

Leaders' Committee

London Office of Technology and Innovation

Item 6

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Summary This report outlines the progress made by the London Office of Technology and Innovation (LOTI) since it came into operation on 15 July 2019. LOTI was created to help its member boroughs, the GLA and London Councils collaborate on projects that bring the best of digital, data and technology to improve public services and outcomes for Londoners.

In its first six months of operation, LOTI has worked on projects aligned to its six workstreams, with a particular focus on improving digital skills, technology procurement and data collaboration. As of January 2020, those projects are moving from a design phase to active delivery. To help in the delivery of its data collaboration work, LOTI will shortly be recruiting for a Data Projects Manager to join the team.

Recommendation Leaders' Committee is asked to note the contents of the report.

London Office of Technology and Innovation

Background

1. The concept of setting up the London Office of Technology and Innovation (LOTI) was developed by London Councils in partnership with the GLA to address London's 'digital collaboration deficit' - the barriers hindering boroughs from working together on projects involving digital, technology and data. Leaders' Committee previously endorsed the decision to establish LOTI in December 2018, see: <https://www.londoncouncils.gov.uk/node/34803>.
2. LOTI was launched on 10 June 2019 during London Tech Week with a mission to help its member boroughs collaborate on projects that bring the best of digital, data and technology to improve public services and outcomes for Londoners.
3. The work that LOTI delivers is centrally managed by a team based in London Councils, consisting of Eddie Copeland (Director), Genta Hajri (Programme Manager) and Onyeka Onyekwelu (Lead Engagement Officer).
4. LOTI's original business plan assumed eight boroughs would join in the first instance. However, 16 boroughs are members of LOTI, including: Brent, Camden, Croydon, Ealing, Greenwich, Hackney, Hounslow, Kensington and Chelsea, Kingston, Lambeth, Newham, Southwark, Sutton, Tower Hamlets, Waltham Forest and Westminster.
5. As LOTI's purpose is to promote collaboration and the sharing of information, it is committed to working in the open. All of its activities are detailed each week at <https://medium.com/loti>. This channel is used not only to share its work but also to receive useful feedback on its ideas and projects.

Workstreams

6. Prior to LOTI's launch, LOTI member boroughs identified six workstreams to focus activity and alleviate some of the key challenges and barriers to collaboration, namely:
 - 6.1. **Digital Leadership:** Helping senior managers and political leaders develop their understanding and skills to make the most of digital; and by building the digital skills pipeline.
 - 6.2. **Sharing and Reusing:** Facilitating better peer-to-peer sharing of needs, ideas, evidence, tools, patterns and code to develop boroughs' collective knowledge.

- 6.3. **Better Partnerships:** Encouraging more effective collaboration, relationships and networks with suppliers, GovTech, TechforGood, universities and nonprofits.
- 6.4. **Embedding Standards:** Supporting the adoption of useful technical standards and common approaches and practices.
- 6.5. **Data Collaboration:** Removing barriers to responsible data sharing. Vetting and managing collaborative data projects across London's public sector.
- 6.6. **Shared Experiments:** Helping boroughs spread the risk, reduce the cost and accelerate their learning about new innovations.

Project Progress Update

In Year One (up until July 2020) LOTI is focused on “fixing the plumbing” - i.e. addressing the barriers that prevent boroughs from gaining the greatest value from technology and data - in three core areas that speak strongly to the aims of the first five workstreams:

Improving Digital Skills (*workstream: Digital Leadership*)

- 7. LOTI intends to build the skilled resources required by boroughs by supporting them to pledge and recruit 100 digital apprentices (i.e. people working in roles in boroughs' ICT and digital teams) by September 2020. LOTI has secured [69 pledges to date](#) and will be working closely with member boroughs to meet their target by the deadline.
- 8. This project has scaled up a digital apprenticeships model pioneered by Hackney, whose officers helped to create a [guidance document](#) for those yet to recruit digital apprentices, and to support managers with digital apprentices in post.
- 9. In addition, a network has been created for managers of digital apprentices to share their experiences, knowledge and challenges. To date, discussions have centred around what roles and skills are needed to support the future of local government services. In the last quarter of 2019-20, a similar network will be created to support digital apprentices themselves. LOTI is in the process of designing with them a programme of work to broaden their understanding of the sector, develop their skills and help them with their career development.

Improving Technology Procurement (*workstream: Sharing & Reusing & Better Partnerships*)

10. On 13 November, in partnership with Bloomberg Associates, LOTI released City Tools: London, a [report](#) and interactive [dashboard](#) that maps technologies, contracts and technology skills across London's boroughs. The information is transparent and easily accessible. The intention is to make it easier for boroughs to identify new opportunities to collaborate, re-shape the government technology market and improve service delivery for Londoners.
11. On 3 December, LOTI held a [future use cases workshop](#) to identify current problems with technology procurement and potential solutions that City Tools: London could offer. An action plan has been drawn up with short and long term goals, which include helping boroughs work together to create common tender specifications where they have contracts expiring at similar times for the same service area, and active engagement with Crown Commercial Services.
12. In partnership with the GLA's Economic Development Team, LOTI will explore the potential to fully integrate City Tools: London with their [GovTech London](#) platform, which is designed to make local government technology procurement more transparent and accessible to SMEs. This has the potential to create a virtuous circle of procurement opportunities that feed into our database of applications used by boroughs. User design sessions will be held in February to inform the design of that tool.

Improving Data Collaboration (*workstream: Data Collaboration and Embedding Standards*)

13. Data collaboration is a fundamental enabler of many public service improvement projects. LOTI boroughs have collectively set out the rationale, principles and actions they will take to enable this in a [Joint Statement of Intent on Responsible Data Collaboration](#).
14. To start breaking down the barriers to responsible data sharing, LOTI has embarked on a project to standardise, improve and reduce the time and complexity it takes to legally fulfil the information governance aspects of data sharing initiatives that involve multiple boroughs. Following active engagement with the membership of Chief Digital and Information Officers, as well as Data Protection and Information Governance Officers, a [seven-step information governance process](#) for data collaboration projects has been developed. LOTI's process sets out what needs to happen at each stage and will be tested in upcoming pan-London data-sharing projects.

15. Used intelligently, data can help boroughs make better decisions, drive service improvements and better serve local residents. Yet it is vital boroughs know how to innovate responsibly and ethically with data and artificial intelligence (AI). LOTI is currently working with officers in Brent to develop a [series of practical workshops](#) designed to help boroughs assess the ethical, legal and public communication aspects of data initiatives.
16. Internet of Things (IoT) devices - sensors connected to the internet - are being deployed in a growing number of public sector contexts. One area which LOTI believes requires particular attention is the use of IoT devices in public spaces, for example in smart lamp posts and street sensors. In collaboration with the GLA's Sharing Cities project and LEDNet, LOTI is in the process of designing an intensive week-long sprint of activity with boroughs to explore:
 - 16.1. how such technology can be used in a way that engenders the public's trust on the use and collection of data,
 - 16.2. how that data will be used for Londoners' benefit, and
 - 16.3. how boroughs can make informed decisions about when and how to implement IoT devices.

Beyond these three core areas, LOTI has also worked on the following initiatives:

Assistive Technology

17. In an effort to support and improve the delivery of adult and child social care services, some boroughs are currently using, or plan to trial the use of Assistive Technologies to help residents to live more independently. LOTI's Assistive Technology project seeks to make it easier for boroughs to build their collective knowledge and evidence base about what works by developing and testing a common evaluation [framework](#) and [guide](#).

Seamless Wifi

18. In support of the Mayor of London's commitment to build London's resilience network, LOTI undertook a project seeking to implement [common wifi networks](#) across LOTI member boroughs. The intention is to enable public sector staff and elected members to more quickly and easily get online when working from another borough. It is hoped that this will increase productivity and remove barriers to collaborative and multi-agency working, including in cases of emergency response.

Funding

19. With its funding from 16 boroughs, the GLA and London Councils, LOTI has a healthy operating budget of £620,000.
20. Each borough contributes £30,000 per annum (with the exception of those boroughs operating shared services, which contribute a combined fee of £45,000 respectively). London Councils and the GLA each pay £100,000 per annum towards LOTI's running costs.
21. Non-personnel expenditure in FY 2019/2020 has been relatively modest, given that LOTI's first months of operation have largely focused on facilitating conversations between boroughs in workshops to inform and shape the design of projects. LOTI will therefore have a significant surplus in its first year. That surplus will be committed to projects that move LOTI's programme from the set-up stage to active development and delivery of shared solutions from the start of the next financial year.
22. In FY 2020/2021, LOTI staff salaries are expected to increase with the creation of an additional post: a Data Projects Manager. That role will be tasked with managing pan-London data collaboration projects with the boroughs and the GLA. This is expected to be a more junior role than LOTI's current staff, set at band C of London Councils' pay scale.

Next steps

23. LOTI recently published its [roadmap](#) of activity, listing 23 items to be achieved by July 2020, based on activities already underway. This highlights how it will deliver on its commitments to fixing the plumbing in the three important areas outlined above.
24. LOTI is now additionally starting work to establish its Year Two work plan, which is likely to explore how boroughs can share the time, cost and risk of experimenting with much more innovative approaches to technology-enabled reform. This is aimed at fulfilling the ambitions in our sixth workstream: share experiments.
25. LOTI has established an expert Advisory Panel, which operates as a steering group, informing and shaping the priorities of the LOTI work programme. This panel consists of a representative of each LOTI borough (its Chief Executive or other senior officer), London Councils Digital Lead, Mayor Phil Glanville and his shadow leads from the other party groups, and the Director of LOTI. The Panel is chaired by London Councils' Director of

Finance and Performance. LOTI will continue to bring future progress reports back to Leaders' Committee.

Recommendations

26. Leaders' Committee is asked to note the contents of the report.

Financial Implications for London Councils

The Director of Corporate Resources confirms that LOTI's spending plans and the additional costs for the proposed Data Projects Manager post are covered by existing resources.

Legal Implications for London Councils

There are no legal implications arising from this report.

Equalities Implications for London Councils

There are no equalities implications arising from this report.