



Office of the
Deputy Prime Minister

Creating sustainable communities

Two Years On: realising the benefits from our investment in e-government

The national strategy for local e-government

www.localegov.gov.uk



CabinetOffice





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The national strategy for
local e-government

March 2005

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Foreword

We have always been clear that e-government is not an end in itself. It is a means to help drive the local policy objectives of mainstream services, release efficiency gains and achieve tangible improvements in terms of the shared priorities agreed between central and local government.

Since publication of the National Strategy in November 2002, we have seen much progress. We have published our priority outcomes for local e-government based around the shared priorities for local government, developed 22 National Projects, established a new support & capacity function with the IDeA, released £0.75 million to every Local Authority in capital grant, supported the work of over 100 Partnerships and launched our e-Innovations Fund. To support and raise awareness about this work, we have established two dedicated web sites dealing with the programme (www.localegov.gov.uk) and the roll out of the National Projects (www.localegovnp.org). In addition, our work also supports the Home & Community franchise on the Directgov portal (www.direct.gov.uk).

This document describes the considerable progress that has been made in the twelve months since the National Strategy First Year Report 'One Year On' was published. What has emerged is an increasingly sophisticated and complex programme of work designed to support Local Authorities during the delivery stage of their local e-government investment. Since last year, we have also developed our plans for ensuring that this investment brings about clear and sustainable benefits that will continue to have resonance beyond 2005 by addressing the role of e-government as part of the ongoing local government strategy, including the CPA process and the efficiency agenda.

Moving into the final year of the local e-government programme, it is time to consider the contribution of our investment to the big picture. Whilst Councils' IEG4 statements show that they remain on course for e-enabling all services by December 2005, our investment programme is not simply about meeting this target. If local e-government is to make a genuine and lasting contribution to the modernisation of public services, then the next twelve months must see us driving through the benefits of technology to help build the strong, vibrant and responsive local Councils that our communities deserve.

We are grateful for the support provided by the IDeA, SOCITM, SOLACE and others in supporting the strategy.



Phil Hope

Phil Hope MP
Minister for Local e-Government



Paul Bettison

Cllr Paul Bettison
e-Champion Local Government
Association

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Two years on from the publication of the National Strategy for Local e-Government, the ODPM has made significant progress towards its SR2002 Public Service Agreement target of:

“assisting local government to achieve 100% capability in electronic delivery of priority services by 2005, in ways that customers will use”.

e-Government is of course part of a bigger picture and one element of a partnership between local and central government to improve public services. Over the last year in particular, there have been significant developments in other elements of the partnership that must serve to provide a focus for the positioning of outputs from the local e-government programme. These include:

- the SR2004 Public Service Agreement requires the ODPM to *“improve the effectiveness and efficiency of local government in leading and delivering services to all communities”* by 2008. The results of the 2004 Spending Review in July 2004 incorporated a target for efficiency gains in local government of 2.5% per annum, to deliver at least £6.45 billion by 2007/08. It is a further requirement that at least half of this is cashable;
- in June 2004, the ODPM published the leaflet ‘The future of local government’¹ to help stimulate the debate about a vision for local government. This was followed at the end of July with ‘The future of local government: Developing a 10-year vision’² which contributes our ideas to the debate. At its heart is a vision of central and local Government working together to deliver better outcomes for people and places, including real challenges for local government in terms of political and managerial leadership, improving citizen engagement and participation and improving service delivery; and
- the framework for the Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) from 2005 will be markedly different from when it was first introduced in 2002. Whilst there will still be distinct service and corporate assessments, there will be a much greater emphasis on measuring authorities’ performance against the shared priority themes. The framework will also have a much greater focus on Local Authorities’ delivery of value for money and their approach to cost-effectiveness and efficiency.

¹ See http://www.odpm.gov.uk/stellent/groups/odpm_localgov/documents/pdf/odpm_locgov_pdf_029203.pdf

² See http://www.odpm.gov.uk/stellent/groups/odpm_localgov/documents/pdf/odpm_locgov_pdf_029983.pdf

Over the coming year, it is clear that the local e-government programme must both:

- take account of the changing policy climate in order to ensure that programme outputs deliver impact and provide a sustainable legacy; and
- influence the emerging political debate in key areas.

In terms of efficiency gains, National Projects have already been identified as key levers for achieving savings in corporate services and procurement. The NOMAD National Project on mobile working technology will help facilitate the use of teleconferencing and flexible and home working and make a key contribution to efficiency gains in the area of productive time, whilst e-recruitment methods substantially reduce costs of new hiring. The CRM National Project is identified as facilitating corporate service integration, to improve processes and resource efficiency in the area of transactional services.

The publication of priority outcomes for local e-government in April 2004 derived from the shared priorities for local government³, has positioned local e-government work in the mainstream of local government modernisation.

³ See http://www.odpm.gov.uk/pns/DisplayPN.cgi?pn_id=2002_0278

CHAPTER 2

Summary of progress made in 2004

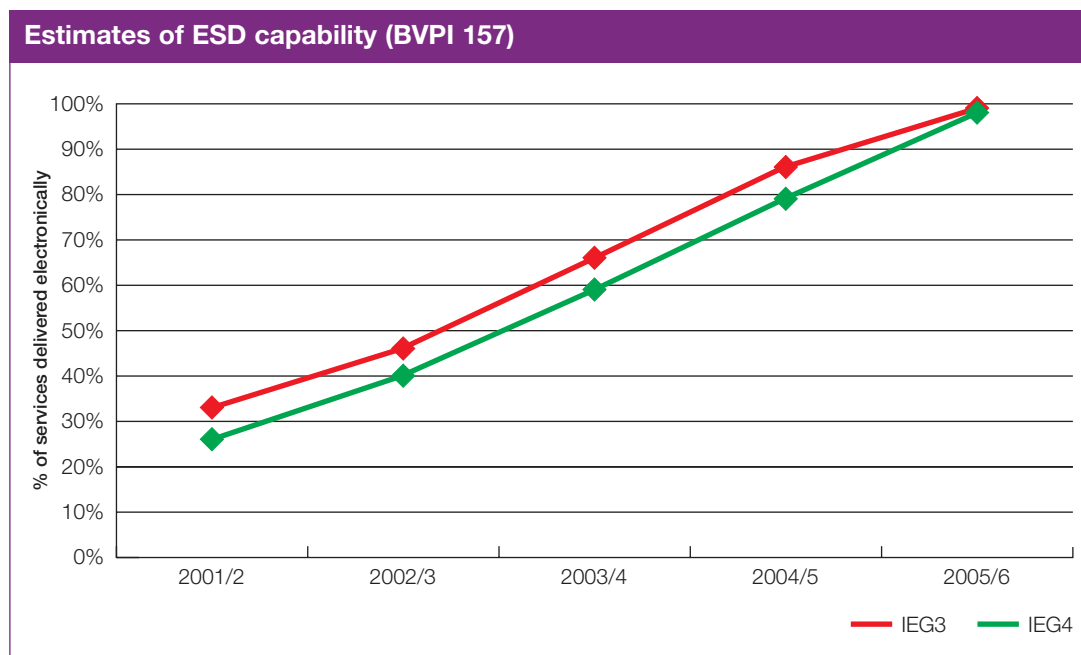
Highlights of the progress made

- The average Council is now 79% e-enabled compared to 59% a year ago. 98% of Councils report that they will be achieve the 100% target by 2005. The robustness of recording progress in this area via BVPI 157 has been improved by requiring all Councils to validate their approach against the standard list of Local Authority interactions (LGSL) available on the esd-toolkit (www.esd.org.uk/standards/).
- The National Projects programme has attracted considerable buy in from Local Authorities. 21 of the 22 National Projects will have completed their work by the end of March 2005. 47% of authorities have indicated that the National Projects are critical to their achieving the e-government targets and a total of over 250 different products have been developed by this programme. It is also clear that many of the products will assist Councils to reach the efficiency targets as well as the e-government targets.
- In April 2004, we published our priority outcomes for local e-government derived from the shared priorities for local government. IEG4 returns show that more than three quarters of all 'required' and 'good' priority outcomes are now being actively implemented. In over 100 Councils, citizens can already go online to submit planning applications, check their Council Tax balance and calculate their benefits.
- In liaison with the IDeA, we have implemented a support and capacity programme to help Councils that are struggling with e-government implementation, or who require specialised advice and guidance, thereby minimising the delivery risks of the local e-government programme. The Implementation Support Unit has provided onsite support to 45 Councils, whilst the Strategic Support Unit has directly engaged over 100 Councils through workshops and other activities.
- We have supported Councils in developing their e-government strategies and joint service delivery through local and regional partnerships, as this promotes better and more cost-effective services. The Partnership programme formally completed on 31 July 2004 and has implemented a range of projects including shared contact centres, community web portals and regional smartcard initiatives. We have also provided funding for nine Regional Partnerships designed to promote the development of e-government and support the roll out of National Projects.
- We are providing help to Councils develop web-based transactional services and deliver integrated information about local and central government services for the citizen – by providing online access through the Directgov portal (www.direct.gov.uk).
- Through the first round of the e-Innovations Fund, 34 Councils received matched funding of £6.2m to deliver their innovative ideas by March 2005. In January 2005, almost 250 proposals were received from authorities to run projects under the second round.
- Through the work of National Projects such as FAME and CRM, we have provided practical advice for Councils to help them resolve data sharing issues within the existing statutory framework.

Individual Council performance

BVPI 157

Best Value Performance Indicator 157 (BVPI 157) requires all Local Authorities ‘to measure the number of types of interaction that are enabled for electronic delivery as a percentage of the types of interaction that are legally permissible for electronic delivery’. This indicator is the yardstick of Local Authority progress against the Prime Minister’s target for the 100% e-enablement of government services by December 2005.



In IEG4 returns, authorities again reported that they are on track to meet the December 2005 target for the e-enablement of services, with the average authority reporting that it will be 98% e-enabled by this date. The figures represent a slight drop (but statistically insignificant) on previous expectations of progress. In part, this is a direct consequence of the ODPM’s efforts to encourage increased standardisation in the way that BVPI 157 is reported by Local Authorities. For example, Local Authorities are now *required* to validate their approach in calculating BVPI 157 against the methodology adopted through the esd-toolkit (www.esd-toolkit.org). This requirement was reinforced through the online submission process from IEG4, with around 50% of submitted BVPI 157 data calculated automatically from more detailed data held by Local Authorities on the esd-toolkit. Such increased standardisation around the calculation of progress in the e-enablement of Local Authority services makes BVPI 157 forecasts the most robust to date and present a national picture of authorities on schedule to meet the December 2005 target.

PRIORITY OUTCOMES

On 29 April 2004, we published our priority service and transformation outcomes for local e-government⁴. These priority outcomes help to ensure that Local Authorities' ongoing work on the e-enablement of services in line with 2005 target for e-government is done in a way that enhances service quality, convenience and accessibility. Local Authority practitioners have also been generally appreciative of their introduction in terms of providing an operational focus for the delivery phase of the e-government programme. Progress on the achievement of these priority outcomes will be assessed through the IEG4 return process in 2004 and the IEG5 process in 2005.

The published priorities comprise 73 outcomes that help Councils to improve the delivery of services to citizens and business, enhance business process efficiency and embed e-government within the mainstream of organisational culture. The proposed outcomes for each priority service and transformation area are defined in terms of:

1. **Required (29)** – these refer to specific online facilities that must be in place by the end of December 2005.
2. **Good (25)** – all Local Authorities are expected to commit to these objectives in order to qualify for further IEG4 funding in 2005/06. As a minimum, such outcomes must be at Amber stage in IEG self-assessment terms by December 2005 (i.e. where work has been approved for funding and is actively being implemented) and at Green stage by 1 April 2006.
3. **Excellent (19)** – high performing Local Authorities that have already achieved, or largely achieved, the defined required and “good” e-government outcomes, were asked to agree a baseline and targets for promoting awareness and take-up of e-services.

The priority outcomes are grouped into ten priority service areas derived from the seven shared priorities for local government and four cross cutting themes designed to help Councils to realise the transformation of working practices through the application of technology.

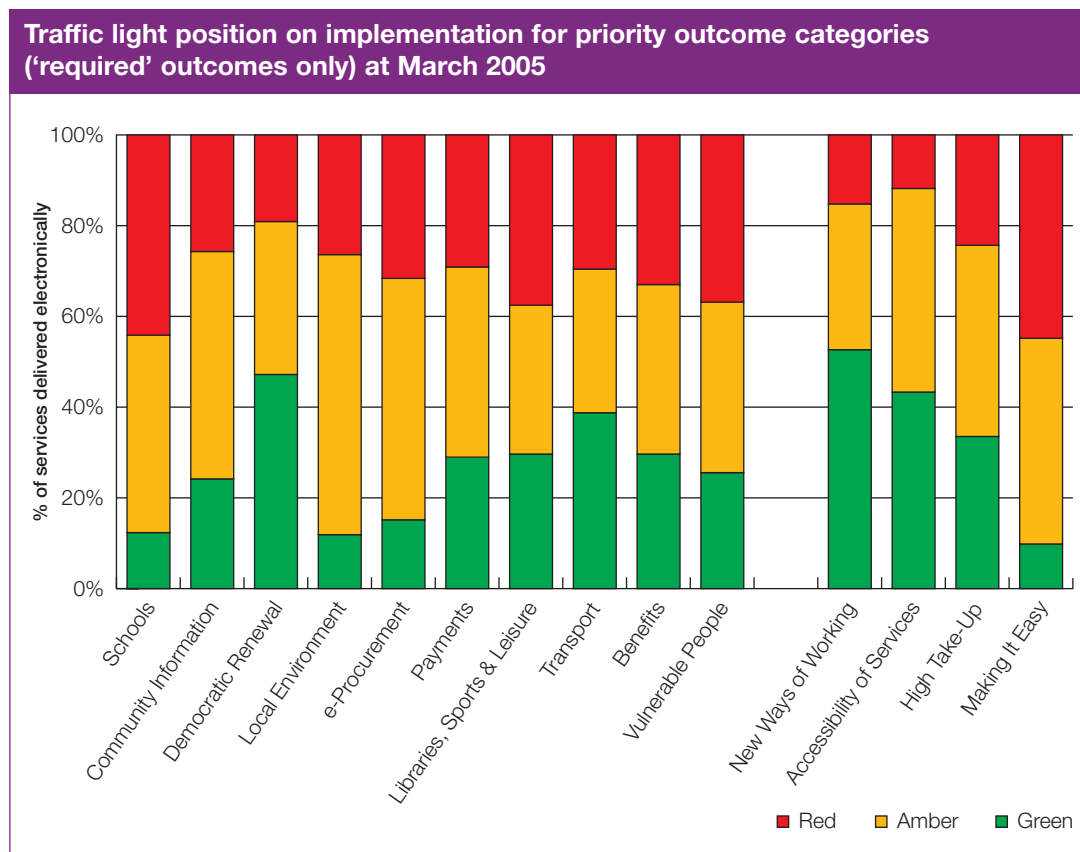
1. **Schools**
2. **Community information**
3. **Democratic renewal**
4. **Local environment**
5. **E-Procurement**
6. **Payments**
7. **Libraries, sports & leisure**
8. **Transport**
9. **Benefits**
10. **Support for vulnerable people**
11. **Supporting new ways of working**
12. **Accessibility of services**
13. **High take-up of web-based transactional services**
14. **Making it easy for citizens to do business with the Council**

⁴ See http://www.odpm.gov.uk/pns/DisplayPN.cgi?pn_id=2004_0112

As part of the support package to help Local Authorities deliver the priority outcomes, the ODPM has:

- secured additional capital grant funding of £500,000 for every Local Authority in England during 2004/05 and 2005/06;
- ensured that requirements are aligned with National Project outputs; and
- delivered a commitment to publish detailed explanation of the requirements, designed around the needs of the practitioners involved in implementing them (see www.idea.gov.uk/transformation/?id=priority_outcomes).

From the diagram below, it can be seen that the majority of Councils are now in the amber/green spectrum for delivery of the ‘required’ outcomes by December 2005. As part of the IEG4 assessment process, it is intended to set progress thresholds against delivery of the required priority outcomes and ask the Implementation Support Unit (ISU) at the IDeA to intervene accordingly to assist individual Local Authorities that fall below these thresholds.



Programme developments

IMPLEMENTING ELECTRONIC GOVERNMENT (IEG) RETURNS

From this year’s IEG4 return in December 2004 through to 31 March 2006, all authorities will be required to input and maintain IEG data in real time via the

esd-toolkit (www.esd-toolkit.org). The aim is to sign-off completion against the IEG self-assessment traffic lights as projects are actually implemented, thereby helping to manage risks against the delivery of key objectives.

For funding and risk management purposes, the ODPM will continue to set key dates in the calendar at which it intends to inspect the extent of IEG progress and take action accordingly. These will include:

- **18 July 2005** – mid term IEG snapshot
- **Dec 2005** – IEG5 deadline for achievement against 2005 target
- **April 2006** – IEG end of programme evaluation

NATIONAL PROJECTS

Our £80 million programme of National Projects aims to ensure that all Councils have access to key electronic services and building blocks, without having to build them from scratch. The 22 National Projects are led by Local Authorities for Local Authorities.

All National Projects will have delivered by 31 March 2006. At the time of writing:

- 15 have completed their development phase⁵.
- 5 are due for completion by the end of March 2005⁶.
- 1 project, Schools Admissions, will continue its development work beyond March 2005 for reasons of strategy and timing.
- 1 (e-Fire) has been restructured to align outputs with the objectives of the Modernisation Framework for Fire & Rescue authorities with programme management responsibilities transferred to the control of the Fire Directorate accordingly.

Since completion of the initial phase of projects in April 2004, we have been developing the programme required to ensure that National Project products are successfully rolled out to authorities, and are sustained for the future. We are currently working to ascertain the detailed demand for these products, but it is clear from attendance at workshops and seminars that this will be high and the products are seen as critical for Councils to achieve the Priority Service Outcomes.

The National Project Roll-out and Dissemination programme (ROADS) was launched in October 2004 with a new and focussed drive for take-up of the products. The ROADS programme comprises six workstreams:

- **Marketing and communications led by** – London Borough of Newham
- **Roll-out and support led by** – West Sussex County Council

⁵ CRM, DiTV, e-Pay, e-procurement, Enterprise Workflow, e-Trading Standards, FAME, Knowledge Management, LAWS, Standards Body, PARSOL, Ryogens, Smartcards, Valuebill, Working with Business.

⁶ e-Benefits, e-Citizen, e-Democracy, ENCORE, NOMAD.

- **Supplier engagement led by** – London Borough of Lambeth
- **Regional working led by** – Knowsley Council
- **Further development of long-term sustainability led by** – Cambridgeshire County Council
- **Programme Management led by** – London Borough of Lambeth

The marketing and communications work stream oversaw the launch of the National Projects web portal (www.localgovnp.org) in October 2004, designed to provide a shop window for work across the 22 National Projects. A national events programme, including conferences and experience sharing workshops, has also been put together to help share knowledge, practical experience and best practice across all Local Authorities.

National Projects
at the heart of excellent services

Search across all of the National Project websites
Enter search text
Advanced search

The Building Blocks to deliver Local e-Government
Arising out of the ODPM's national strategy for local e-government, the 22 National Projects offer councils proven, cost-effective, standard products, services and implementation roadmaps with which to build effective e-services tailored to their citizens and each council's own unique needs.

The National Projects
The projects have pulled together the knowledge and experience of councils, central government, the private sector and others to define and deliver key critical services and building blocks to help councils deliver the local e-government vision and meet the 2005 election efficiency agenda.

Events
The National Projects Programme is staging a coordinated programme of events designed to help you deliver Priority Outcome targets and meet the 2005 election service delivery deadline.

Latest news
30/11/2004
H2O with worklife
29/11/2004
National Project short-listed for MDDO Awards
17/11/2004
Get on board with e-panel project

Upcoming events
London @ South Cove
Hilton Hotel, Kensington, 29 November - 3 December
North East - Thistle Hotel
Newcastle, 29 November - 3 December

Register for regular updates on news and events

Supported by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister

Directgov

As part of our mainstreaming strategy, we are now firming up proposals for the long-term sustainability of the National Project products during 2005/06 and what will need to be in place next year to ensure the successful roll-out and dissemination of this work. In the next year, we will continue to manage the roll-out of the products from National Projects. During 2005/06, we will begin the process of:

- facilitating the transfer of those products that we consider to be mission critical in terms of priority services and efficiency targets, with current lead authorities being offered first refusal on carrying the work forward. Our preference overall is to encourage municipal enterprise rather than selling off direct to the private sector; and
- winding down the programme and realising the value of all remaining capital assets.

National Projects

- **Customer Relationship Management (CRM)**
Providing support, advice and guidance to help Councils deliver citizen focussed services
- **Digital TV (DigiTV)**
Complementing your channel strategy and helping bridge the digital divide
- **e-Benefits**
A solution to benefit all
- **e-Citizen (Take-up & Marketing)**
Enabling Local Authorities to increase take-up of e-services
- **e-Fire**
Efficiently managing information and providing transactional fire-related services
- **e-Pay**
Taking payments online
- **e-Procurement (NePP)**
Delivering e-Procurement
- **e-Trading Standards National (e-TSN)**
Local Authority trading standards services – working together effectively
- **Enterprise Workflow**
Getting the right work to the right people at the right time – time after time – and knowing you have done so
- **Environment and Community Online Residents' e-Services (ENCORE)**
Making local environment information easy to find
- **Framework for Information Sharing in a Multi-Agency Environment (FAME)**
Effective information sharing for improved service
- **Knowledge Management**
Creating a learning environment for Local Authorities
- **Local Authority Websites (LAWs)**
Helping Local Authorities deliver services online
- **Local e-Democracy**
Staying ahead with community matters
- **Local e-Government Standards Body (e-Standards)**
The national standards authority for local e-government
- **Online Schools Admissions/Pan London School Admissions**
Putting the school admissions process online / Making school admissions in the Capital fairer
- **Planning and Regulatory Services Online (PARSOL)**
e-Planning and e-Regulation by Local Authorities for Local Authorities
- **Project Nomad (Mobile Technology)**
Keeping our Local Authorities mobile
- **Reducing Youth Offending Generic National Solution (RYOGENS)**
Helping young people – reducing youth crime
- **Smartcards**
Discover a smarter way
- **Valuebill (Council Tax/Business Rate Valuation)**
Joining up local and central government
- **Working with Business**
Your business made easy

Details on all the projects can be found on via our website www.localgovnp.org

SUPPORT & CAPACITY

Support

Through the IDeA, we are providing direct support to Local Authorities that are struggling to achieve their e-Government programme, or who require advice and guidance on areas of e-Government delivery.

e-Government Strategic Support Unit

The e-Government Strategic Support Unit (SSU) is a free advisory and research service on local e-government. The SSU's advisors come from a wide range of public and private sector backgrounds and have substantial experience in core areas of e-government. They are primed to:

- provide in-depth advice on implementing e-government;
- help authorities engage with the National Project and partnership initiatives;
- identify commercial suppliers that provide e-government solutions;
- keep track of developments in technology and in other sectors; and
- encourage closer working between authorities.

Since its launch in January, the unit has dealt with enquiries through the dedicated help line from over 220 Local Authorities and has directly engaged with over 100 through workshops and other activities. The SSU has a 'research once and share many times' remit, and it has now published topic briefings on a wide range of issues including community engagement, access strategies, customer relationship management, and knowledge management. These are all available from the e-government resource on IDeA Knowledge.

e-Government Implementation Support Unit

The e-Government Implementation Support Unit (ISU) provides help to a number of Councils that have been identified by the ODPM as needing individual support to meet the 2005 e-government target.

The unit provides onsite programme and project management assistance, drawing on peer support. Its implementation managers have extensive experience in local government and the skills to help individual authorities with their improvement plans and to carry forward their e-government programmes.

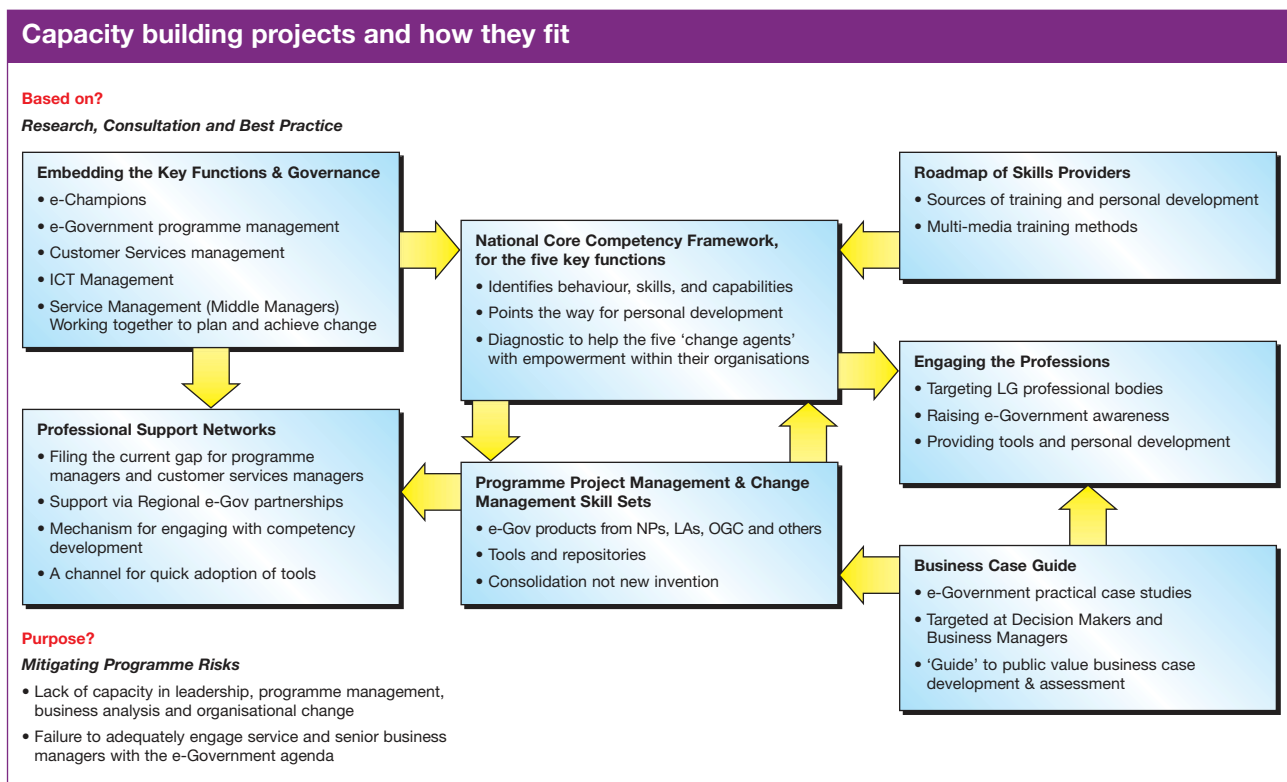
For more information about the work of the SSU and ISU phone 020 7296 6194 (office hours only) or email e-gov@idea.gov.uk.

Capacity

Our research with Local Authorities identified the need for a framework for capacity building designed to mitigate strategic risks to the local e-government programme, as follows:

- establishing key roles and their skills needs;
- addressing the skill and knowledge gaps;
- embedding best practice in people and role development;
- better engagement with relevant professional organisations; and
- examining ways to achieve take-up of value for money business cases by service and business managers.

Capacity building work is now embodied in a portfolio of 7 projects and initiatives as shown below.



PARTNERSHIPS

We have supported Councils in developing their e-government strategies and joint service delivery through local and regional partnerships, as this promotes better and more cost-effective services.

In particular partnerships are intended to:

- ensure joined up service delivery at a local level;
- promote efficiencies and economies of scale in the procurement of solutions; and
- facilitate the rapid roll-out of outputs from National Projects by reducing the number of potential buyers.

LOCAL PARTNERSHIPS

In June 2002, 64 Local Authority partnerships were allocated £47m funding. A second funding round was announced in November 2002 for the remaining £26m. In this round, over 80 partnerships were allocated some form of funding.

By the end of the local e-government partnership programme in July 2004, over 450 outcomes had been developed including shared contact centres, community web portals and regional smartcard initiatives. The ODPM is working with the North West e-Government Group (NweGG) to publish a catalogue detailing those products that have:

- been developed through the programme; and
- can be implemented by individual authorities.

This work is due for completion in March 2005. The catalogue itself will be made available as a web-based facility as well as other formats.

REGIONAL PARTNERSHIPS

We now have provided £2.7 million funding for nine Regional Partnerships. The Regional Partnerships will provide an ongoing focus at a regional level on the delivery of e-government. In particular, they are intended to ensure that Local Authorities are able to exploit developments within their region, avoid duplication of efforts and benefit from the economies of scale gained from the regional developments. As well as providing a coherent approach to regional e-government delivery, the regional approach will also support the efficiency agenda and the general drive to achieve value for money in delivering services to citizens, through co-ordinating future activity with the Regional Centres of Excellence.

The Regional Partnership Network has also been set up to provide a vehicle where partnerships can share knowledge and experience, leading to a situation where each region will have an established partnership capable of sustaining itself and e-government at a local level beyond December 2005. It is intended that the network will engage all Local Authorities in the region, support the development of capacity for e-government within the regions through specific projects and activities, and develop and support specific networks, for example Customer Service and Programme Managers Networks, that play an important role in supporting the development of these key functions within each region.

DIRECTGOV – HOME & COMMUNITY FRANCHISE

Directgov (www.direct.gov.uk) was launched in April 2004 as the Government's flagship digital service designed around the needs of the user, making it much easier to find and access government information and services electronically.

A franchise team was set up at the ODPM in November 2003 to prepare and launch the initial of Home and Community Franchise content on the Directgov portal. The success of the initial release led to full development of the franchise, including establishing the ENCORE National Project as a vehicle for linking Directgov with Local Authorities.

The Home and Community Franchise is the only franchise to have invested in engaging stakeholders across government, including parish councils and the voluntary sector. In particular, the input from stakeholders has helped to shape the franchise information architecture and content from the outset. Our success has meant that the Home & Community Franchise is held by Directgov as the benchmark for other franchises.

The ENCORE (Environmental and Community Online Residents' E-services) National Project comprises 6 work streams and is being used as a test-bed for e-enabling LA environmental services. We are working closely with ENCORE to find a technical solution to allow the citizen to deep-link seamlessly to Local Authority services by means of post code or map look-up.

In summary, the Home & Community Franchise has been highly successful in:

- ensuring Directgov remains citizen focused;
- engaging stakeholders; and
- establishing the ENCORE National Project as a means to link Directgov with Local Authorities and help e-enable environmental services.



CPA 2005 FRAMEWORK

The framework proposals for CPA 2005 were published for consultation in December 2005⁷. A key part of the Comprehensive Performance Assessment is the corporate assessment, designed to measure the capacity of the Council, working with its partners, to deliver improved outcomes. For CPA 2005, it is proposed that the corporate assessment methodology be strengthened to measure the capacity of Councils to deliver ambitions and priorities for local communities, including evidence that the use of e-government supports the delivery of priorities. Within the detailed criteria for judgement, it is proposed that Councils performing well will need to have achieved both the “required” and “good” priority outcomes for local e-government.

⁷ See <http://www.audit-commission.gov.uk/cpa/>

e-VOTING

Due to the combination of European Parliament and Local elections in June 2004 there were no wide-scale e-voting pilots in 2004/05. In January 2004, Swindon Borough Council piloted the use of fixed and mobile electronic voting 'kiosks' in a by-election. In April 2004, the Electoral Commission reported that 93% of voters in polling stations found the kiosks easy to use⁷.

An electoral modernisation strategy is soon to be released which will outline the plans for e-voting over the next five years.

e-INNOVATIONS

The first round of support for e-Innovations is now well under way with over 30 projects developing new ways of moving forward the e-government agenda. The main focus on these projects is to encourage practical examples of new and innovative approaches to joined up working, effective service delivery and community engagement.

34 Councils will receive matched funding of £6.2m to deliver their innovative ideas in the areas of e-learning, bridging the digital divide, emergent technology for better government and e-business by September 2005.

On 1 December 2004, the Minister announced details of the 2nd Round of e-Innovations. The second round will be targeting efficient and effective government, inclusion through innovation, e-business and leadership⁸. A budget allocation of up to £7 million is available for this round. Learning from the experience of the first round, we will move from a bidding round towards a more collaborative style of developing projects. By the submission deadline of 5 January 2005, almost 250 proposals had been received from Local Authorities.

Progress on implementation barriers

DATA SHARING

Data sharing and data protection practices remain a source of uncertainty for many Local Authority officers. However, an operational view of public sector data sharing, endorsed by the Department for Constitutional Affairs in its 2003 guidance on the law⁹ is that:

*“data sharing **can** take place in a way that helps deliver the better services that we all want, while still respecting people’s legitimate expectations about the privacy and confidentiality of their personal information”.*

⁷ See http://193.113.179.211/swindon_final_report.pdf

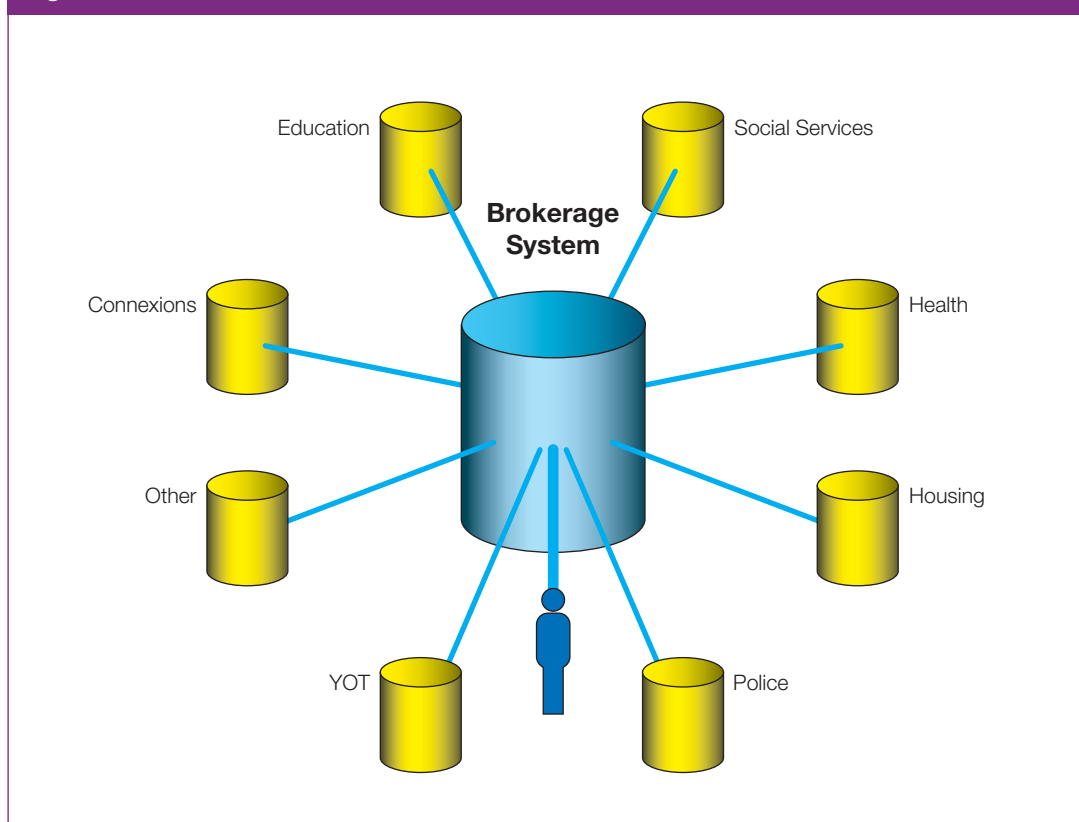
⁸ See http://www.localgov.gov.uk/Nimoi/sites/ODMP/resources/JB%20letter%20to%20LAs%20-%20e-innovations%20launchR2%20-v_D2.pdf

⁹ See <http://www.dca.gov.uk/foi/sharing/toolkit/lawguide.pdf>

In this respect, Local Authorities should not be dissuaded from starting sensible data sharing initiatives under existing statutory powers. National Projects such as FAME¹⁰ and the DfES ISA trailblazers¹¹ offer Local Authorities considerable practical advice on data sharing issues. The importance of addressing data sharing issues within the existing statutory framework were highlighted in the recent Bichard Report on Soham and the Laming report on the death of Victoria Climbié.

The emergent principle of data sharing is that the legislation can be used to support data sharing about specific individuals if there is a shown cause within the legislation and if that information is brought together for the purpose specified in that case. Thus, a Local Authority ICT back office architecture that supports 'hub and spoke' methods for data sharing is permissible. An example of a 'hub and spoke' model from the FAME National Project is illustrated in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1



For Local Authorities, there is a specific and well known legal impediment to data sharing contained in the 1992 Local Government Finance Act affecting council tax and business rates data. Initially, the 1992 Act was seen to be a 'showstopper' to the delivery of e-government as many Councils wished to pre-populate their Customer Relationship Management (CRM) systems with council tax data. However, as the systems cannot be linked, Local Authorities now run CRM and council tax services on separate systems but can frequently provide an integrated approach for customers at point of delivery (the 'hub and spoke' approach). CRM systems are now pre-populated with addresses from the Local Land and Property Gazetteer (LLPG) using the Unique Property Reference Number (UPRN) system.

¹⁰ See <http://www.fame-uk.org>

¹¹ See <http://www.dfes.gov.uk/ISA>

KOATS – Kent Connects Change Of Address Transformation System

The Shepway District Council Pathfinder change of address transformation system (COATS) project was originally deemed unlawful (in a 124 page legal opinion) as the Council would not have authority to share Council Tax data. However, the Kent Connects partnership has subsequently taken up this project under the new acronym of KOATS. The new scheme complies with the Data Protection Act and other legal restrictions on Local Authorities' powers to share data (see <http://pathfinder.shepway.gov.uk/PDF/sd/local-authority-data-sharing.pdf>) as it does not rely on existing Council business units sharing data. Instead, Kent County Council has set up an independent change of address service on the Kent Connects portal (www.kentconnects.com).

It is estimated that 11% of the UK population moves each year and it costs the average Council between £15-£79 to make each change. If done automatically using a system like KOATS, each authority would make a 50% saving on this activity.

It is recognised that complex legal issues surrounding confidentiality, human rights, data protection and administrative law remain. However, an operational view derived from a range of local e-government projects clearly demonstrates that Local Authorities can work alongside the existing legal matrix to identify sensible and workable boundaries for data sharing initiatives.

AUTHENTICATION

Many Local Authorities will need to provide a wide range of authentication levels in their electronic transactions with citizens. The Government Connect¹² project will provide a means to do this by providing:

- a nation-wide government trust model for citizen, business and intermediary (agent) authentication;
- secure delivery of transactions or forms, from citizens to Local Authorities or between Local Authorities and any other government organisations connected to GC (for example, the IR or DWP);
- citizen payment collection services; and
- secure messaging for confidential two-way communication between citizens and Local Authority service providers.

As well as the above solutions, Government Connect should facilitate mechanisms to join-up across government organisations and will benefit Local Authority aims to achieving greater value for money.

A shadow board led by Bolton Metropolitan Borough Council and comprising the ODPM, Cabinet Office e-Government Unit and Local Authority representatives has been established to discuss the barriers to implementing Government Connect within Local Authorities. In addition, Government Connect is currently being implemented and tested in a number of Local Authorities, notably:

12 See <http://e-government.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/assetRoot/04/01/04/12/04010412.pdf>

- Shepway
- King's Lynn & West Norfolk
- North Somerset
- Wolverhampton
- Rotherham Partnership (Rotherham, Tameside, Liverpool, Sheffield, Bromley)
- Welland Online Partnership (South Kesteven plus four others)
- Dorset Partnership (North Dorset plus four others)
- Sedgemoor
- Stroud Partnership (Cheltenham, Forest of Dean Partnership)
- Tameside

We plan on bringing all this knowledge and experience together to produce guidance on authentication, including the means and mechanisms by which local government can engage with the Government Gateway, in the form of a Government Connect Prospectus early in 2005. This Prospectus will be initially produced for consultation among English Local Authorities.

PEOPLE & PROPERTY DATABASES

The Valuebill National Project establishes the electronic exchange of information between Local Authority billing agencies, the Valuation Office Agency (VOA), and the National Land and Property Gazetteer (NLPG) – improving valuation services for citizens and businesses. Significantly, it is also assisting the integration of billing authorities and VOA into the wider land-related initiatives in local and central government.

The project has established the data flow requirements and data standards involved in linking billing authorities to Local Land and Property Gazetteers (LLPGs) to NLPG to VOA. A starter kit has been created to disseminate these standards and protocols and to help improve property data flows internally within Local Authorities.

The Unique Property Reference Number (UPRN) behind the NLPG has been shown to be the key enabler of customer facing programmes, the link to numerous other applications that contain property data (e.g. planning, housing, libraries) and the key source of data for populating Customer Relationship Management (CRM) systems.

We are also having discussions with the Office for National Statistics, Ordnance Survey and the IDeA concerning the creation of a definitive National Addresses Database.

CHAPTER 3

Addressing the key risks

In last year's annual report, we identified the following 7 risks to the programme delivering local e-government in 2005. This chapter explains what action we have taken in the past year to remove or mitigate these risks.

1. Leadership and capacity

To tackle the issue of lack of capacity and knowledge of e-government issues we contracted the IDeA to develop a programme of support to individual Local Authorities that wish to have this support.

In the first year of this support and capacity programme the Implementation Support Unit's method of engagement has been successful. The combination of funding small quick pieces of work directly controlled by an Implementation Support Manager and the providing of capital funds for major activities has allowed flexibility to provide real support on the ground to all Councils identified as struggling with key aspects of their e-government programme.

The Strategic Support Unit, structured to provide expertise in the main themes of the e-Government strategy, has dealt with enquiries from over 220 Councils and has achieved a high satisfaction rating in the process.

2. Ownership and understanding

With the publication of priority service and transformation outcomes for local e-government in April 2004 we have set out a clear operational agenda for local e-government up to the end of 2005/06, including service-specific and cross-cutting objectives.

Through the establishment of the Strategic Support Unit (SSU) at the IDeA we have provided in depth knowledge support and guidance, and support for specific authorities that are wanting to make better progress, including guidance for practitioners on the priority outcomes for local e-government.

3. Joining up/national infrastructure

We are continuing to work to provide central infrastructure by working up a Government Connect Prospectus to be published early in 2005 that will allow all Local Authorities to be in a position to be make an informed decision about engaging with the Government Gateway.

We are also continuing to liaise with the Department of Constitutional Affairs to see what further specialised guidance on data sharing can be issued to Local Authorities to balance complex legal issues with operational best practice.

4. Joined up e-business plans

We have continued to co-ordinate our work with the e-Delivery Programme (eGDP) chaired by the Cabinet Office e-Government Unit, on national infrastructure projects such as Directgov and the Government Gateway.

By the end of the programme in 2005/06, we will seek to embed a common e-government infrastructure to ensure economies of scale benefits across government, the provision of best of breed technologies and an increased speed to market for quality government web services, both for departments and end users.

5. Failure of National Projects to deliver

We have already overseen the development of a total of over 250 different products through the National Projects programme.

Key products include the e-Procurement Toolkit that has been recognised by the Office of Government Commerce (OGC) as being crucial to the implementation of e-procurement across government. Another success in the area of high volume/high impact services is the PARSOL (Planning and Regulatory Services Online) Exchange, which is a centrally hosted web service permitting the electronic exchange of data for consultation concerning planning applications.

In December 2004, we published the Benefits Guides to the National Projects¹³ that estimated a financial value to local government of the benefits that National Projects already completed can deliver. The estimated average values of these benefits (across all English Local Authorities for the CRM, Project NOMAD, PARSOL, Enterprise Workflow, Valuebill and LAWs National Projects) are:

¹³ See www.localgovnp.org

- Cost savings £320m
- Increased revenue £60m
- Service improvement £1,300m

6. Lack of resources

There are two main resource aspects to the local e-government programme:

- money; and
- expertise.

In 2004/05 and 2005/06, every Local Authority in England will receive an additional £500,000 to help them to deliver the priority outcome requirements for local e-government and achieve the December 2005 target for local e-government.

In expertise terms, Local Authorities are supported in their task by 22 National Projects that offer Councils proven, cost effective, standard products, services and implementation roadmaps with which to achieve priority outcome requirements and make efficiency gains from local e-government investment.

National Project products provide Local Authorities with the opportunity to implement e-government with:

- reduced costs in procurement and implementation;
- establishment of standards;
- access to generic solutions;
- provision of solutions that are not available and unique to Local Authorities;
- products developed by Local Authorities for Local Authorities; and
- reduction in total cost of ownership.

It is also clear that many of the products will assist Councils to reach the efficiency targets as well as the e-government targets – this is especially the case for products like the e-procurement toolkit, the generic framework for partnership working and the products from the e-payments project. Out-turn analysis of IEG4 returns shows that Councils expect to deliver £1.2 billion in efficiency savings by 2007/08 directly as a result of e-government investment.

7. Take up and sustainability

A key element of the ODPM's SR2002 Public Service Agreement on e-government involves the delivery of e-services in ways that people will use.

Analysis of IEG⁴ returns demonstrated that that Councils' recognise the potential of the web in areas such as change of address notifications. However, they are much more cautious about actively encouraging customers to change the way that they traditionally undertake transactional services such as payments. Without channel migration to back up the roll out of e-services, the full potential of e-government for efficiency gains will not be achieved.

The e-Citizen National Project will produce information and methodologies to aid Local Authorities in identifying who to promote e-channels and services to, how to market e-channels and how to measure the take up of e-services. The final outputs from this National Project will be available by the end of March 2005.

As part of our work within the Home & Community Franchise of Directgov (www.direct.gov.uk) it is intended to instigate analysis of the relationship between Local Authorities and the Directgov portal. This will include measures of take up performance both in terms of increased through (downstream) traffic to Local Authority websites via the Directgov portal and vice versa (upstream traffic). We will also be taking monthly rankings of the performance of Local Authority websites in terms of market share. This work will help inform our progress towards SR2002 objectives, as well as providing objective background information to identify Local Authorities for Implementation Support Unit (ISU) intervention within the support and capacity programme.

We will also take account of the e-Government Unit's Service Design and Delivery Guide¹⁴ for achieving high take up of e-services, cost savings and better quality public services.

¹⁴ See <http://e-government.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/assetRoot/05/51/17/24/05511724.doc>

CHAPTER 4

2005 & beyond – realising the benefits from our investment in e-government

Making ‘e’ disappear

By the end of the local e-government programme in December 2005, our aim is to have embedded e-government within the mainstream agenda for local service delivery such that ‘e’ comes to stand for efficient, effective and engaging. The term e-Government will disappear as Councils appreciate the requisite contribution of technology to becoming modern, customer focused and efficient service organisations.

Making it real

E-government is a means to an end – better quality, more cost effective services. Over the next year, and beyond we will continue to work with Local Authorities and others, to demonstrate how e-government is making a real difference to people’s lives. In particular, we will focus on realising the full benefits of e-government in terms of:

- value for money – building the efficient and effective Councils that our communities deserve;
- take up – improving the accessibility of local services and promoting awareness about new access channels in order to make real changes to the quality of life for ordinary people; and
- organisational change – promoting new skills, simplifying administrative procedures and changing ways of working to meet the demands of modern life.

Sustaining momentum

The December 2005 target is an essential element of the Government's framework for modernising Local Authority services. However, it is part of a longer-term improvement journey. In this respect, it is important that the momentum generated over the last four years by the Local e-Government Programme is not lost. We will do this by:

- mainstreaming e-government within local government policy and practice, including recognition within the CPA assessment process;
- continuing to work with the Cabinet Office e-Government Unit and other government departments to ensure that the potential for ICT to facilitate joined-up government is maximised in new and existing initiatives;
- making arrangements for the maintenance of items of core infrastructure such as the esd-toolkit and Directgov/Local Authority links;
- evaluating the programme and capturing lessons learnt; and
- celebrating and raising awareness about the success of the programme.