



ODP General Meeting

1st December 2025

What's the purpose of this meeting?

- **When is it?** Monthly, first Monday of the month
- **Who is it?** Everyone involved in Open Digital Planning (over **174** LPAs, delivery partners and the MHCLG team)
- **What is it for?** It's our opportunity to give updates, share opportunities, showcase some of the work happening in the community, and (sometimes) bring in speakers from elsewhere that are relevant to the work we do
- **Is it recorded?** No, but we do add the slides to the ODP hub

Agenda

- Community update
 - MHCLG team changes
 - What happens with your reporting
 - Support during the Festive period
 - ODP events update
- LPA Showcase: Westminster City Council
- Opportunities
 - Learning and development opportunities

Community update

MHCLG team changes

Hellos and farewells!



Welcome to **Guy Cross!**
Senior Delivery Manager in the
MHCLG team that supports the
ODP Community



Farewell to **Sarah** – finishing
work with ODP at the end of
December



Farewell to **Andy** – finishing
work with ODP at the end of
January

What happens with your reporting

Monthly Reporting

- Review report
- Funding remaining
- Help/ support
- Insights
- Monthnotes on Slack



Support during the festive period

Support during the festive period

- MHCLG team
 - Responses may be slower but continue to follow usual process for raising any issues
 - Ask questions in open slack channels, lots of folks can see and help
- ODP products
 - Follow usual process of #help-issues-odp-products slack channel
- Planning data platform – no change to usual process, responses may be slower but people are around to cover emergencies and incidents
 - Endpoint submission form
 - #group-data-support slack channel
 - Email

January 2026 General Meeting

- This will take place on Monday 12th January, rather than our usual first Monday of the month

ODP Events update

ODP Winter event – be quick registration closes on Wednesday 3 Dec!

Date: Thursday 11 December, 10:00 to 16:00 hrs

Venue: Coin Street Neighbourhood Centre, 108 Stamford Street, London SE1 9NH

Why Attend? This is a brilliant opportunity to:

- Share progress and learnings
- Spark new ideas
- Strengthen collaboration across the community

[Register by Wednesday](#)



Save the date!

- 🌸 26th March: ODP Spring Event (Keswick - LDNPA)

Venue: The Stamp Room at the Pencil Factory – Main Street, Keswick

💡 As ever, let us know what you will find valuable from our events! Volunteer to host, get involved, sign up – the more you will get from being part of the community

📅 Further 2026 events – the MHCLG team are now looking to finalise the calendar for 2026

Can you offer a venue and would like to host an ODP event in summer or autumn 2026?

If so, please get in touch if you would like to host an event

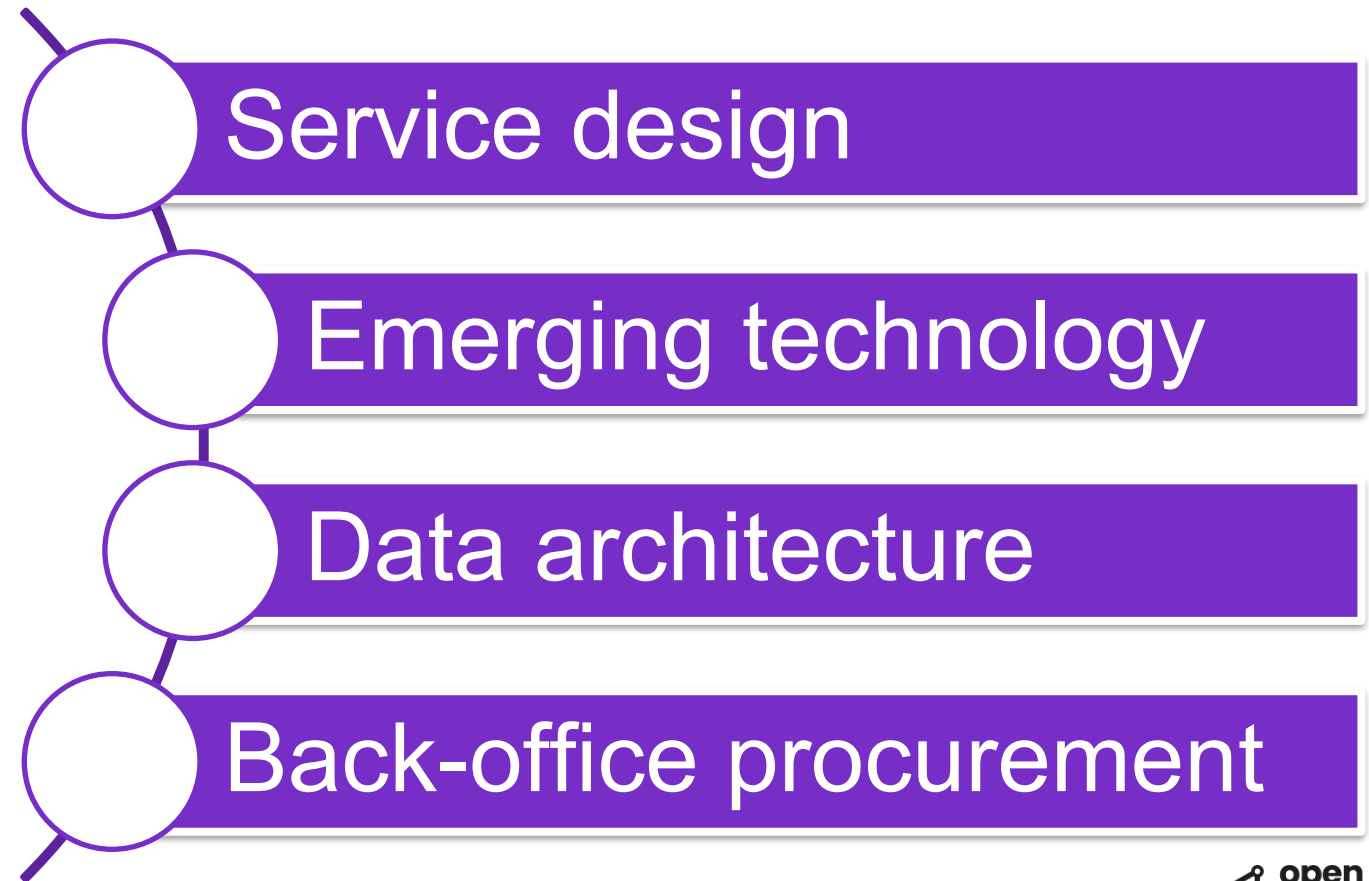
LPA Showcase: Westminster City Council



Westminster ODP Update – 1st December 2025

Planning Horizons: Digital and Design

Balancing the need for improvements now with longer-term holistic transformation



Our approach: tech-enabled, user-centred



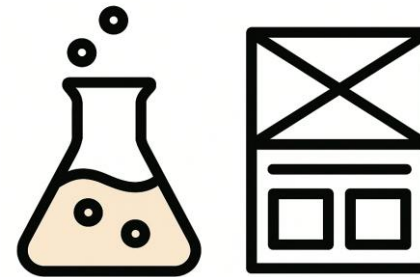
**Agree what
success
looks like**



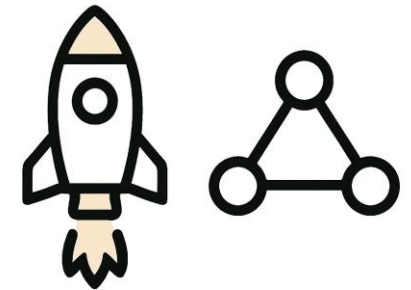
**Research and
define pain
points and
opportunities**



**Generate,
validate and
prioritise
ideas**



**Pilot and
prototype
concepts**



**Scale and
roll out**

Working collaboratively across Planning



Workshops with Planning colleagues to map processes and user journeys

Shadowing and interviewing Planning Officers in their day-to-day work

Planning Officers in teams with data, design and software engineering colleagues at an AI hackathon

Strategic workshops with leadership teams

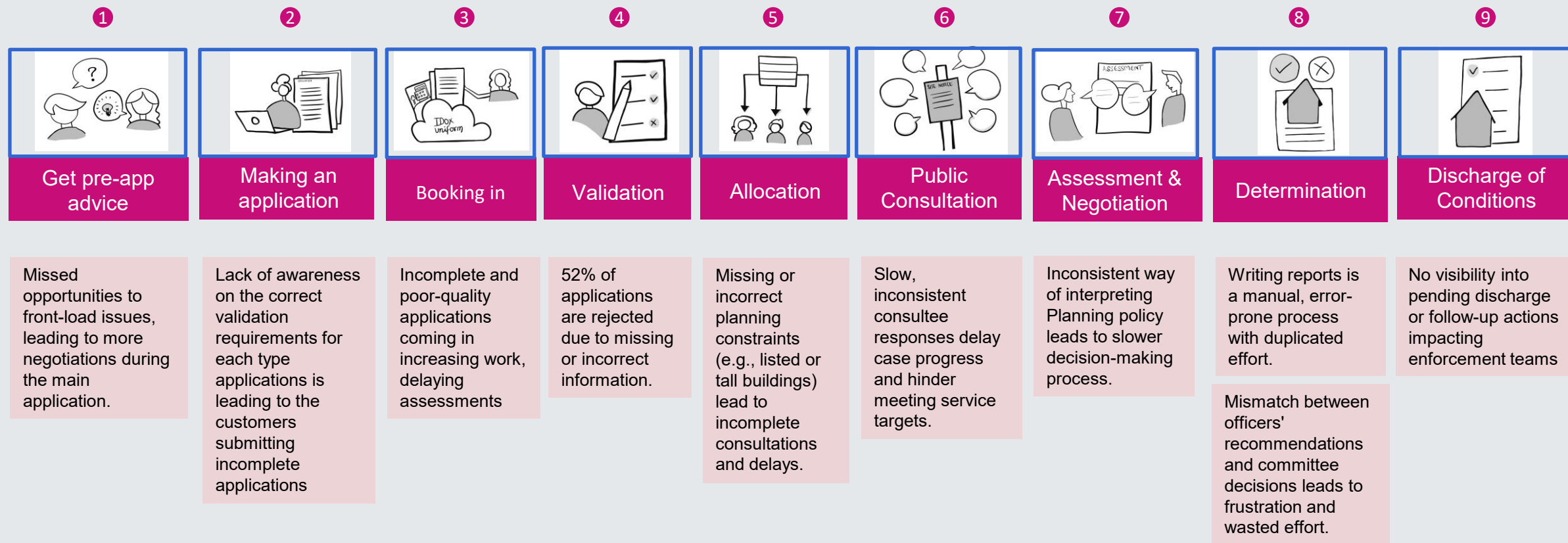


“

I would like to have a real control over the responses from the consultees. We get loads of information from different parties and automating summaries will save us hours and hours, to do determinations and assessment more effectively”

Planning Officer

Tackling challenges journey-wise, stage-wise and system-wise



5a. Senior Design, Conservation & Sustainability officer



“

"If I could wave a magic wand, all applications are acceptable. Details submitted are compliant with policy and guidance. Complete all applications on time. Receive all applications on time and an improved backoffice system."

Key Responsibilities

- Assess the impact on design and heritage
- Compliance with policy
- Ensure preserve and/or enhance heritage assets
- Process pre-apps
- Make decisions
- Deal with appeals
- Morning meetings are meetings where we process many applications very quickly (ex: a day to process 12 applications where there is no need for consultations, mostly approval, and then we write them up)
- Design surgery happens every 4 weeks on a rota system allocating 12 slots for Planning officers to present the case and take your inputs verbally.

Success Measures

Pre-app specific

- Provide applicants/developers with clear information to ensure applications meet approval requirements.
- Ensure submitted applications are complete and meet necessary standards.
- Deliver high-quality advice that drives repeat business and income generation.

Touchpoints, Systems & Tools

Local plan - e-mail legislation, heritage policy and guidance, morning meeting, design surgery, consultations, level of complexity – 0, uniform, planning map, competing priorities, sustainability, Highways, historic England, national amenity societies local amenity societies

Unique User Needs

I need all the information (design drawings, heritage statement, design and access statement, townscape visual impact assessment, mapping) in an acceptable format and clear policy and guidance the first time **so that** I can quickly progress the caseload

I need a consult on Uniform(C3) & (E10) in order to be notified **so that** I can negotiate this into my workload

I need a site visit, clarification on certain elements, further drawings where necessary **so that** I understand the application completely and can assess it taking into consideration, also incorporating any Committee Comments or send my objections to planning officer accordingly

I need to provide inputs on the planning application and appeals in various forums based on my unique expertise **so that** all applicants comply with the policy, design, environmental, infrastructure, and legal requirements



Copilot Mini Hackathon at WCC

Theme

How might we automate repetitive, time-consuming tasks to enable greater productivity for Planning staff?

Attendees

Planning Officers, ISU team members, Software Engineers, Data Scientists, Service Designers and colleagues from Microsoft

On the day

- All attendees actively involved in hacking and iteration
- Microsoft supported teams to make quick progress
- Embraced failure
- All teams produced a working proof of concept on test data



Evaluating the prototypes

Prioritising capabilities to take forward:

1. Document Uploader
2. Document Triager
3. Drawing Number Extractor
4. Consultation Summariser



Assessment criteria



AI effectiveness



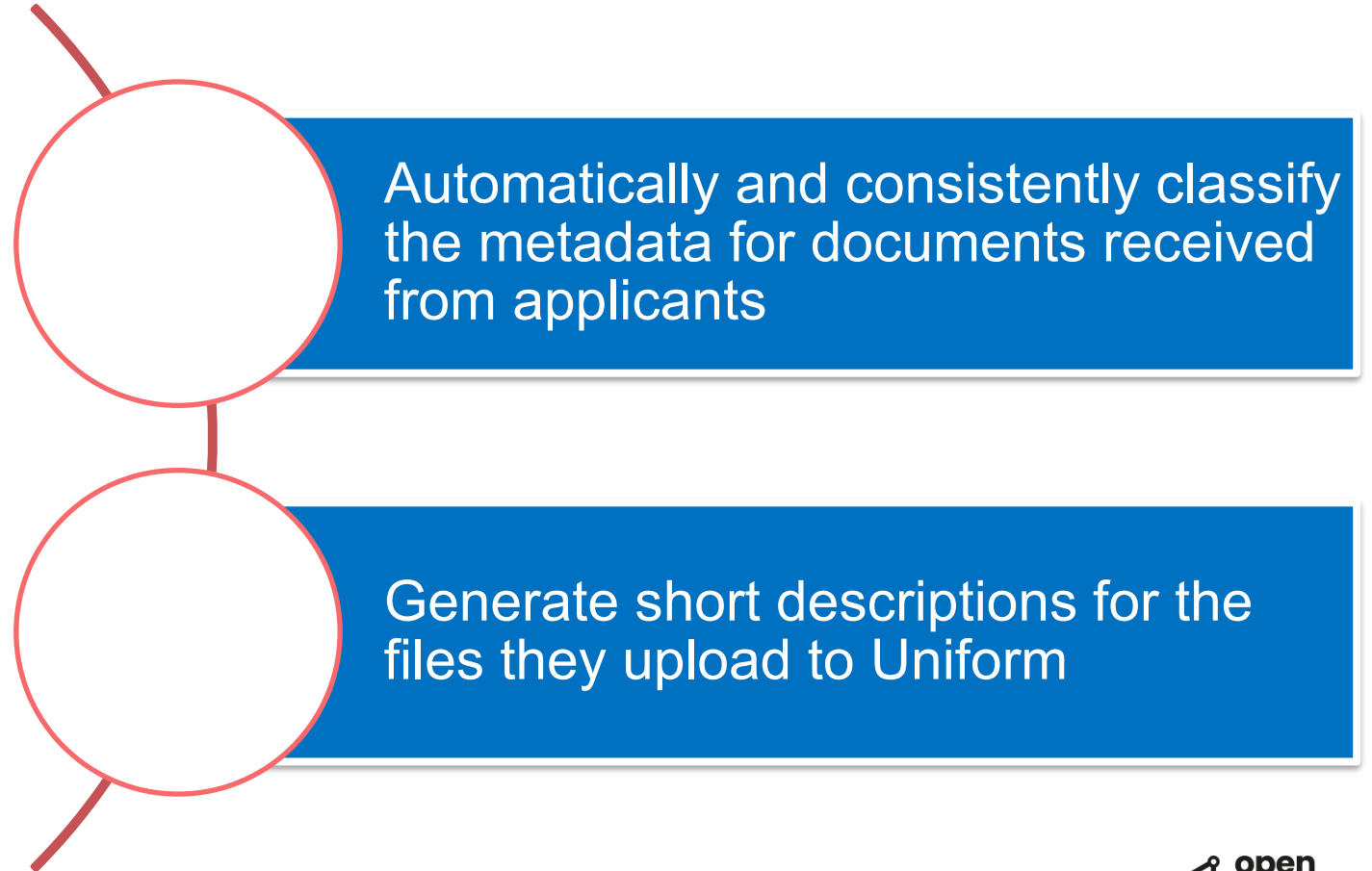
Feasibility of build requirements



Productivity gains

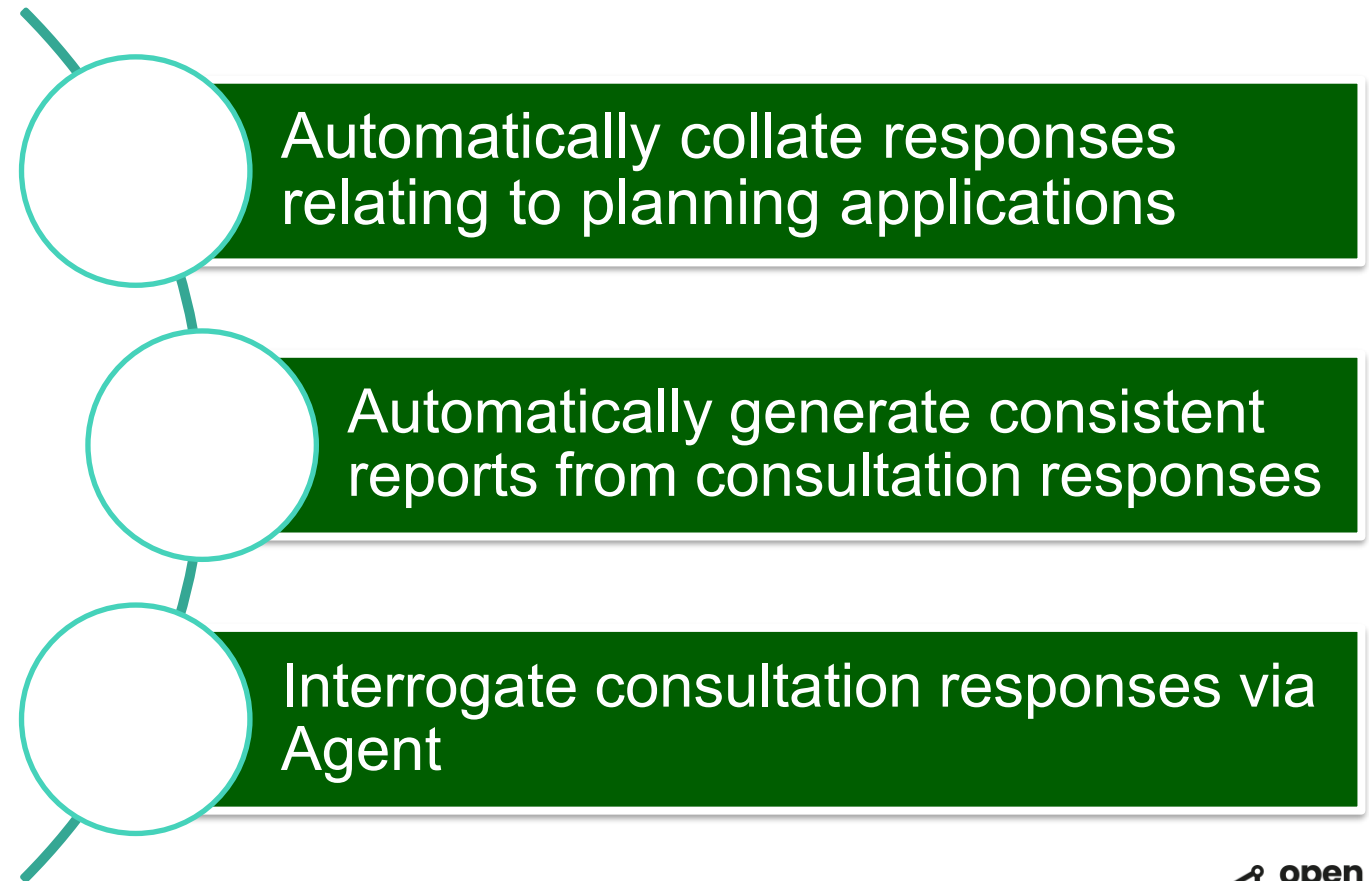
Document Uploader

Planning Officers
can...



Consultation Summariser

Planning Officers
can...





Questions?

Tell your story!

- We'd like to continue LPA showcase slots at future General Meetings
- If you'd like to take a 10 minute showcase slot, please get in touch with Tom
- Showcases are the same short story-telling moments we have at our in-person events, opportunities to hear from the range of LPAs in ODP and all the interesting work happening!

Opportunities

Learning and development opportunities

101 Short Learning Sessions

- ~~Agile 101 12/11/25~~
- ~~User Research 101 19/11/25~~
- ~~User Centred Design 101 26/11/25~~
- **Content Design 101 3/12/25**
- Procurement 101 10/12/25
- Measuring Impact 101 17/12/25
- Artificial Intelligence 101 7/1/26
- Change Management 101 14/1/26
- Citizen Engagement 101 21/1/26
- Leadership and Governance 101 28/1/26

GIS Training

- GIS Basics pilot course is now live!
 - 15 places available on 15th, 16th, 17th December 1pm to 3pm, and you must attend all 3.
 - Must have QGIS installed for session 2 and 3
- Lots of courses coming in January....
 - 8th January – Intermediate GIS (full day)
 - 17th January – Cleaning Data (full day)
 - 15th and 22nd January – Publishing Data (2 hour sessions)
 - 27th January – Basic GIS (full day)

Digital for Directors

- Sessions have now been rescheduled...
- Aimed at Local Authority Directors in Planning, Placemaking, Regeneration, Economic Development
- Limited to 8 participants
- Led by **Sarah Chilcott**, former Managing Director at the national Planning Portal



Thank you!

#all-lpa-general