The Local Digital Declaration

What is it?

By signing the Local Digital Declaration, NCC would be joining a growing community of over 250 local authorities, public sector bodies and government departments who are committed to the shared vision of the Declaration which is built on the following five key principles:

- We will go even further to redesign our services around the needs of the people using them. This means continuing to prioritise citizen and user needs above professional, organisational and technological silos.

- We will 'fix our plumbing' to break our dependence on any inflexible and expensive technology that doesn't join up effectively. This means insisting on modular building blocks for the IT we rely on, and open standards to give a common structure to the data we create.

- We will design safe, secure and useful ways of sharing information to build trust among our partners and citizens, to better support the most vulnerable members of our communities, and to target our resources more effectively.

- We will demonstrate digital leadership, creating the conditions for genuine organisational transformation to happen, and challenging all those we work with to embrace this Local Digital Declaration.

- We will embed an open culture that values, incentivises and expects digital ways of working from every member of our workforce. This means working in the open wherever we can, sharing our plans and experience, working collaboratively with other organisations and reusing good practice.

What are the benefits of signing up to the Declaration?

- We would get momentum, energy and shared learning from the rest of the Local Digital community (over 250 public bodies are already signed up).

Staffordshire County Council
Signed by: John Henderson on 2 September, 2019

- Access to the Local Digital Collaboration Unit at the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG), to support us in our digital transformation journey. MHCLG have funded the Local Digital Collaboration Unit to support and bring together the community around the Declaration in their collective mission.

- All Declaration signatories are eligible for free digital skills training, and the opportunity to access funding to support the delivery of a collaborative project(s).

Introduction to User Experience Principles and Processes ⭐

Provider:
Future Learn

Cost:
Funded by LDCU

Topics:
Design, User research, User-centred design

Get creative with people to solve problems ⭐

Provider:
Future Learn

Cost:
Funded by LDCU

Topics:
Agile, Design, Problem-solving

Driving digital transformation (field guide)

Provider:
Apolitical

Cost:
Free

Topics:
Digital transformation

What would we need to commit to?

Our leaders and politicians will:

- Make sure that digital expertise is central to our decision-making and that all technology decisions are approved by the appropriate person or committee. This will ensure that we are using our collective purchasing power to stimulate a speedy move towards change.

- Have visible, accessible leaders throughout the organisation (publishing blogs, tweeting and actively participating in communities of practice), and support those who champion this Declaration to try new things and work in the open.

- Support our workforce to share ideas and engage in communities of practice by providing the space and time for this to happen.

- Publish our plans and lessons learnt (for example on blogs and at sector meetups) and talk publicly about things that have or could have gone better.

- Try new things, from new digital tools to experiments in collaboration with other organisations.

- Champion the continuous improvement of cyber security practice to support the security, resilience and integrity of our digital services and systems.

Our transformation, information technology and digital teams will:

- Research how to reuse existing user research, service design, common components, and data and technology standards before starting to design or procure something new.

- Build capacity in service design, so that each service we transform is informally tested by our peers against our national service standard where appropriate.

- Where appropriate, every new IT solution procured must operate according to the technology code of practice, putting us in control of our service data, using open standards where they exist and contributing to their creation where they don't.

- Share knowledge about digital projects where there is an opportunity for potential reuse or collaboration with others.

- Work together to establish the trust frameworks we need to safely analyse and share personal data. This will allow us to better serve our shared customers and reduce the need to ask citizens for the same information multiple times.

- Work together to create common solutions that allow us to check people's eligibility for services with central government and others in real time, with their consent.

- Take inspiration and ideas from a wide range of sources and participate individually in communities of practice and interest outside the organization.

What does this really mean?

Commitment	How?	Observations and risks	Good practice examples
Make sure that digital expertise is central to our decision-making	Establish a Corporate Digital Development Board to help prioritise digital developments Ensure we empower, support and upskill the right people, to do the right things at the right time – Product Owners, User Researchers, Scrum Masters, etc.	No corporate digital transformation board. Where do Departmental digital boards feed into to prioritise work, etc.?	Signatory authorities identified on slide 3 present examples of where a unified approach to digital and 'best use' of knowledge and expertise has resulted in peer recognition of sector-leading transformation.
Have visible, accessible leaders (including Elected Members) throughout the organisation	Publish regular Blogs and use Twitter/Yammer/Linkedin/Social Media, etc. (internal and external). Leaders to represent NCC and contribute to communities of practice.	Do we have external 'communities of practice'? Do all Corporate Directors produce an online message/Blog? Do we have a Councillor who would be happy to be our Digital Champion?	The Chief Executive's Blog, Online messages from the Corporate Director ASCH, ICT's Agile Community of Practice , a Leader and Group more aware of the opportunities afforded by digital
Publish our plans and lessons learnt and talk publicly about things that have or could have gone better.	Share our lessons learnt and talk publicly with the wider local digital community. Celebrate our successes and learn from others. Internet, intranet, blog, social media.	We should not shy away from acknowledging where we could have done things better. Encourage engagement with partners and interested third parties.	100% Digital Leeds, Croydon Digital, Digital Wigan
Adhere to the Technology Code of Conduct so that – 1) We meet user needs, based on research with your users. 2) Technology scales for future need 3) Technology is easier to share across Government and with our Partners	Understand and develop the skills of a user researcher. Think about the future use of all new developments. Is the solution scalable? Use open standards where possible and remove any dependencies on a single third party supplier	Question our current consultation/user reach – does it allow us to properly understand the needs of our users? Are we at risk of confusing our residents by implementing end point citizen engagement tools?	Essex CC user research panel blog - Talking to colleagues at Shelter about our user research panel - Service Transformation (essex.gov.uk), GDS's Service Manual - Service Manual - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)
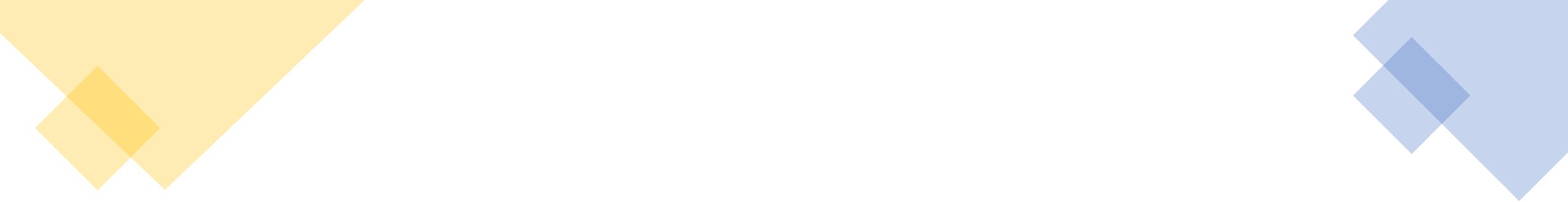
Next Steps

- Establish a small 'Task and Finish' group who will report to the Corporate Digital Board to ensure that we can meet and buy-in to the declaration's commitments across the authority.

- Identify a project to take forward and deliver in the next 12 months (Residents Access).

- Work with MHCLG's Digital Collaboration Unit to assess where we are against the commitments.

- Ensure NCCs Digital Strategy recognises and refers to the Local Digital Declaration and its role in enabling and enhancing digital transformation opportunities.

- Work alongside HR to ensure the ethos and commitments of the Declaration are recognised in corporate culture and workforce development plans.