

# Planting the flag - a new local normal

**The response of local government to the COVID-19 pandemic has been nothing short of astonishing - focusing on the things that really matter locally, adapting to new, virtual ways of working, engaging communities, adopting a risk and trust-based approach to simplifying processes, enabling residents and businesses to access the services they need, maintaining and even increasing productivity, sharing solutions ...**

Emerging from the crisis are a new sense of purpose, a revived community spirit, a digital culture amongst both organisations and citizens, an increased cadence of decision-making and rapid realisation of outcomes that hitherto had proved elusive. 'Reset, reform and renew' are starting to enter the conversation, as opposed to backtracking to how things were. How can local government sustain the benefits from the new ways of working and supporting its communities in the many diverse places up and down the country? And, how can they avoid the very real risk of being forced into serving Section 114 notices en masse?

The Local Digital team in the UK Government's Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) has requested Socitm's input to its plans to brief the Local Government Minister about the positive future path for local government post COVID-19.

This document brings together the ideas and experience from members of Socitm and its partner associations (LOLA and MCE) around the world. It is work in progress but provides a good snapshot of our current thinking.



Socitm: [www.socitm.net](http://www.socitm.net) the professional network for leaders engaged in the innovation and modernisation of public services throughout the UK.



LOLA: [www.lola-ict.org](http://www.lola-ict.org) Linked Organisation of Local Authority ICT Societies - a non-profit organisation of international ICT professional associations in Australia, Belgium, Canada, Netherlands, New Zealand, Sweden, UK and USA.



MCE: [www.majorcities.eu](http://www.majorcities.eu) Major Cities of Europe - ICT Users Group is composed of over 500 leading experts of innovation from municipalities across Europe.



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## Focus:

People

Place

Productivity

## Tasks:

Reset

Reform

Renew

## Principles:

Simplify

Standardise

Share

Sustain

### Distributed, place-based leadership and delivery

- › One direction across place
- › Meaningful for people
- › Empathy for people's lives
- › Shared data and digital technology
- › Better insights and outcomes
- › Digital literacy
- › Self sustainability

*e.g. Leeds, Greater Manchester, West Midlands, Tel Aviv*

### Democratic engagement and renewal

- › Digital communications and engagement
- › Open and transparent
- › Accessible and equitable
- › Virtual meetings, voting, public engagement

*e.g. Lyon, Norfolk, Waltham Forest, Welwyn-Hatfield*

### Service design

- › Broker local service delivery ecosystems
- › Co-create/co-design/co-produce across place
- › Collaborate with suppliers and other agencies
- › Harness community assets
- › Agile, low code, minimum viable product, iterate
- › Employ dynamic purchasing
- › Reform services especially relational
- › Rethink nature of services e.g. care homes vs care in the community, cash payments
- › Measure outcomes not inputs

*e.g. Rennie Grove hospice at home; Surrey Heath, Camden, Bucks, Aduar & Worthing, Brighton & Hove, Hackney, Issy-les-Moulineaux, Vienna*

### Workstyles

- › Health and wellbeing mindset
- › Reduce the commute - 4 days home, 1 day office
- › Balance work - family - fitness
- › Spectrum of paid <-> volunteer roles
- › Organic and collaborative
- › Add value not inputs
- › Digital and data skills

*e.g. Liverpool, Dudley*

### Virtual infrastructure

- › Networks
- › Applications - common, cross-sectoral instances and licensing
- › Device provisioning and management
- › Identity verification and eligibility checks
- › Open standards and application programming interfaces
- › Cyber sustainable
- › Anytime, anyplace, anywhere, anyone - 100% high speed connectivity

*e.g. Norfolk, Leeds*

### Data insights

- › Ethical, transparent, open standards
- › Value data especially geospatial
- › Combine across place/partners/third sector
- › Predictive analytical capability
- › Intelligence and insights
- › Balance privacy and public
- › Consumer tools
- › City/place-based capability

*e.g. Barking & Dagenham, Camden and Shropshire*

### Asset rationalisation

- › Co-location
- › Flexible building spaces
- › Repurpose buildings
- › Mixed organic developments
- › Low-carbon built environment

*e.g. Greater Manchester community hubs, Barking & Dagenham, Coventry City Council, Camden, Croydon, Hammersmith & Fulham, Tower Hamlets and Westminster*

### Living spaces

- › Respect for nature
- › Custodians and participants
- › Value of green space - clean air and water, trees, wildlife
- › Sustainable resource lifecycles and waste management
- › Green technologies - drones, electric/hydrogen vehicles, local energy grids

*e.g. City of London (late 19th century), Amsterdam*

