing public sector data as an asset.

<https://bit.ly/2kKgpgE>

## South-west England

**Exeter City Council** has launched a digital service for those who risk becoming homeless, allowing them to refer themselves online, contact caseworkers and upload documents securely, as well as for professionals to refer their clients.

<https://bit.ly/2m4wXQq>



# Welcome to Smartershire

## Shropshire and Norfolk demonstrate how rural authorities can transform themselves with technology

The most obvious difference between rural areas and urban ones is that the former are home to far fewer people per square mile. This almost inevitably means that locally-delivered public services cost more, both in travel costs and staff time spent in transit.

This gives rural local authorities some particularly good reasons to use technology for transformation, according to Tony Summers, chief executive of Socitm Advisory. Its clients include councils with substantial rural geographies, such as Essex, Lancashire, Wiltshire and Norfolk, with work including development of digital strategies, help in returning IT services from outsourcing and improving internal processes.

“It puts more of an emphasis on the use of technology to make the working lives of those in rural areas more effective, such as the ability

to work on the go and to be more mobile and agile,” says Summers of rural authorities, with longer staff travel distances meaning they can benefit more than urban ones by allowing mobile staff to work remotely. He recalls work at East Sussex County Council, where social workers were sometimes faced with two-hour round trips from clients’ homes to enter data at the office in Lewes: “Removing the need for an individual to have to travel backwards and forwards to record the output from a case hearing was a phenomenal saving.”

Some such councils near big cities can struggle to recruit and retain talented staff. Summers says that Essex’s County Hall in Chelmsford has to compete with the City of London, just 35 minutes away by train. But a bigger problem is that the rural areas that need remote access to systems struggle with mobile connectivity, he adds.



“It puts more of an emphasis on the use of technology to make the working lives of those in rural areas more effective.”

*Tony Summers,  
Socitm Advisory*

## Mapping Shropshire's social care

Some local authorities are taking creative approaches to these problems, including the use of data to understand how better to serve their rural populations or building their own long-range mobile networks. The last three years have seen Shropshire Council taking the former approach in transforming how it supports adult social care with technology.

Head of technology Andrew Boxall says this has meant the technology service acting like an IT supplier to Andy Begley, the council's executive director of adult services: "I've essentially been Andy's business relationship manager for the last three years," he says.

One successful and fairly simple project has involved building a brokerage service, a map-based system that improves the bidding process for adult social care work by displaying quotes entered by providers. The service uses Microsoft SharePoint and the council's geographical information system to generate a map with pins showing previous bids.

Using the map, relevant data is displayed when hovering on specific pins. This can expose that a care provider, asked to bid for 15 hours of at-home support for an older person, is quoting £14 an hour when previously they have quoted £12 an hour for similar work in the next street.

"We have a team of people who would normally be chasing 10 care packages, phoning round saying do you want to bid," Boxall says. The brokerage system reduces their administrative work, saving tens of hours each week and helps them negotiate down prices by giving them better information. "It enables us to make the right decision, really quickly," he says.

Most importantly, the system helps Shropshire organise care for older people faster, often allowing them to leave hospital earlier. "It's a benefit for the NHS, but it's one system," says Boxall. "We've got to help everyone where we can."

Shropshire is looking at further improvements, when it adds Microsoft Teams to the service.



**"We can't just pop down the road and help someone... it's better for us to help people earlier and help them stay out of the system."**

*Andrew Boxall,  
Shropshire Council*

Currently, personal data is sent to care providers by email: "It's not as collaborative as it should be," Boxall says. In future, the council could pass on the personal information through Microsoft Teams or a custom business PowerApp, as well as using PowerBI to analyse all the data.

Boxall's service has also helped adult social care to analyse skills shortages by geography, comparing high densities of need based on demographics with its capacity to meet those needs. "What that demonstrated is that we have a part of the county that is woefully underprovided to support older people at home," he says, namely

the mostly-rural south. Shropshire has its own housing development company, which is involved in discussions on building affordable housing in these areas that would help social care staff live there.

Through the area's NHS sustainability and transformation partnership, Shropshire Council has access to anonymised GP summary care record datasets to look at how to provide care closer to people's home. This helps predict how many people are likely to need health or social care services in the next few months. Boxall says that insights into future demand are particularly important in areas such as Shropshire: "We can't just pop down the road and help someone, it's a two and a half hour drive across the county. It's better for us to help people earlier and help them stay out of the system."

As part of helping people to stay in their own homes, Shropshire is working on internet of things (IoT) technologies. It started using Amazon Alexa smart speakers, then a further test with users in the town of Broseley revealed that smart watches were useful.

The council has since collaborated with Hitachi Solutions, who helped implement its customer relationship management system. More recently Shropshire has been looking at other IoT opportunities and has become involved in the European trial of ActiAge, following in the footsteps of Leeds City Council. "This next step in our IoT journey should complement the other projects being undertaken, it's become quite a complex web of work that all delivers different elements towards the same outcomes," Boxall says.

Overall, he says a key transformation lesson lies in helping people realise what technology can and cannot do. This is further complicated due to generally low levels of understanding of IT literacy. Managers often latch

on to buzzwords such as artificial intelligence or a particular type of software and say they need to buy that. Instead, Boxall says managers should explain what outcomes they are seeking, such as saving staff time. "I need to know what they are trying to achieve but quite often people don't say what they are trying to achieve, because they don't think we can actually achieve it," he says.

It is often possible to get significant results by making use of software the council already owns; for example Microsoft's Office 365 suite includes lots of little-known functionality. "People doing transformation should really get to grips with what they can already do," he sums up.

#### Norfolk's networking opportunity

Norfolk County Council is taking a different, but similarly transformative, set of approaches to using technology. "We're working to make Norfolk the best connected rural county in the UK and a smart county," says Kurt Frary, deputy head of information management and technology for the council. "We've started to look at the whole ecosystem." That means providing services that local businesses can use and involving them in developing technology.

Perhaps the biggest opportunity comes from the long-range wide area network (Lorawan) that the council is helping to establish in Norfolk and Suffolk. Lorawan allows low-bandwidth communications over longer distances than standard mobile networks, making it ideal for poorly-served rural areas. Local companies have started to explore the network's potential. Ben Burgess, an agricultural machinery supplier, is trialling solar-powered sensors that track moisture and temperature levels in fields to help farmers decide when to spray crops.

"It's changing the way we work with businesses, changing what we think is possible," says Frary, with organisations not needing to pay or ask permission to use the network.



"We're working to make Norfolk the best connected rural county in the UK and a smart county."

*Kurt Frary,  
Norfolk County Council*

The council can view and use the data itself and is considering how connected sensors could be used in transport and education, such as to monitor air quality near schools. The council recently started work to use Lorawan-linked sensors on the Norfolk Broads to direct boat-users to empty moorings and provide them with information on which bridges boats can clear, the latter by using sensors to monitor water levels.

Norfolk is also working to transform its internal processes including through a digital fulfilment hub undertaken with Canon, which will centralise the printing, sending and receiving of letters. The council currently spends £1.2 million annually on incoming and outgoing mail, and delivery and storage of documents before staff costs; the project aims to reduce this, although the amount will depend on how many people are happy to receive

letters as email attachments rather than on paper. "We have to be accessible to everyone," says Frary.

Aside from cost savings, the hub will make flexible and remote working easier, as correspondence will be available to staff wherever they are. The project should generate other efficiencies, including less time spent producing letters and better referencing due to QR codes being included on outgoing documents. The county's finance department has already started using the system, and Norfolk plans to move most other departments over to the system in the next 12 months.

Not all of Norfolk's transformative projects are large-scale, with one involving no more visible technology than a couple of large screens in the reception of County Hall. These use data from rail and bus companies to show departures, including those from Norwich railway station, a 10 minute walk away. This means that people know in advance if trains are delayed, as well as providing a better idea of public transport options, something of benefit in a small city serving a rural area where services are less frequent than in urban centres.

*Andrew Boxall and Andy Begley are speaking at Share Leeds on 15 October, and Kurt Frary will be attending.*

#### Read more

Socitm Advisory:  
<https://bit.ly/2TVct8K>

Activeage Project:  
<https://bit.ly/2kNFgAd>

More information on Lorawan:  
<https://bit.ly/2hUs4GO>

Lorawan coverage map:  
<https://bit.ly/2UIDHtB>

# How Barking and Dagenham uses data to transform

Urban local authorities have as strong reasons as rural ones to change how they work. A new Socitm report explores how one London borough has used data to achieve this



On several measures, Barking and Dagenham is more deprived than most of the rest of London. In the 2011 Census, among the capital's 33 local authority areas, only Havering had a lower proportion of residents with post-school level four qualifications and only Hackney and Islington had residents with higher levels of bad or very bad health. In 2010-12 the borough had the lowest age of death for women in the capital and only Tower Hamlets had a lower age of death for men.

But there is a great deal of variation within the borough. To gain insights into which areas of needed particular supporting, the council established a social progress index (SPI) for its wards. This provides an overall calculation and a 'rag' (red, amber or green) rating for dozens of factors under three main headings:

**1. Basic human needs:** nutrition and basic medical care (including premature mortality and use of foodbanks); water and sanitation; shelter (including homelessness and housing benefit take-up); and personal safety (including domestic abuse).

**2. Foundations of wellbeing:** access to basic knowledge (based mainly on pupil attainment data); access to information

and communications (including average broadband speed and registered library users); health and wellness (including obesity); and environmental quality (including air pollution).

**3. Opportunity:** personal rights (including household ownership and voter turn-out); personal freedom and choice (including teenage pregnancy and benefit claimants); inclusiveness (including racist hate crimes and volunteering); and access to advanced education (using data on post-school education).

The council used SPI to identify Heath ward, just north of the centre of Dagenham, as an area with particularly high deprivation, high unemployment and low income. In January 2019 the borough set up a community food club exclusively for residents of Heath ward, using the existing William Bellamy children's centre. This provides around £20 of groceries for a payment of £3.50, as well as advice on finance, health, employability and skills and access to a community garden.

The club has also helped identify residents with serious problems such as high debts, allowing the council to provide support.

It has since been expanded to cover five wards in the borough from two more sites.

Pye Nyunt, Barking and Dagenham's head of insight and innovation, said that timeliness is one of the issues faced by his team in using data analytics to "disrupt the way the council thinks," something included in his job description.

Speaking at a presentation hosted by innovation charity Nesta in March, he said that councils need to track how people's behaviours are changing, but currently do so largely with data from the 2011 census. "A lot happens in 10 years," said Nyunt, referring to the borough's rapid population growth. "If we're trying to design from data what those services should look like for our new population, it's quite difficult to do that when the best dataset you've got occurs every 10 years." The borough has built its own census-equivalent dataset, updated annually.

*This is an edited extract from a forthcoming Socitm report. It will be published at [socitm.net/publication-library](https://bit.ly/2kiLmYY)*

*Pye Nyunt's presentation at Nesta: <https://bit.ly/2kiLmYY>*



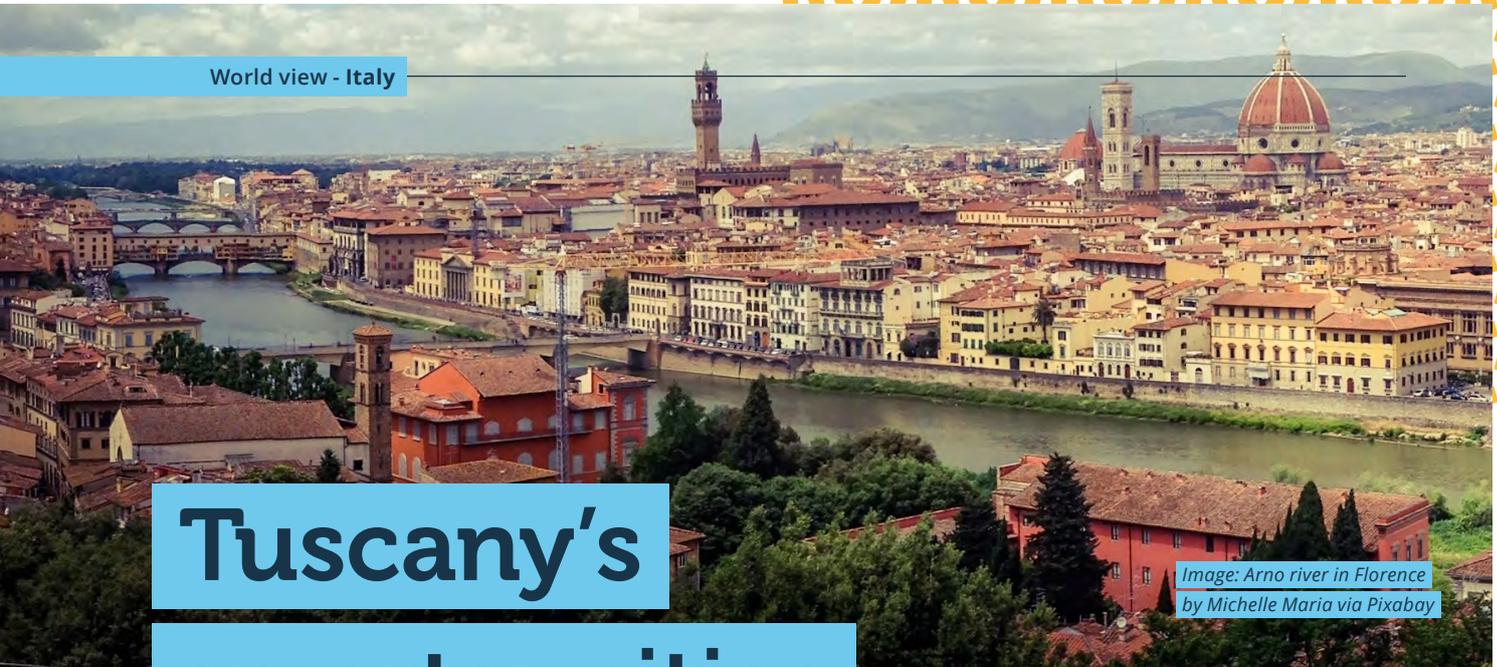


Image: Arno river in Florence  
by Michelle Maria via Pixabay

# Tuscany's smarter cities

## How Florence and Prato are joining up data and reporting to let public authorities and utility companies collaborate better

Florence is the capital of Tuscany and the region's most populous municipality, with 379,000 residents. Its local authority, Comune di Firenze (Municipality of Florence), has been developing e-government since the early 2000s, with work on open data since 2010 and smart cities from 2015.

It does so with a focus on sharing, including through its status alongside San Sebastián in Spain and Bristol in the UK as one of three 'lighthouse' cities in Replicate, an EU-funded project that is part of its Horizon 2020 Smart Cities and Communities work. This also involves Essen in Germany, Lausanne in Switzerland and Nilüfer in Turkey. "The main strategic asset of the city is sharing," says Gianluca Vannuccini, manager of the city's IT infrastructure development office.

Its current smart city work relies on sharing data with other organisations serving the area. The work is the result of an action plan for sharing data developed

from 2016 known as Firenze Digitale, with goals including the improvement of digital services, shared communication channels and shared digital infrastructure, such as identification and payments. Originally a three-year plan, this has since been extended to 2020.

The main tangible result will be a physical control room for smart city work, where the city council and other organisations can share information and planning. Most of the other organisations will be publicly-owned utility providers, including two that provide parking services – one indoors, the other outdoors. These organisations vary widely in size, with some serving 600 clients and some only working in Florence. "It's a nightmare to integrate all these bodies," says Vannuccini, but the control room aims to achieve this.

The city has contracted for the management of the control room, which it plans to open within the next year, and has already done the

data integration through a big data platform built by the University of Florence. This is based on thematic dashboards covering areas including energy, transport, resilience and policy making that visualise and pull together the data within the platform. "The most important user now is the mayor," says Vannuccini, who is very keen in notifying staff on occasions when sensor data seems to disappear from his dashboard.

When it is open, the control room should provide the city with better management and citizens with a better service, by allowing the organisations to work together on reported location-based problems such as with roads. "By being together in a room, we want to improve the speed of solving problems in the city," says Vannuccini, adding that such problems often require two, three or four organisations to work together.

To facilitate the project the city has merged two existing companies into a new publicly-owned organisation,

Firenze Smart: one set up in 2006 to provide digital services, a data centre and the management of a tourism card, which serves 22 of the 41 local authorities in Florence's metropolitan area, the other which runs physical city infrastructure including street and traffic lights as well as traffic supervision. "The idea was to build a smart city company managing assets for the city," says Vannuccini. The merger has taken place and the new company is defining its key strategic projects, which will include managing millions of euros of payments made to the authorities.

He says that the 22 councils are used to working with each other having done so for many years. They vary enormously in size, from some which serve a few thousand people to Florence itself, but all provide a similar range of services. "All of the smaller cities benefit from the outcome of the innovation."

Florence is also planning to reduce the number of apps it offers to just three: one for most services for residents, one for tourists and one covering transport and mobility. It currently has specific apps for groups including parents of schoolchildren, allowing them to make payments and to access information on school meals. Vannuccini says it may be difficult to merge these, "but that needs to be the trend".

He says that collaboration with San Sebastián and Bristol is useful, although the three cities have their differences: "The private sector involvement is much bigger in Bristol than in San Sebastián and Florence." Italian authorities tend to procure specific services rather than establish public-private partnerships such as Bristol is Open, the joint-venture between Bristol City Council and University of Bristol which runs an operations centre with similarities to that in Florence and counts NEC, InterDigital and Nokia among its industry partners.

Vannuccini adds that Florence was inspired by Bristol's work on public engagement, such as kitting out an apartment in a community centre with energy efficient equipment: "I would love to replicate that approach in Florence too."

Meanwhile, San Sebastián has worked on developing an open data platform, open source internet of things functionality and



"By being together in a room, we want to improve the speed of solving problems in the city."

*Gianluca Vannuccini,  
Municipality of Florence*

dashboards. He says that knowledge of other cities' experiences provides a basis for effective and tangible development, and that this is one of the most valuable elements of EU-funded projects.

#### **Persuading companies to share**

Prato City Council, a smaller urban municipality in Tuscany serving 195,000 people, started its smart city work three years ago. Like Florence, it is having to tackle the reality that many services are run by companies which are publicly-

owned but are run as businesses. "If they have some data that can be crucial for their business and for competition, they can be very reluctant to share it," says Paolo Boscolo, ICT infrastructure manager for the city. But for smart city work, "you need collaboration".

Prato has worked to build collaboration with the support of an association of utility providers in the city, aiming to convince them of the benefits of sharing information. It has also undertaken interviews with other smart city projects in the area, which fed into a plan that was then passed to the city's politicians to set goals. The result is a focus on tourism, sharing data between utility companies and mobility problems such as roadworks.

Unlike Florence, Prato is creating a virtual control room rather than a physical one. It plans for this to go live later this year, with Boscolo seeing better mobility and less pollution as key expectations for the new system.

Prato is using the same data platform as Florence and has been working closely with its fellow Tuscan city for more than five years. But Boscolo says relations with others among the 10 cities in the region – which include Lucca, Pisa and Siena – have been less positive.

However, they are all now working on a single system for parking in Tuscany's cities, to be shared by the companies that manage parking and to include a single app for citizens. The work will go ahead if and when Tuscany's regional government provides funding.

Prato is also working to link up organisations involved in the city's culture with a shared system for marketing events. The city will feature data from the system on its own website, and any of the city's cultural institutions will also be able to use its data.

**Italy's public operating system**

Both Vannuccini and Boscolo feel that collaboration between Italian authorities is improving. Vannuccini says that earlier in his two-decade career, municipalities did not collaborate as much as they do now with regions, or they worked in different ways. "Now, we are in a long period of collaboration," he says, adding that this has been helped by individual managers with a strong belief in such work.

At the national level, the last few years have seen a strong commitment to standardisation of key digital assets. Associated with the existing Agency for Digital Italy, the government set up a



Image: Prato skyline by Yakir via Pixabay



"If [utility companies] have some data that can be crucial for their business and for competition, they can be very reluctant to share it."

*Paolo Boscolo,  
Municipality of Prato*

Digital Transformation Team in September 2016 for two years, since extended to the end of 2019, to build an 'operating system' for the country's public administrations. The organisations have split the work, with standardisation and

certification on digital development of administrations handled by the Agency for Digital Italy and development guidelines and toolkits provided by the Team for Digital Transformation. Vannuccini says this has "helped enormously" by helping to spread information and run national infrastructure including digital identification and payments systems, gateways that allow organisations to build their own processes while taking advantage of work done centrally.

Prato's Boscolo adds that these systems are obligatory for local authorities to use, and there are other centrally-imposed requirements including a standard style for websites. A single citizen app for Italy is also under development, with a few cities experimenting with this. It has ended a period during which cities could do what they wanted, he adds: "In the last five years, the situation has completely changed," due to a different approach by central government.

The Digital Transformation Team is also insisting that public authorities with what it rates as poor and middling data centres close them, shifting to cloud services. Those with poorly-rated centres have to move

by the end of this year, with those rated as average by a later date. Only those rated as 'very good' are being allowed to retain their own centres.

Both say this forced move to the cloud is causing problems. "All our systems are currently designed to work in physical data centres," says Vannuccini. Authorities also lack people with the skills to manage cloud services and worry about the location and legal status of cloud-held personal data. There is also a financial problem, in that a lot of IT funding will have to shift from the capital expenditure used to build data centres to the operational expenditure required for cloud services. "Full cloud migration will be a really tough challenge for public administrations," he says.

**Read more**

Replicate project:  
<https://bit.ly/30g4TJc>

Firenze Digitale website:  
<https://bit.ly/2zbAIMU>

Digital Transformation Team:  
<https://bit.ly/2z6fURx>

Prato Smart City (in Italian):  
<https://bit.ly/30klkEv>

## Enabling place-based outcomes



### Engage and connect with citizens

Provide highly secure, inclusive, and deep citizen engagement



### Modernise the local government workspace

Empower more secure inter-departmental and multi-agency collaboration



### Enhanced decision making for better outcomes

Apply data analytics for actionable and predictive insight to improve services to citizens





## Alison Hughes

*Assistant director of the strategic ICT partnership for Bolton and Wigan councils, Inspiring Healthy Lifestyles and NHS Wigan CCG*

# Positive about working in partnership

How Alison Hughes' background in social care prepared her for running an ICT service shared by four organisations

### About Alison Hughes:

Alison has worked in local government for 33 years, previously for Liverpool City and St Helens councils in a range of non-technical business roles. Since 2013, she has held the post of assistant director of the strategic ICT partnership that provides ICT and digital services for Bolton and Wigan councils, Inspiring Healthy Lifestyles – the leisure trust that provides leisure and cultural services in Wigan, Selby and Cannock Chase – and most recently NHS Wigan CCG. Alison is passionate about the difference that technology can make in public service and to people's lives.

### Q. What are the main aspects of your work at Bolton and Wigan councils?

I developed and set up the Bolton and Wigan ICT Partnership in 2012, following a redesign of the ICT service at Wigan to respond to the demand for more flexibility and significant financial pressures. It incorporated a new private sector deal with Agilisys, which took on the delivery of a range of internally provided ICT services to provide the Partnership with access to a range of additional skills and resources to drive the ambitious modernisation programmes forward at pace.

I lead the contract on behalf of the public-sector and social enterprise partners as part of a shared client team. I also lead in-house applications support, ICT business partners and an ICT transformation change team for Wigan Council, to enable the delivery of ambitious customer, digital and business change strategies. I am proud that the contract with Agilisys and the shared service with the other partners has recently been extended for a further two years plus, which is a testament to how well this arrangement has supported the partners in delivering on their key outcomes.

I am privileged to have THE most amazing team of people around me, who are always all about 'making it happen', finding ways to shift obstacles and taking it up to the next level or two. I spend my day on a mix of strategic projects and developments, planning for the future, sprinkled with the usual day-to-day problem-solving that we heads of ICT have to deal with and which can suddenly derail us from our planned work at any point.

I think my background in delivering business change in adult social care and children's services has really helped me in my current role, as it gave me a strong focus on outcomes and a good understanding of these service areas, rather than just the technology. I also have a good knowledge of how to build relationships and bring people with me, which is a key focus for me every day. I think being able to have fun while you work is very important and I like to think the laughter I hear every day is a good sign that we have some strong multi-skilled teams working together effectively.

Our focus in the last few years, like lots of other people in similar roles, has been on implementing simple collaborative solutions to enable new working arrangements. These include Govroam and other shared wi-fi solutions to maximise the use of our public estate, providing tactical solutions using Microsoft SharePoint and Teams and developing and implementing strategic solutions such as shared virtual desktop infrastructure services. These enable us to collaborate with a range of new partners from both the public and third sectors. There has been a strong focus on developing the use of

assistive technology and using consumer technology to enable people to live independently in their own homes and allow frontline staff to work in a more agile way.

**“Being able to have fun while you work is very important and I like to think the laughter I hear every day is a good sign that we have some strong multi-skilled teams working together effectively.”**

**Q. Why did you stand to be a Socitm vice-president?**

I did not enter the ICT industry through a traditional route as my background is in a range of public service areas like adult social care and health, children’s services and project-based roles. As a result I have always relied on trusted bodies like Socitm to help me learn about current issues, trends and best practice.

I have played a key role in implementing technology in the workplace because I am interested in how this can help us deliver better outcomes for our citizens and I can bring others along with me, learning as I go. Socitm has always been a great source of support for me in my role and I have met some great people through its events, working with other partners. I have now gained more experience and would like to think that by working with some of the great people and partners who are members of this society I can use this experience and enthusiasm to help others in the same way.

**Q. How will you collaborate with others as a vice-president?**

My current job is ALL about collaboration, relationships and compromise, bringing together the priorities and requirements of four very different partners to leverage the strategic and financial benefits available from a shared service, whilst ensuring that each partner is able to retain their own identity and move at their own pace. I seek ways to ensure that we maximise the impact of the public pound to collaborate around key projects to benefit all partners, adopting single project management and implementation plans to reduce costs and this makes more things possible.

I am also increasingly working on a public sector place basis, involving NHS partners, community and voluntary groups and other public service providers, as we cannot solve some of the more ‘wicked’ integrated problems without working together effectively. Without

these solutions, public services will remain a complex, bureaucratic system for our citizens, who navigate this system trying their best to make sure that there is a consistent view of their data across all the agencies they interact with, without the ability to manage and own their own data.

I also work at a regional level, as both Bolton and Wigan councils are part of the Greater Manchester Combined Authority, which requires negotiation and strong relationships to improve the experience for our residents who engage with us across wider geographical boundaries.



**Q. What do you enjoy doing outside of work?**

I have loved horses since I was tiny. I never grew out of that “wanting a pony” phase and finally five years ago I bought my horse Roxy. She is nine years old now and we have lots of adventures, as well as doing a bit of dressage at the weekend which we are enthusiastic about rather than proficient.

I love baking cakes and biscuits, which my work colleagues are quite pleased about, and enjoy weekends away, especially at British seaside towns in the winter when they are all bleak and empty, doing a spot of walking and a lot of eating out.

I have been married to P for 37 years and we have one son Lee. I am a mentor for a few women at different stages in their tech journeys and I love helping them to grow in their roles. Nothing gives me greater pleasure than when they achieve new things in their careers.

# Socitm adds modernisation to what it stands for

Established for over 30 years, Socitm continues to challenge convention, inspire change and power progress. In an environment of constant change, the society has taken a holistic overview of the services it offers to ensure it continues to add best value to its members, both professionally and personally.

As a result of this detailed review, it has refreshed the services it offers and enlivened its look and feel. Socitm is confident that these revamps make it more representative than ever of its commitment to championing innovation in order to continually improve the services it provides to citizens.

Socitm has now become the **Society for Innovation, Technology and Modernisation**. Its vision is to be the preferred network for professionals who are shaping and delivering public services. It has recently published a brand-new website, one which it believes provides greater accessibility and more pertinent information in a more concise form.

The society has also launched new membership and partnership packages, which allow existing and new members and associates to build upon their service offering as part of a scalable journey ([details on page 10](#)).

According to Chantelle Denny, Socitm's operations and finance director, these exciting changes open a new chapter in the Socitm story while remaining true to the values the society has upheld throughout its history.

"Public sector service delivery is dependent on the ability to manage and thrive upon change," she says. "In today's disruptive climate our members are expected to adapt rapidly and find innovative solutions to new challenges all the time. How can we represent them adequately if we're sitting still?"



"As a member-led society, we understand the hurdles you need to overcome on the digital transformation journey."

*Chantelle Denny,  
Socitm*

"We need to demonstrate as much dynamism and proactivity as they do. Communication and collaboration lie at the heart of our society and we want our conversations with members to be ongoing. We need to grow and evolve all the time for this to happen effectively. That's

why we've revamped the look, feel and voice and started a new chapter in the Socitm story.

"Since our foundation, we have been committed to supporting our members and partners in their drive to reform public sector services through initiative, innovation and personal insight. Our new packages, and the services we provide underline and future-proof this pledge," she adds.

In addition to urging Socitm members and partners to explore the new website, Chantelle is keen for people to get in touch with any enquiries and would be pleased to receive feedback about any aspect of Socitm operations.

"Managing expectations, wrestling austerity, mitigating risk and effecting organisational culture change are among the many challenges faced by digital leaders in the public sector. As a member-led society, we understand the hurdles you need to overcome on the digital transformation journey. This knowledge and empathy allow us to support you better by ensuring we meet your specific needs," she says.

"As a team, we pride ourselves on building personal relationships with members and partners and we'd love to hear from you so please call us, drop us a line by email or speak to us at one of our events at any time."

**Contact Socitm:**  
01604 709456  
[hello@socitm.net](mailto:hello@socitm.net)  
[socitm.net/contact](https://socitm.net/contact)

# Learning to share at Socitm's events



## Events manager Poppy Whelan provides five reasons to attend the society's national conferences

Our national and local events bring our network of members and partners together. They strengthen relationships, inspire innovation and provide a platform for sharing best practice. High-calibre speakers and interactive workshops offer delegates unique insights and knowledge of specific value to our sector. But why should you attend? More specifically, why should you grant your team the time and resources to come to one of our Share National conferences?

A few years ago, I was chatting with a friend of mine who works in market research and he turned to me and asked me: "Why do people ever attend conferences?" Even as an events manager, it made me pause to think. When I first began my career, I wasn't taught the fundamental reasons why people attend. I learnt this over time and – having joined Socitm earlier this year – I am still learning.

At our Share National events, I've witnessed the social and educational benefits to attendees, speakers and partners. Themed around our key policy areas, no two events are alike. Attending is an investment that pays dividends for delegates and organisations. It also helps to improve service delivery right across the public sector.

These are my personal top five reasons why people attend our Share National events:

### 1. To network

Share National brings together people from all different geographical areas who share a commitment to improving outcomes for service users. As you build your professional network, Share National events are a good place for catching up with those you haven't connected with in a while.

### 2. To expand your knowledge and find solutions to problems

You will hear about new techniques, new technology and new innovations from thought leaders of whom you may not have previously been aware. Share National gives you the opportunity to talk to people about these resources and insights, to ask questions and join workshops.

### 3. To present your ideas and work to others

One of the more obvious reasons for attending Share National is to present your work. Presenting will make you more confident about the work that you do, and the

feedback and questions you receive can provide you with valuable new insights and perspectives.

### 4. For people to meet you

Share National is also a good way for people to meet you. Regardless of whether you are a chief information officer or part of our Leadership Academy cohort and presenting for the first time, you can make a connection with someone who could dramatically change your professional career. This is especially important when you are looking for a collaborator, problem-solver, mentor or someone you can mentor yourself.

### 5. Learn beyond your immediate specialism

Share National events have many sessions for professional development and career advice. Events are united by a single broad topic, but they have many different sub-fields of interest. This is a real bonus when so many projects are multidisciplinary.

In short, attendance at Share National events dramatically enhances both your professional and personal development, as well as providing you with knowledge and tools that cannot be taught in-house or online. The focused nature of each event allows you to come away with the confidence to take risks and apply best practice examples. We're still finalising our Share National programme for 2020 and we'll keep you up to date as more details are confirmed. I can't wait to welcome you there.

## Major Cities event uncovers change in city of masks

Socitm believes the way the world works is changing. It's no longer enough to look for local solutions to domestic challenges. Disruption, development and rapid technological evolution mean the UK public sector needs to share best practice internationally to achieve improved outcomes for people.

We have always been of the view that global collaboration is essential if we are to best represent our members in times of change. It is for this reason that we value our world-wide partners highly, endeavouring to build stronger relationships and assume a greater presence at overseas events.

Earlier this year, Socitm attended the annual conference of Major Cities of Europe (MCE) in Venice. This was hosted and organised with the Municipality of Venice, the Cà Foscari University and Venice Information Technology and Systems (Venis), the company that runs the city council's computing and telecoms.

Held at the Cà Foscari Economic Campus, the overarching theme of the conference was 'Channelling

change, digital cities in a changing world: explore more, discover more, create more'. Joined by nearly 350 delegates from 20 countries, Socitm's research and policy director Martin Ferguson, leadership development and research director Nadira Hussain and incoming president Sandra Taylor shared their personal experiences and those of our members with an audience passionate about improving public sector service delivery in their home countries.

Sandra and Nadira gave a well-received presentation about Socitm's unfolding leadership, diversity and skills programme. This included some of the many glowing testimonials our Leadership Academy alumni have provided.

Nadira also chaired a panel discussion titled 'Digital transformation: the leadership paradox'. This focused on how the adoption of good digital government practice can be grown and improved. The session also asked participants to consider the nature of true digital leadership and the qualities the sector needs

to develop in those who will fulfil leadership roles in future. Martin gave an enthusiastic and thought-provoking contribution, drawing upon UK experience, to a session entitled 'The moral maze – the role of cities in avoiding a digital dystopia'.

Reflecting upon an engaging and enlightening programme, Martin said: "The conference was a unique opportunity to interact and exchange directly with other European municipalities in a non-commercial environment."

"We were able to discuss the real challenges that municipalities currently face. It increased our understanding of how to involve citizens in designing and achieving better outcomes and how to use data and information more effectively, hearing the truth, not the spin. Experiences like this are integral to ensuring our members benefit from global insight and best practice, ensuring the UK remains at the fore in promoting and facilitating innovative change," he concluded.

*Major Cities of Europe:*  
[www.majorcities.eu](http://www.majorcities.eu)

# Interview: Why Nadira Hussain wants members to learn to lead

The days are getting shorter and autumn brings with it a misty chill in the morning air. But against this backdrop of a season passing, Nadira Hussain, Socitm's director of leadership and development, remains relentlessly enthusiastic. September marked the first anniversary of her current role and she is more passionate than ever about empowering people to affect real change in the public sector.

Having been the head of ICT for the London boroughs of Tower Hamlets and then Enfield, Nadira is well-versed in the day-to-day challenges facing public-sector ICT professionals. Serving as Socitm President in 2015-16 gave her insight into the value of digital responsiveness, adoption and practice with a focus on leadership, workforce development and the political dimension.

Her commitment to bringing the government's political agenda closer to citizens is the cornerstone of Socitm's Leadership Academy. She believes, vehemently, that the cultural change necessary to facilitate this is dependent upon extending and championing the skills and potential of our sector's upcoming influencers.

"The unbiased and fair dissemination of information and service accessibility are the pivotal goals for our members. These aren't defined merely by the parameters of disruptive technology. Instead, they rely upon people with the vision and foresight to lead," she explains. "Throughout my career, I've worked with some remarkable people. Those who have been bold enough to take

risks and challenge convention in the pursuit of cultural change. Invariably, these individuals are empathetic and have the affinity and comprehension to appreciate that their ability to effect lasting change is reliant upon building a resilient team with a positive legacy to be passed on.



"The pivotal goals for our members... rely upon people with the vision and foresight to lead."

*Nadira Hussain,  
Socitm*

"Our Leadership Academy development programmes are all about harnessing and nurturing individual talent and celebrating the diverse attributes and experience that make effective and impactful leaders. Each of our programmes, developed in partnership with QA Training, helps build delegate's confidence and centres on collaborating and sharing experiences," she says.

Nadira is fresh from attending Socitm's London and South local meeting where the academy's latest Top Talent programme cohorts delivered their group presentation. It is evident from her infectious enthusiasm that the occasion was a success.

"The Top Talent presentations were incredible. They exceeded my expectations and surpassed even my hopes for what the academy can achieve. It was so inspiring to see how far the group had progressed with their individual projects. To have the pleasure of watching people – some of whom have never given a presentation before – delivering their findings so confidently and with such fervour was just so uplifting."

"As the academy develops and we continue to receive such positive feedback from our alumni, I feel ever-increasing optimism for our sector and for the people who are reliant upon our services. We hear so much about 'digital transformation', as if the concept is possible in isolation of people. What the Leadership Academy is doing is challenging that notion by equipping people with the confidence to manage and thrive upon change.

"Through our Alumni and Development programme, we're ensuring that a culture of positivity and proactivity is a lasting and impactful one," she says. "We have so many exciting developments in the pipeline for the academy in 2020. I can't wait to share them. This has been a fantastic year. I have no doubt the next 12 months will be – if possible – even better."

# Meet the President's team

Socitm's president, immediate past president and three vice-presidents now have specific responsibilities, based on areas members have identified as important



## Sandra Taylor

### Socitm President

*Head of digital and ICT services,  
Dudley Council*

Policy theme:  
Leadership, diversity and skills

Sandra has worked in ICT for Dudley Council for 27 years, where she is accountable for the realisation of business strategies and outcomes through the deployment and delivery of appropriate and relevant digital services.

She has led in modernising and optimising ICT infrastructures, as well as delivering digitally enabled transformation programmes to implement new organisational delivery models.

Email: [sandra.taylor@socitm.net](mailto:sandra.taylor@socitm.net)  
[in Sandra Taylor](#)



## Nicola Graham

*Socitm Immediate Past President  
Head of ICT, Aberdeenshire Council*

Policy theme: Ethical use of emerging technology and data

Email: [nicola.graham@socitm.net](mailto:nicola.graham@socitm.net)  
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## Sam Smith

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# Events diary

The map shows upcoming events and Socitm regional meetings – fantastic networking and learning opportunities that form one part of the Socitm membership package.

Booking and further information:  
[socitm.net/events](https://socitm.net/events)





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