

Councils awarded over £750,000 to improve services through digital technology

More than £750,000 has been awarded to councils looking to improve services using digital technology, Local Government Minister Luke Hall MP has announced (12 September 2019).

Six projects by local authorities working together across the country have received £753,000 from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government's [Local Digital Fund](#).

They include projects aimed at improving online housing repairs services, making websites for planning applications easier to use, and giving residents smoother methods of online payment.

Minister for Local Government, Luke Hall MP, said:

Councils up and down the country are working together to embrace digital technology and improve public services.

They are truly looking ahead and adapting their work to make things better for residents. I'm delighted to invest over £750,000 from our Local Digital Fund into 6 more collaborative projects aimed at improving local services.

Projects funded and the local authorities involved are:

Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council (lead), Leeds City Council, and Manchester City Council – £350,000.

Providing social workers with better information to cut the time and cost of child referrals. A project to provide social workers with better family context information from other local services for their child referrals. It will speed up children's social workers' decision making, improving the experience of families, and saving money.

Buckinghamshire County Council (lead), Adur and Worthing Council, London Borough of Croydon and Leeds City Council – £50,000.

Prototyping an open community directory of support services. The project will be aimed at developing a community-based service directory in local areas to help residents and council officers know which support services are available locally. This includes both council and third-sector provided support services.

London Borough of Southwark (lead), London Borough of Hackney, Greater London Authority, and Surrey Heath Borough Council – £100,000.

Exploring how to make the planning process more efficient and transparent. The project will look at user-centred digital planning application systems.

City of Lincoln Council, London Borough of Southwark, South Kesteven District and Royal Borough of Greenwich – £100,000

Developing a better online housing repairs system. A project to explore and prototype common service patterns for reporting and managing repairs.

Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council (lead), Allerdale Borough Council, Cherwell District Council, Huntingdon District Council, North East Lincolnshire District Council, Sheffield City Council and South Northamptonshire Council – £80,000.

Exploring income management and e-payments. A project to help councils overcome blockages to adopting existing cost-effective payment and management systems and move away from legacy systems and suppliers.

Worcestershire County Council (lead), Redditch and Bromsgrove Council and Suffolk County Council – £73,000.

Providing registrations data to local authority housing services. A project to use death registration data to reconcile the availability of social housing, reduce the wait time for families on local housing lists and prevent lost council tax revenue.

This funding round was only open to projects which were previously awarded [funding last year](#). A funding round [remains open](#) for new local authority projects to apply to the [Local Digital Fund](#) before it closes on 16 September.

Ideas could range from making people's lives easier with more efficient, online ways to pay for services or get help, to embracing tech to support vulnerable people or making bin collections, social housing repairs and taxi licensing services more efficient.

For the projects, lead councils across the country partner with at least 2 other councils to share knowledge and ideas. This collaborative approach is a key pillar of the government's [Local Digital Declaration](#), launched in 2018, to coordinate public bodies seeking digital solutions

The Fund is also being invested in digital skills and digital leadership training for council staff.

See [more information](#) on the Local Digital Fund, projects previously funded and how to apply.

Only councils in England are eligible to lead on applications; councils in

other parts of the UK are still eligible to partner on applications.