



Report

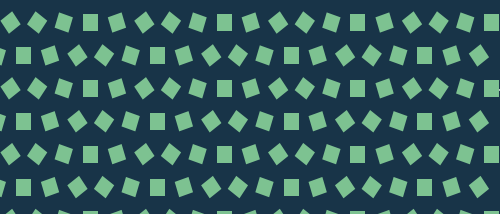
Share Leeds conference, 15 October 2019

November 2019



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Introduction

Socitm's Share Leeds event took place within the city's Met Hotel, a grand brick building dating from 1899. A few hundred yards to the north stands an even grander expression of Victorian civic pride: Leeds Town Hall, opened in 1858 to house the council, courts, police, prison cells, concerts, banquets and balls, meetings and the library. The building, with its immense clock tower, looks like the seat of government of a small country rather than a city.

But Leeds has much newer buildings as well, including those that line the nearby north bank of the Aire river. Meanwhile Channel 4 is in the process of revamping the Majestic building around the corner from the Hotel Metropole on City Square as its new headquarters, which is currently covered by a huge banner reading "Didn't think Channel 4 knew there was life outside the M25".

Leeds City Council was recognised as digital council of the year at the 2019 Digital Leaders 100 awards. It received special recognition for its work in improving digital tools and technology as well as increasing digital inclusion in the city.

There are a number of programmes ongoing across the city that are using digital tools and technology to improve the outcomes for everyone. For example, *Techmums* clubs are helping women into employment and the council's *Careview* app is helping to identify residents in need of support.

These are just two examples of how the city council rises to the challenge described by our key policy area: service design and transformation.

Led by Huw McKee and one of five such critical strategies, service design and transformation sets out Socitm's commitment to transform places through a dynamic, digital economy enabled by contemporary, people-centric service design.

Leeds City Council's future focused, digitally aware leadership puts co-designed services at the heart of its transformation journey. For this reason, the city was the ideal location for a thought-provoking and collaborative conference where improving outcomes for citizens was key.



Shropshire scrutinises data to save Dave

Shropshire Council's head of technology Andrew Boxall and Andy Begley, executive director of adult social care, housing and public health, opened the event with a keynote presentation on the transformation of the county's IT service over the last two years.

The work has included saving £1 million from the budget, introducing new call centre, customer relationship management and enterprise resource planning software, and dealing with an audit that had rated IT as a strategic risk for the organisation. "I felt like I was going to climb Kilimanjaro," said Boxall, replacing a picture of the Wrekin – a 400-metre high hill a few miles from the council's headquarters in Shrewsbury – with an image of the 5,900-metre high mountain in Tanzania.

A key part of Boxall's work has involved providing new systems for Begley, who campaigns on "flipping adult social care" so people see it as one of the biggest economic drivers in the UK rather than a drain on the economy. Begley said that the sector has around 120,000 vacancies at any one time: "Boris Johnson talks about fixing social care as if it was some sort of broken car. I think really the car needs petrol going into the engine to make it work."

Among his work to change adult social care, Begley wanted to visualise data to help people interact with the service more effectively. With funding from the Local Government Association, the council installed five projectors to display data in a 360-degree environment called 'the Bridge', providing a powerful way for politicians and managers to engage. Boxall said this has meant improving the council's use of geospatial data and Microsoft PowerBI to drive the system.

Begley added that it is important not to get swamped by vast amounts of data but instead look for a few pieces of information that provide a clear message. One example is 'finding Dave', someone who is aged 85 or above and lives alone in a thermally-inefficient house. 'Daves' have an 80% chance of visiting accident and emergency over the next 12 months with a urinary tract

infection, as they often only heat one room, leading to them drink too little. An intervention such as a home visit by the local fire service can cut this risk to 20%, saving the public sector money: "By the way, you might save Dave's life," Begley added. The council already holds the three datasets, with inefficient houses lit up on a thermal image of the county taken on a cold night.

Boxall said his role is akin to a business relationship manager for directors, including Begley, as well as working to build the council's IT literacy. The latter still has a way to go – he recently helped one team reduce its printing by showing them how to combine PDFs digitally. Previously, they had printed all the pages of the PDFs in question then scanned them.

More generally he said that too many people talk about using artificial intelligence or other fashionable technologies without appreciating either the cost, or the fact that more basic steps – such as moving key information from paper to digital systems – would be required first. "They shoot for the moon, but don't understand that what they are asking for is unrealistic," he said.

Boxall added that a lot can be achieved with software the council already licences, such as Microsoft's PowerBI and SharePoint. An example is Shropshire's development of an adult social care brokerage solution that helps staff spend less time on administration and negotiate better prices by mapping previous quotes for work (detailed by Boxall in an interview with *In Our View* – see 'Read more' link).

"The impact [the social care brokerage system] had on the local market was profound... We started to make much more informed commissioning decisions and purchasing decisions."

Andy Begley, executive director of adult social care, housing and public health, Shropshire Council

"The impact that had on the local market was profound," Begley said. For example, when commissioning staff can see that a provider is already serving people nearby, they can challenge the supplier's attempt to add a premium for serving a rural location. "They go away and rethink the price – that's a simple little example. We completely changed the way we interact with the market, and the way the market reacted to us," he said. "We started to make much more informed commissioning decisions and purchasing decisions based on that information."

The council wants to extend the system to the commissioning of residential and nursing care, and open it for public use.

Read more:

'Welcome to Smartershire', p12, *In Our View* autumn 2019: <http://bit.ly/2OxDeUj>

Focus on culture change says Westminster boss

Technology services should focus on challenging their organisations and changing culture rather than just handing out hardware, the chief executive of Westminster City Council told Share Leeds.

Stuart Love took the post in February 2018, after having run the city management and communities department for three years. He had worked for Westminster earlier in his career, before spending a decade working on the Isle of Wight and Southampton. "In order to deliver world-class services, I firmly believe that the council has to be a world-class employer," he said. "I came back

to an organisation that had stagnated, an organisation that was arrogant, frankly, an organisation that felt that it had nothing to learn from anywhere else."

Describing the inner-London borough as a 'tale of two cities', Love described the widespread disparity between people's outcomes in its wealthiest and most deprived areas. A study in 2017 by Trust for London and The New Policy Institute found that Westminster has the third-highest pay inequality of the 32 London boroughs. It also has the second-least affordable private rent for low earners in London, behind only Kensington and Chelsea. Westminster has one of the largest disparities in life expectancy in the UK and health inequality is remarkable in its vastness.

Underlining the need to put citizen experience at the heart of ensuring services can enable all people in Westminster to be well, stay well and live well, Love explains the importance of organisational culture change.

He calls his programme to restore vision and innovation 'the Westminster way', and said that IT has a significant role to play. The council brought forward the introduction of new devices after he tried using a Microsoft Surface Pro laptop and decided that these should be issued widely as previous council-issued devices were clunky and heavy. The council has also given everyone access to the full range of tools in Office 365 and told them to use these as they wish, although he said the council could do more to educate people on how to take advantage of them.

Love added that technology departments need to do more, including a shift from long-term projects that aim for perfection to a more iterative process that benefits from learning from mistakes. He said the role of a local government chief information officer "has to be about challenge, innovation and helping to drive the organisation forward – it's not about rolling out devices".

He concluded: "I want you to innovate. I want you to help us change as an organisation. That change is as much about culture as it is about technology."

In response to a question from Socitm's director of policy and research Martin Ferguson on what the council has done to instil curiosity, Love replied:

"I didn't have to instil that in our staff as it was already there. We just have to find ways of making sure we make the most of that." Staff had shared his view that the organisation had lost ambition, so supporting its return has involved "pushing at an open door," he said.

"We're not there yet in terms of properly connecting technology to culture change," Love added. "That's why I've said things about the challenges we still face. But by and large, our staff are up for this."

Top Talent recommends Leeds rewards scheme

The digital economy has changed the way the world works and this has triggered a change in the style of leadership required in both the public and private sector. Yesterday's leaders often assumed the role of hero: leading their troops with military precision from a position of command and control.

This top-down approach may have passed for efficiency in an industrial age, digital leadership is about communication, collaboration and encouraging and supporting innovation.

Socitm's Leadership Academy delivers a series of programmes uniquely designed to harness, develop and promote talent within the public sector. As with all the academy's programmes, Top Talent invests in individuals, empowering them and the public sector to confidently take risks and challenge convention imaginatively in a volatile climate of constant change.

As part of the four-day programme, developed in partnership with Socitm's training partner QA, the cohort work together creatively to devise dynamic solutions to real-life challenges set by a third-party. The programme concludes with a presentation at a Share National conference.

Share Leeds played host to the academy's most recent Top Talent graduates' presentation: their response to a challenge set, aptly, by Leeds City Council.

Dylan Roberts, the council's chief digital and information officer pledged to listen to their recommendations for a citizen reward scheme. "We will definitely be progressing it to our leadership team," he said, adding that he would be interested in collaborating with other authorities on such a scheme.

The recommendation was based on research carried out by a 14-strong cohort of the Top Talent programme, some of whom presented their findings at Share Leeds. Dave Elkington, head of customer and digital services at Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council, said participants had used 'blue sky' thinking, focus groups and research on private and public sector reward schemes to come to their conclusions.

They found that 77% of Leeds councillors supported the idea of a rewards scheme, with 66% believing the council should run it in-house. However, the city's digital information team believed it would make more sense to involve a third party, noting that those run by councils, including Belfast, Bradford and Cambridgeshire, all have a technology partner.

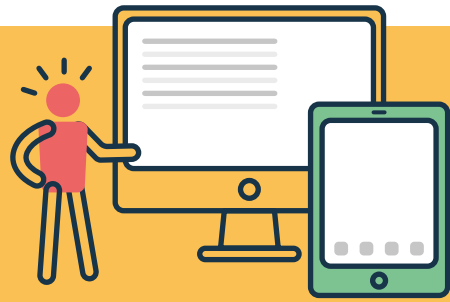
Dave Forshaw, head of design at Liverpool City Council, added that there was strong evidence of the benefits of rewards schemes, including those generated from volunteering in communities. These include development of community spirit, improved mental health and wellbeing for participants and money being retained within the local economy. "This is something Leeds City Council should consider and develop further," he said.

Top Talent helps participants improve their leadership skills by getting them to consider and recommend action on a real issue for local government IT.

"[A citizen reward scheme] is something Leeds City Council should consider and develop further."

Dave Forshaw, head of design,
Liverpool City Council

How Leeds could reach staff left to their own devices



Service design and transformation is dependent both on culture change and increased digital literacy not just within communities but among local authority employees.

Today, three-quarters of the 5,000 employees of Leeds City Council who do not have user accounts are online with their own devices, meaning the council could provide them with information digitally.

Research by the council found that 37% of these staff would use their own devices to connect to the council, 21% would not and 42% were not sure or did not answer. Those surveyed said they would most interested in hearing about job and training opportunities, followed by

updates about their service area and messages from their manager. Only 5% were interested in general updates from senior leaders, however.

Jo Miklo, head of digital efficiencies for Leeds City Council, said that of all 17,000 staff, 19% are not digitally literate. The council provides general training for employees in basic skills including buying online. Similarly, it has a project to raise the digital awareness of decision-makers: "Digital should be as much a part of a manager's job as HR and finance," she said.

Read more:

Socitm Top Talent: <http://bit.ly/2OxhCCR>;

University of Cambridge video on Cambridgeshire time credits scheme: <http://bit.ly/3359iIS>

In brief

Worcestershire uses low-code for mass digitisation

Worcestershire County Council has digitised more than 75 services through use of a standardised low-code development process, chief data officer Neill Crump told Share Leeds. Having set an aim in 2014 of '100% of services online', the council believes it has saved more than £1.7 million through the digitisation of processes including blue badge applications and human resources forms. Crump said the council spends an average of £9,000 for each digitisation, which it

typically delivers in six weeks. The low-code process uses drag and drop visual programming that allows rapid prototyping, followed by changes based on feedback.

techUK hosts children's services workshop

A lack of common language across public services can frustrate sharing data on children, techUK's head of local public services Georgina Maratheftis told the event. This was among the challenges highlighted by a recent workshop, hosted by the trade body, for practitioners of children's services and suppliers. The workshop also highlighted the importance of starting with the need for collaboration in design and the benefit of 'safe spaces', such as off-site meetings, for innovation. Maratheftis said techUK is keen to do

more to bring together innovative suppliers and public sector organisations, and is running a survey for the latter on how they make procurement decisions.

Read more:

Survey: <http://bit.ly/2KE4XNj>

Look for failures from timing, people and UX says Capita head

Most digital projects fail because of problems in at least one of three areas – timing, people and user experience – Grainne Watson of Capita told the event. The outsourcer's head of product category, digital and innovation said that successful projects should have well-defined outcomes; start small even if they involve big thinking; be data-informed, rather than data-driven; and inform and encourage people.

Socitm offers free service assessment tool

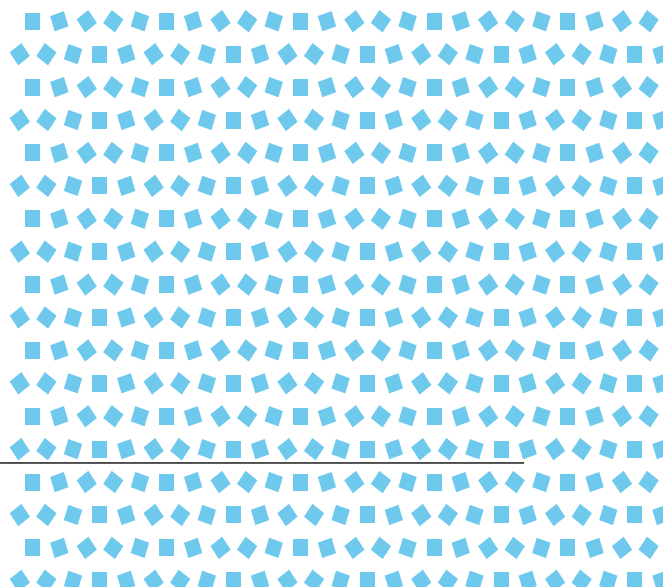
Socitm members can make free online use of an assessment tool developed with the Welsh Government and Coventry City Council, which assesses nine aspects of service design, the event heard. Socitm Advisory's client services director Simon Norbury said the tool covers customer experience, digital skills and people, service design, methodologies and standards, delivering digital, data and analytics, digital platform and technology, with participants choosing statements reflecting one of five levels for each aspect. He said that some local authorities using the assessment have found significant differences between IT services' self-assessments and the views of end-users. As well as a free self-assessment, Socitm Advisory offers paid-for workshops run by one of its consultants to discuss findings.

Learn more:

For further information, email:
simon.norbury@socitm.net

Taking 365 to Parliament's 30 bars

Mark Reynolds, Hable founder, says: "A successful technology project requires you to get people on board by inspiring them to embrace and giving them the confidence to learn new things." This is exactly what the Microsoft partner undertook at Parliament. Hable began working with Parliamentary Digital Service (PDS) in 2015, when they were planning a national refresh of laptops for all MP's and the House of Lords. Alongside the hardware rollout was a complex Office 365 project. Hable provided consultancy services, to support the project team with their Office 365 strategy and planning. We then produced some eye-catching comms collateral in the form of beer mats left in Parliament bars. This innovative move encouraged people to sign-up to training helping to initiate the cultural change necessary to roll-out digital transformation.



Conclusion

With nearly 150 delegates in attendance, Share Leeds was over-subscribed. Full of relevant and thought-provoking content, the event highlighted how pivotal service design and transformation remain to Socitm members.

It has been more than seven years since the coalition government announced 'Digital by Default' as a core component of its digital strategy. However, the provision of digital services that are 'so straightforward and convenient that all those who can use them will chose to do so while those who can't are not excluded' remains enormously challenging.

Contemporary uncertainty and ongoing financial constraint mean the society's members are constantly searching for innovative and efficient ways to achieve simplicity and accessibility against an unpredictable backdrop.

In placing collaboration and sharing at the heart of all it does, Socitm's Share National events provide a forum from which its members can push forward more effectively.



About this report

Author

SA Mathieson - Writer and analyst

Editor

Marianne Lansley - Communications manager

Designers

Magdalena Werner - Senior creative designer

Benjamin Hughes - Graphic designer

Have your say

We always welcome feedback and discussion on the contents of our publications.

Martin Ferguson

Director of research and policy
martin.ferguson@socitm.net

Nadira Hussain

Director of leadership development and research
nadira.hussain@socitm.net

Get in touch

Website: www.socitm.net

Email: inform@socitm.net

Tel: 01604 709456



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