Evaluation of the London Office of Technology and Innovation (LOTI)

January 2024

MAYOR OF LONDON

Contents

Executive summary

The London Office of Technology & Innovation (LOTI) was established in 2019 to address a deficit of digital collaboration within London local government. LOTI aimed to inspire and enable better collective digital leadership and capabilities; deliver stronger digital foundations by embedding common standards and approaches; facilitate peer-to-peer sharing and innovate to improve current and future public services and outcomes for Londoners.

LOTI is a membership organisation: initially with 15 London boroughs as members, now 27. Each borough contributes £30,000 in annual fees (or £22,500 each if represented by a shared IT service) and the Greater London Authority (GLA) and London Councils each contribute £100,000 per year. LOTI has also secured £3m in external funding (as of July 2023). LOTI employs a small number of staff which has grown year-on-year as its portfolio of work has expanded (three staff in year 1, now a team of eight).

GLA City Intelligence was commissioned to undertake an evaluation of the organisation's activities and performance since its creation in 2019. The objectives of the evaluation were to (i) review progress against LOTI's core mission and objectives, (ii) understand the value LOTI offered its members, and (iii) assess the value for money of specific LOTI activities.

Evaluation methods
We adopted a mixed methods approach to the evaluation. A survey was designed to understand the views of data and digital professionals working in boroughs that were LOTI members. Semi-structured interviews were held with six senior digital leaders in LOTI member boroughs and two LOTI representatives. Desk-based research was undertaken to review outputs and supporting material. Seven activities were assessed in more detail for their value for money. Challenges in capturing and quantifying the social costs and benefits of these activities, as well as insufficient data, meant full cost-benefit analysis was not undertaken for each activity. Instead we considered the underlying economic rationale for each activity, reviewed or retrospectively developed logic chains, assessed recorded outputs or outcomes and where possible considered value for money in terms of efficiency savings compared to a business-as-usual scenario.

Key findings

1. Progress against LOTI's mission and objectives
LOTI substantially improved digital collaboration across London, receiving overwhelmingly positive feedback from both the survey and interviews with LOTI members. Members feel supported by LOTI staff and ultimately LOTI helps them 'get things done'. Collaboration is challenging and members feel that the cross-borough work co-ordinated by LOTI would not happen otherwise. However, challenges to collaboration remain; there is a lack of alignment around goals, different organisational mindsets and silo-working in local government is hard to overcome.

Digital leadership: Senior digital leaders could clearly articulate how LOTI facilitates a space for senior leaders to collaborate. LOTI provides thought leadership on important topics such as Digital Inclusion and Generative Artificial Intelligence. Specialised recruitment support has helped build senior management capacity, which had previously been a significant challenge.

Sharing and re-using: Members gave examples of how exchanging knowledge and resources benefited them. As a result, LOTI has improved members' understanding of best practice in technology and data. Sharing fairly simple information such as job descriptions for hard-to-fill vacancies has been very effective.

Better partnerships: Members identified strong collaboration within LOTI member boroughs. LOTI also facilitates communication with external stakeholders that were previously seen as hard-to-reach within central government.

Embedding standards: Initiatives such as the Pan-London Data Sharing Agreements project has successfully standardised practices and established a common working group approach to information governance for all London local authorities. Implementing common software (e.g. Dapian) across members worked less well – not all boroughs have the same requirements and have differing levels of capacity to invest both time and money in a shared digital solution.

Data collaboration: Focussing on information governance has been very successful and pivotal in removing barriers to sharing data. In other areas such as procurement contracting it has been hard to galvanise boroughs to share information and address shared challenges together.

Shared experiments: Successful projects include the Attack Surface Mapping Pilot and the Get Online London digital inclusion service. There remains room for adopting more experimental approaches, which remains a key approach in LOTI's plans for the forthcoming years.

2. What members value
LOTI is highly valued by all parts of its community that we surveyed and interviewed. Membership has grown and existing members have been retained. Against the backdrop of a global pandemic and ongoing challenges within local government, it has established a distinct and credible brand and fosters a positive culture that promotes collaboration. LOTI staff were praised; they are seen as resourceful and supportive. Members value being part of this supportive community, but their lack of time and capacity can be a barrier to participation. Digital leaders from boroughs have attended every monthly meeting since its inception. LOTI's distinct culture encourages members to seek assistance from within the community, avoiding redundant efforts and promoting efficient knowledge-sharing. LOTI has advanced members' understanding of best practice in technology, data, and innovation. Several stakeholders felt LOTI could do more to communicate its value to members and beyond.

3. Value for money
While it is hard to quantify precisely how much, it is evident that LOTI helps boroughs save time and money. Recruitment support from LOTI is associated with cost savings for member boroughs of at least £300k compared to market rates for the same type of support, and the Data Sharing Agreements project has potentially delivered £1.4m in savings to the public sector compared to staff time that would be required for individual agreements between all parties.

Several other projects appear to be cost effective in certain plausible scenarios. The Attack Surface Mapping pilot would only need to have avoided one cyber-attack (costing £242k) to provide net benefits to the public. As a reference point, IBM estimated the average cost of a single cyber-attack with a data breach to be £3.4m, and the costs to remedy the 2020 cyber-attack on Hackney Council are thought to have been even higher. The 'Preventing vulnerable residents from crisis' project would offer value for money if it avoided just two crisis events, such as a person becoming homeless or a child being taken into care. We were not able to establish value for money of three activities examined: LOTI-provided training courses, Dapian, and LOTI guides and resources. However, these activities are all fairly low-cost, are underpinned by a clear rationale and could deliver important outputs and outcomes.

Importantly, our analysis is limited to the efficiency savings accruing to borough members. A more comprehensive social cost benefit analysis would consider the resulting outcomes of these activities for Londoners to determine their value for money. The social and economic benefits to Londoners could be far higher than the financial savings to boroughs.

Boroughs that are members will be concerned about the bottom line; their return on investment for LOTI membership. Members we interviewed consider LOTI good value for money. While it is difficult to estimate the benefits for an individual borough, we identify potential cost savings from several activities and suggest that all activities examined show potential to offer good value for money. LOTI's activities have also resulted in benefits for boroughs who are not members, such as the data sharing agreements project. LOTI guides and resources are freely available and have been used widely, including outside London.

1 Introduction

In February 2023, the GLA decided to continue its funding for LOTI for three further years. The end of the first tranche of funding offers a natural point at which to take stock and review progress. GLA City Intelligence was commissioned by the London Office of Technology & Innovation (LOTI) to undertake an evaluation of the organisation's activities and performance since its inception in 2019. The research was led by GLA Economics with the support of the GLA's Opinion Research team.

In broad terms, the evaluation aimed to assess whether LOTI has met (and continues to meet) its objectives, the needs of its members and beneficiaries, and whether it represents good value for money to the public purse. It is hoped that the evaluation will help inform LOTI's next phase of work.

It is important to state at the outset that this is not a comprehensive impact evaluation of LOTI, which was beyond the scope of this commission. Such is the broad nature of LOTI's work, which often involves facilitating collaboration and information-sharing between partners, it is difficult to quantify and monetise impacts. The focus of the evaluation was therefore on 1) seeking the views of LOTI's member organisations through qualitative research, and 2) examining the potential value for money offered by seven LOTI activities, where in some cases it was more feasible to quantify outputs and outcomes.

The report is structured as follows:

- Chapter 2 provides background information about LOTI, its objectives, main areas of work and expenditure.

- Chapter 3 discusses the objectives and research questions that were pursued as lines of enquiry for the evaluation and summarises the methodology including its limitations.

- Chapter 4 presents the findings of the qualitative research including survey results and interviews.

- Chapter 5 examines seven strands of LOTI's work in more detail, providing a high-level assessment of their value for money.

- Chapter 6 provides a summary and concluding remarks.

2 About LOTI

Following the call from the Mayor in the 2018 [Smarter Together London](#) roadmap, the London Office of Technology & Innovation (LOTI) was created in the following year to help boroughs, London Councils and the GLA make the best possible use of technology, data, and innovation to improve public services and outcomes for Londoners.

LOTI is a membership organisation, that helps its 27[1] borough members, London Councils and the GLA to use data and technology to enhance organisational performance and facilitate collaboration around common technology-related challenges.

LOTI's core community is made up of London local government's Chief Digital, Information and Innovation officers (CDIOs) and their technology, digital and data teams. However, with a mission to improve services and outcomes for Londoners, it also works regularly with officers from service and policy areas like Environment, Social Care and Housing.

It is important to note for context that shortly after LOTI's inception, the Covid-19 pandemic began. This unprecedented and turbulent period made it exceptionally challenging for a newly established organisation to operate and meant that some of the organisation's priorities and its delivery model had to pivot to reflect external circumstances.

LOTI's objectives

The original business case for LOTI sets out a mission for the organisation and some high-level objectives.

"LOTI's mission is to address the digital collaboration deficit to improve public services and outcomes for Londoners. Its objectives are to inspire and enable better collective digital leadership and capabilities; deliver stronger digital foundations for public services through common standards and approaches; and innovate to improve current and future public services."

The Membership Charter[2] went on to refine these into six objectives as follows:

1. **Enable better digital leadership:** Helping senior managers and political leaders within member organisations develop their understanding and skills to make the most of digital, thereby building the digital skills pipeline.
2. **Sharing & reusing**: Facilitating better peer-to-peer sharing of needs, ideas, evidence, tools, patterns and code to build boroughs' collective knowledge.
3. **Better partnerships**. Encouraging more effective collaboration, relationships and networks with suppliers, universities and non-profits, etc.
4. **Embedding standards**: Supporting the adoption of useful technical standards and common approaches and practices.
5. **Data collaboration:** Removing barriers to responsible data sharing. Vetting and managing collaborative data projects across London's public sector.
6. **Shared experiments**: Helping boroughs spread the risk, reduce the cost and accelerate their learning about new innovations.

These are strategic objectives but they are not SMART[3] objectives in that they do not specify quantified outputs or outcomes to be delivered in a particular time frame. This means that for the purposes of our

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[1] 27 boroughs were members of LOTI in October 2023. Initially in July 2019, LOTI had 15 borough members.
[2] Signed by all member Boroughs at the point they join.
[3] Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Timebound

evaluation, we have assessed progress against them qualitatively, based on the evidence provided to us and gathered through semi-structured interviews and a survey of stakeholders. We report quantified outputs and outcomes related to these objectives where they are available.

LOTI does not have a formal set of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). However, it has two high-level indicators of performance internally which are:

i) **Membership**: whether membership is growing and if existing members are retained – a sign that these members perceive value in the work of the organisation. In July 2019, LOTI had 15 borough members and as of October 2023 had expanded to 27 of the 33 London boroughs as well as London Councils and the Greater London Authority.

ii) **Attendance from senior staff**: LOTI aims to engage with Chief Information Officers (or similarly senior roles) from each pertinent organisation to make it a forum that can make decisions and act together. Senior leaders have attended every monthly meeting since its inception.

It also tracks several other metrics such as the number of guides, toolkits and templates shared with boroughs, the number of collaborative projects and additional funding secured. Some of these outputs are set out in Chapter 5.

Programme of work

Linked to the objectives above, LOTI summarises the four main things it does for its community as:

1. **Share knowledge** – for example through reports, guides and workshops and through communities of practice.

2. **Build capacity** – helping boroughs with their recruitment and training.

3. **Lead collaborative projects** – some very experimental, while others aim to scale good practice.

4. **Influence change** – building partnerships with key organisations from central government departments to trade associations and speak with one voice on behalf of members.

LOTI established a programme of work across eight workstreams, designed to build digital, data and technology capacity across London public service stakeholders. Some of the main activities and support offered to members under each workstream include the following (note this is not a comprehensive list):

Work strand	Support/ Offer
1. Recruitment Support	Access to LOTI recruiter LOTI Jobs Board Salary Benchmarking LOTI Careers days
2. Networks & Communities of Practice	Communities of practice for data professionals LOTI HQ: group of boroughs' main representatives who meet monthly LOTI women's network
3. Skills & Training	Data science training with Office for National Statistics Upfront Confidence Course
4. Guides & Resources	>50 guides, tools and templates
5.Technology Products	LOTI creates, finds or negotiates better prices on technology products that can enhance boroughs' work
6. Campaigns & Lobbying	LOTI speaks with one voice to central government departments, suppliers and other major partners
7. Collaborative Projects	Opportunity to design and participate in digital and data innovation projects, from net-zero to social care.
8. Expertise & Capacity	Access to LOTI team's expertise Access to specialists hired by LOTI LOTI service staff

Resources and expenditure

Each borough member pays £30,000 in annual fees (or £22,500 for each borough that is represented by a shared IT service) and LOTI receives £100,000 in funding from the GLA and £100,000 from London Councils. LOTI is hosted by London Councils. Bloomberg (Bloomberg Philanthropies and Bloomberg Associates) provided financial and in-kind support for LOTI's initial discovery and set-up, and continue to provide ongoing support for specific events.

As of February 2023, LOTI had a budget of just under £1m excluding external funding. External funding secured over the period (some of which is still to be spent) has included:

- £1.362m from the GLA for the Digital Access for All mission.

- £1.2m to develop the next stage of Get Online London (signed off in July 2023)

- £340,000 from the Department for Levelling Up Housing and Communities (DLUHC) and boroughs to create a rough sleeping data platform.

- £120,000 from MOPAC and MET Police to co-fund Pan-London Information Governance role.

The main items of LOTI expenditure for the financial years since its inception are set out in Table 1.

Table 1: LOTI headline expenditure by financial year

Item	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	Total
Staff and hosting cost	**252,000**	**380,000**	**485,000**	**648,000**	**1,765,000**
Projects					
Training & skills:					-
Upfront confidence course			75,000		75,000
Design sprints:					-
Internet of things	15,000				15,000
Climate goals				31,000	31,000
Pan-London Information Governance:					
Dapian	20,000	66,000			86,000
Consultancy support for data ethics charter			10,000		10,000
Pan-London IG pilot				7,700	7,700
Cyber security:	-				-
Cyber security discovery report			10,000		10,000
Attack Surface mapping pilot				75,000	75,000
Recruitment support:					-
Headhunter				60,000	60,000
Salary benchmarking report and exemplar JDs				22,000	22,000
Salary Tracker Tool				21,000	21,000
Other:					
Preventing vulnerable residents from reaching crisis			75,000		75,000
Mapping digital exclusion			78,000		78,000
PUBLIC Consultancy support for housing services tender		32,000	31,000		63,000
Assistive technology pilot		40,000	16,000		56,000
Device upcycling			10,000		10,000
Research into innovative social care tech			10,000		10,000
Research into new service models			10,000		10,000
Thirty3		57,000			57,000
Projects total	**35,000**	**195,000**	**325,000**	**216,700**	**771,700**
Overall total	**287,000**	**575,000**	**810,000**	**864,700**	**2,536,700**

Staff and hosting costs are the largest items of expenditure, reflecting the collaborative nature of much of LOTI's work[4]. The LOTI team is small but has grown year-on-year as the organisation's portfolio of work has expanded (Year 1: 3 people; Year 2: 4 people; Year 3: 5 people; Year 4: 8 people).

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[4] Staff and hosting costs include Building costs, other premises, CR Salaries, CoL SLA, Insurance, Audit fees, Depreciation, CR Supplies & Services, Telephones, Postage, Comms Salaries, Comms Supplies & Services, Corporate Salaries, Photocopying, Corporate Supplies & Services.

3 Evaluation objectives and methodology

This chapter sets out the objectives for the evaluation including the key research questions and lines of enquiry, our approach and methodology.

Objectives

Three main objectives of the evaluation were identified:

a) **Objective 1: Review progress against LOTI's original mission and objectives.**
LOTI's objectives were articulated in several documents and in different ways, but we adopted the six from the Membership charter (see above). These are not SMART objectives, so we were unable to assess progress against them quantitively. Instead, we examined progress qualitatively through the survey and interviews and reported outputs and outcomes for programmes where they were available.

b) **Objective 2: Understand what value LOTI has brought to its members and their satisfaction with the membership model.**
Specific research questions included: What do members value about their membership of LOTI? What do members value in LOTI's objectives? What are members' perceptions of the support LOTI has provided and its role in facilitating collaboration? How has collaboration amongst boroughs worked to date?

c) **Objective 3: Assess the value for money that LOTI's activities provide for Londoners.**
As set out below we aimed to assess whether seven of LOTI's activities provide value for money for Londoners. These activities do not cover the entirety of LOTI's expenditure and programme of work.

Methodology

To meet the evaluation objectives, we adopted a mixed methods approach to build on available evidence. We carried out a survey to understand the views of the data and digital professionals working in boroughs that were LOTI members. We also conducted qualitative research in the form of semi-structured interviews with a sample of senior digital leaders in LOTI boroughs and LOTI themselves. Finally, we carried out a desk-based review of outputs and supporting material on the seven activities chosen to assess value for money using a framework discussed below.[5]

Survey

This survey was designed to understand participants' experience of being part of the LOTI community (i.e., what they valued and what they didn't value about their membership). Target respondents included digital and data professionals working in all LOTI member boroughs, who were invited to participate in the survey in July 2023. Several reminders were sent by email encouraging those invited to complete the survey before it was closed three weeks later.

Whilst all borough members were invited to participate in the survey, 75% (18 of 24) borough members completed the survey.

Semi-structured interviews

Semi-structured interviews were designed to examine perceptions of senior digital leaders in borough members on LOTI's performance, collaboration activities, as well as to help us identify their views on specific elements of LOTI's projects, events, guides and resources. Ten senior digital leaders were approached for

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[5] Most of the value for money assessments cover costs and output data up until the end of financial year 2022/23, and the qualitative analysis was conducted later on in 2023.

consent to take part in the interview as well as two representatives of LOTI (director and fellow/founder). The interviewees were selected on the basis that they had been involved with LOTI from the start and had in-depth knowledge of LOTI. Each interview lasted up to one hour and was conducted online (using Teams).

Value-for-money analysis

Value for money (VfM) analysis can take different forms depending on the purpose of the assessment and the perspective of the evaluators. The National Audit Office (NAO) defines value for money as the optimal use of resources to achieve the intended outcomes. 'Optimal' means 'the most desirable possible given expressed or implied restrictions or constraints'[6]. The NAO uses three criteria to assess the value for money of government spending, known as the three 'Es':

- **Economy**: minimising the cost of resources used or required (inputs) – "**spending less"**.

- **Efficiency**: the relationship between the output from goods or services and the resources to produce them – "**spending well"**.

- **Effectiveness**: the relationship between the intended and actual results (outcomes) of public spending – "**spending wisely"**.

The NAO approach is considered best practice for auditing public expenditure. Value for money, as described in the HMT Magenta Book guidance, is focused on comparing the social benefits of an intervention against the social costs. In this context, it is often an extension of impact evaluation which aims to assess what difference a policy intervention made, whether the expected outcomes were achieved, and whether they can be attributed to the intervention.

The most comprehensive form of VfM analysis is social cost-benefit analysis, which assesses the impact of an intervention on social welfare with all relevant social costs and benefits valued in monetary terms[7]. Alternatively, it can take the form of cost-effectiveness analysis which compares the costs of alternative ways of producing the same unit of output (e.g. cost per job supported).

Such is the broad nature of LOTI's work that it was agreed early in the process that a comprehensive impact evaluation and value for money assessment of the entirety of LOTI's work programme was not feasible. First, it would not be possible to capture (let alone quantify) all the relevant social costs and benefits of LOTIs activities and support. Second, the data to inform this analysis had not been collected so there would have been significant data constraints. This is consistent with HM Treasury Magenta Book guidance, which emphasises the importance of evaluations being proportionate and tailored to their intended purpose[8].

We therefore agreed to focus on a particular set of activities, according to the following criteria:

- Amenable to economic evaluation: Can we quantify and monetise the potential benefits?
- Importance: Are the likely costs and/or benefits likely to be significant (relative to other activities)?
- Feasibility: Are the necessary data available, or if not, can we make plausible and valid assumptions?

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[6] National Audit Office (n.d.) 'Successful commissioning toolkit'
[7] HM Treasury. (2020). HMT Magenta Book, p.49.
[8] HM Treasury. (2020). HMT Magenta Book, p.49.

Based on these criteria, the following activities were prioritised:

1. Recruitment support for member boroughs
2. Training and skills provided to member boroughs
3. Collaborative Project: Preventing vulnerable residents from reaching crisis
4. Collaborative Project: Pan London Data Sharing Agreements Project
5. Collaborative Project: Attack Surface Mapping Pilot
6. Technology product: Dapian
7. Guides and resources[9]

Other activities that are central to LOTI's way of working such as 'networks and communities of practice' and 'influencing and lobbying' were excluded from this analysis as they are less amenable to economic evaluation. Significant collaborative projects such as 'Supporting Dementia Care' and 'Mapping digital exclusion' were also excluded on the basis that the outcomes of these projects are dependent on the effectiveness of other unrelated interventions making it difficult to isolate LOTI's contribution to the potential benefits, based on our preliminary assessment of the evidence.

While our original intention was to undertake cost-benefit analysis for all seven strands, it soon became apparent that this would not be possible with the data available, nor would it be proportionate to do so given the level of LOTI expenditure. We assessed value for money according to the framework described below. These are all key questions that would form part of a Treasury Green Book-compliant economic appraisal:

- **Rationale:** Was there a clear rationale for intervention (i.e. a market failure or other reason why the public sector needed to intervene)? Was evidence provided to articulate the problem and the case for intervention?

- **Logic chain:** Was there a clear logic chain for how LOTI's activities would translate into outputs, outcomes and have a positive impact for Londoners?

- **Outputs and outcomes:** What outputs and outcomes were achieved and what was the additionality? (i.e. would they have happened without LOTI intervention?)

- **Value for money:** Depending on the data available, were there financial savings to the public sector? Were there social benefits that could be monetised and did they exceed the costs?

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[9] Resources cover a range of topics, including guidance for local authorities around generative AI

4 Qualitative research findings

This chapter presents the findings of our research based on a survey of members and semi-structured interviews.

Survey participation

We received responses from 31 individuals working in 18 of the boroughs that are members of LOTI, out of a total of 25 borough members (at the time of administering the survey). No responses were received from seven borough members, nor London Councils.

Figure 1: Number of survey participants by borough
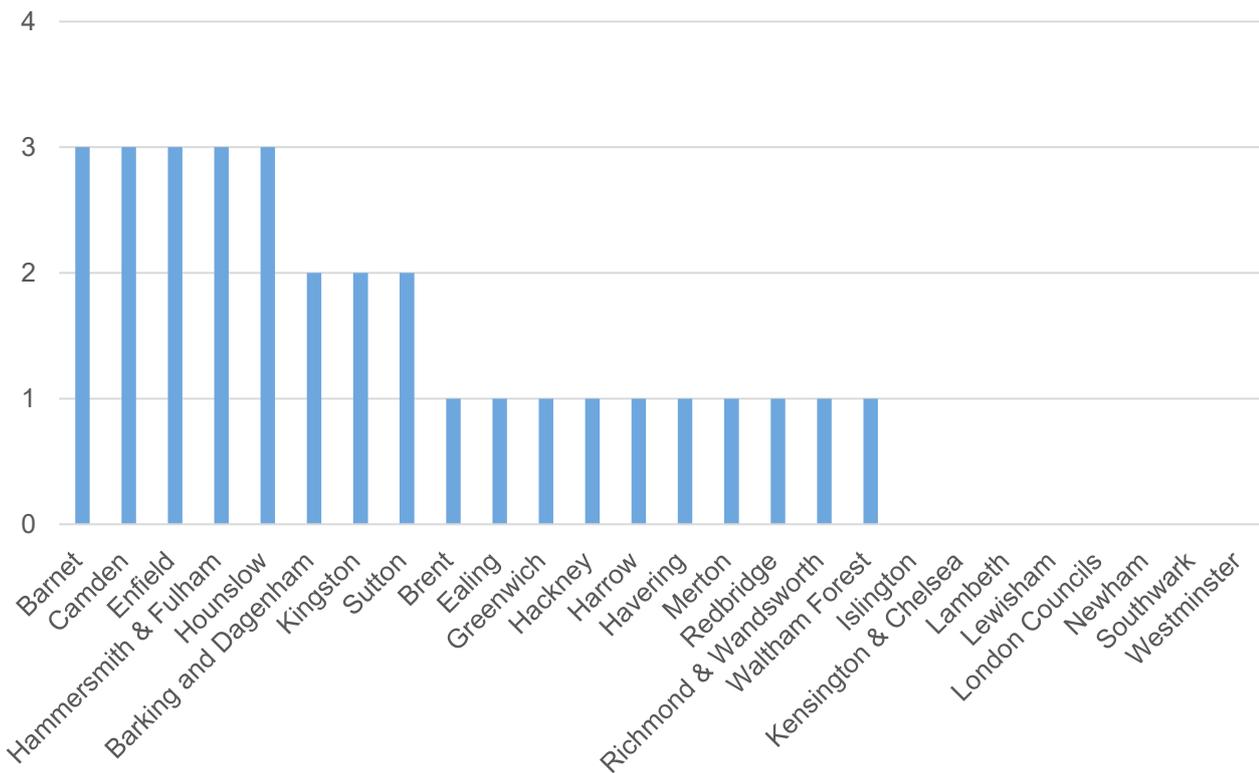
Interview participation

Six senior digital leaders from member boroughs as well as two members of LOTI (the Director and a LOTI Fellow and founder) took part in the interviews. Two other digital leaders declined to participate.

The rest of the chapter sets out findings in the following sections:

A: The scale of the challenge
B. LOTI's overall performance and member satisfaction
C. LOTI's role in promoting collaboration and knowledge-sharing
D. Feedback on LOTI projects and initiatives
E. LOTI's impact and value to members
F. The future of LOTI

A. The scale of the challenge

The capacity and resource constraints facing London boroughs is important context for how LOTI works with its members and its ability to meet its objectives.

Boroughs' circumstances and internal processes differ

Even though boroughs across London face similar core challenges on issues such as social care, housing, and climate change, amongst others, they also contend with different local circumstances, such as working with different politicians and local issues making their circumstances unique. For example, a significant number of members spoke of their internal challenges and how this impacted their ability to make the most of their membership with LOTI.

Therefore, LOTI's vision around a pan-London approach is not straight-forward because the political and local challenges that boroughs face individually impact on their needs and priorities. This makes prioritising projects to meet challenges across boroughs complicated.

> *"Sometimes you can see politics between councils and individuals in other discussions, you know, where people have opposing views." (Interviewee, borough member)*

> *"…it is just thoroughly accepting that London is not one city, it is at least 33 cities, and it is mostly a fantasy that London does a thing all at the same time, in the same way. It is just not the city we have." (Interviewee, internal stakeholder)*

Different pressures faced by members mean that aligning their work and timescales is not easy. For example, an interviewee gave an example of how different circumstances inside local authorities can delay work with LOTI. Another interviewee explained that collaborating to have the same software across boroughs is not straight-forward.

> *"I just think the vision [regarding collaboration] is really nice, and I think it's the right vision as well. But there is something called a harsh reality. The hard reality on the ground is the fact that…all of us are in different places from a council perspective, like, we all have different challenges, we have different politicians that we work with..." (Interviewee, borough member)*

Member boroughs have different internal processes. This can make it difficult at times to align each borough's work with LOTI's work. For example, the differences between members' internal processes complicate the conversations in relation to aligning systems such as uniting and signing up to a main software which they can collectively use.

> *"…because we have quite a big, outsourced contract with another technology provider, which doesn't necessarily work sometimes with the collaboration activities." (Interviewee, internal stakeholder)*

> *"we all have different governance structures in place, so it's not as easy as saying, 'Hey, seven of you, your particular software is expiring. Do you all want to join together and have one contract?" (Interviewee, borough member)*

> *"There may be areas where we don't participate due to different approaches with other councils." (Survey respondent, borough member)*

Members' priorities are not always the same

Since members have their own local circumstances and face different challenges, their priorities could also differ. Therefore, LOTI's ability to meet all members' requirements and needs is challenging. For example,

while some members may have more interest in IT issues, others may be more interested in digital transformation.

> *"doing enough that keeps both camps happy, and multiple camps happy, is not straightforward"* (Interviewee, internal stakeholder).

> *"Sometimes you can see politics between councils and individuals in other discussions, you know, where people have opposing views." (Interviewee, borough member)*

> *"It is not about if we are ahead of the game, but I think the priorities definitely differ. I think LOTI probably does not have sight of what our challenges are." (Interviewee, borough member)*

The survey also revealed as barriers to collaboration 'a lack of alignments around goals' (18%) and 'different mindsets in each organisation' (18%). For example, one interviewee said that as they were ahead of other members, most of their learning came from their interactions with LOTI itself.

> *"I haven't signed up for collaborative projects a lot with LOTI members because they're all in different headspaces, or they're slightly behind in the curve, or ahead in the curve in some instances" (Interviewee, borough member)*

> *"There is also, like, a bit of a difference of opinion. I, kind of, strongly think that we can make these legacy…older organisations who work in often frustrating ways to us. I think we can use our commercial power, our market power, to make them change…But others think we should be developing our own things and trying to ignore them. So, there is a bit of philosophical difference as well, in opinion". (Interviewee, borough member)*

Despite these challenges, members broadly appreciate LOTI's efforts in addressing their needs and wants. Also, there was an appreciation that the differences between members meant they could complement each other which is a key benefit of the participatory model which LOTI advocates.

> *"LOTI is trying to create improvements in a range of difficult areas. Not all of them can align with all member requirements all the time. The service and insight it provides has been and continues to be a worthwhile spend for our Borough." (Survey respondent, borough member)*

> *"… we are all at different speeds and different places. We are probably all really good at one thing that the others can share from… And that, I think, works quite nicely. So, it's a very, like, loose confederation, and that works, because we all come from different politics. You know, there are lots of differences and there are budget differences. So, to have a more participatory model seems to work quite well." (Interviewee, borough member)*

Local authority departments often work in silos and lack internal capacity
The effectiveness of LOTI's projects rely on more than just input from the digital/IT team in each borough. Indeed, projects require input from stakeholders in relevant departments within the boroughs as well. For example, for a project in social care to work, input was needed from the social care team inside the borough. However, a key challenge to the effectiveness of LOTI is the fact that local authorities' departments often work in silos. This makes coordination and unification around projects an arduous task when input is needed across departments. The survey also identified 'Lack of support from other colleagues in my organisation' (18%) as a barrier to collaboration.

The separation between departments means that LOTI is not always well-known beyond the IT and digital departments across boroughs.

"They would not know [LOTI]. Some would. So, I do try and have those conversations wider than just digital and my team, but it doesn't happen all the time" (Interviewee, borough member)

"…where we haven't been able to get enough engagement internal from our business colleagues" (Survey respondent, borough member)

LOTI is aware of the issue around different departments working in silos and is working hard to tackle this issue by creating collaborative spaces where stakeholders can have conversations and find solutions. Examples of these spaces include; WhatsApp group, communities of practice and networks.

'And in different boroughs, some… who would love this to happen, do have that information. In others, it is held by so many different teams, who do not talk to each other, within the borough. It is very difficult for us, from the outside, to resolve that bit, and so I think we have just got to be relentlessly pragmatic about what we can do.' (Interviewee, internal stakeholder)

"So, I have two councils. Both councils are doing very similar work in adult social care and when I talk to my colleagues, everybody has got the same sort of projects going on… At some point, we need to make a leap that says, 'Why aren't we pooling our resources and doing this once and then reusing it?' It is really hard to do that because that's not how London's set up. That is not how boroughs are set up, but I think what LOTI does is it creates a safe space where there's opportunity to have those conversations and start to explore it." (Interviewee, borough member)

Members' lack of time and capacity is a barrier to participation
Member boroughs struggle to have sufficient capacity and time to reap maximum rewards of their membership in LOTI. Indeed, 'Lack of time and capacity to engage' was identified as the most significant barrier (75%) to collaboration. Interviewees explained that their boroughs were struggling due to tight budgets and limited resources which impacted on their capacity and available time to engage with LOTI's collaboration activities and projects.

"…it has been difficult for a lot of our services to participate in collaborative projects due to our internal resource gaps." (Survey respondent, borough member)

"Sometimes some people may not want to commit because a borough has to commit for 40 working days so there's a bit of concern around that. And then there's obviously the ones that can't fund it. (Interviewee, borough member)

Some interviewees mentioned that aside from having limited capacity and resources, members also have significant pressure from their busy day jobs.

"And then there are others that are just so busy because they don't have enough internal resources, they don't have time to focus actually even on working out how that could work in their organisation. So, I think there's a multitude of problems." (Interviewee, borough member)

"One of the challenges with LOTI is the day job is very busy… What we're paid to do every day, you know, is massive responsibility with not enough money. Even the wealthier boroughs don't have, and certainly the poorer ones don't. So, it means we don't have all the roles we should have and, you know, all of that. I think that has been a problem throughout anything we wanted to do" (Interviewee, borough member)

Some interviewees said that they were struggling to complete their projects' tasks in time, causing delays for the overall project. Members' lack of capacity to complete tasks was affecting LOTI's projects negatively.

"But then when you go through the exercise the boroughs again don't do their bits and pieces or they have to go and have conversations with their directors of social care or whatever and then that becomes tricky… this is not an IT problem, it's a local government problem. It's just underfunded so they're going to struggle."
(Interviewee, borough member)

"The innovation and procurement project. We put… a procurement toolkit together. And we started working in a specific area to see if we could work together, which kind of worked, kind of did not. So, we're probably better than we were at sharing… But in my view, we've let ourselves down and it's very frustrating, because we could have done a lot more… We tried to get a list, a very simple thing. All the LOTI members, we wanted them all to share what systems they have got for what things, what areas, and when their renewal dates were. Very simple. Everyone should have one of these. It is called a 'Contract register,'… They basically couldn't get it …one or two boroughs did, but not everyone" *(Interviewee, borough member)*

A participatory model with uneven capacity among members can lead to uneven participation
There is a risk of uneven participation and collaboration with LOTI as some boroughs have more capacity and resources than others. For example, an interviewee noted that there was a tendency for the same members to take the lead, creating a slight disparity in participation which can impact the programme of priorities as well as the distribution of potential benefits reaped from LOTI activities by borough members.

"Again, I suppose there's just that caveat just to make sure that those people aren't working with the loudest voices or the same boroughs all the time. Because sometimes just because we don't put our hand up. It might just be as simple as we haven't got the capacity… if you're talking to the same people all the time, you'll start to develop your programme around what you're talking about with those people." *(Interviewee, borough member)*

"I think if it's always led by the same boroughs then yes there's an element of being left out. But I think there's also an element of that driving a particular agenda". *(Interviewee, borough member)*

B. LOTI's overall performance and member satisfaction
Despite the challenges facing borough members and LOTI, overall satisfaction rates with LOTI are very high. Almost all respondents (96%) said they were satisfied with LOTI's performance. This included 71% of respondents who said they were 'very satisfied' and 25% who said they were 'fairly satisfied'. Only 4% said they were 'neither satisfied nor dissatisfied'.

Figure 2: In general, how satisfied, or dissatisfied are you with the overall performance of LOTI?
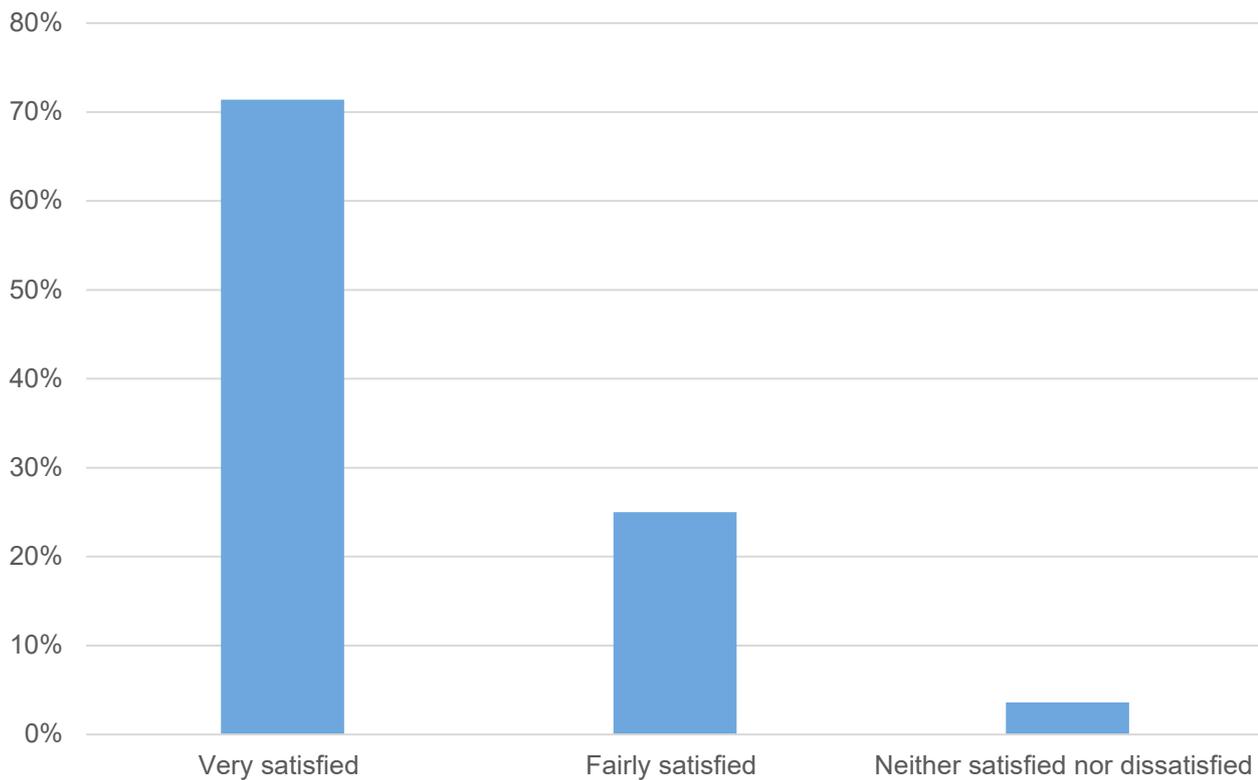
Several members highlighted how LOTI was pioneering in its field with an 'excellent' team, useful resources and that it was offering good value for money.

> *"it certainly is, in my view, well worth the £30,000, it's going to be £33,000 next year, you know, that's nothing compared to the benefits, but I think the impact is greater than the sum of the parts if that makes sense. So, I think London, as a city has benefited in all honesty from it." (Interviewee, borough member)*

All survey respondents (except for one) said that all aspects of LOTI's membership were valuable. Only one survey respondent said that 'Projects & Events' were not very valuable.

Survey respondents said that the most valuable aspects of LOTI were:

- Overall mission: To help London borough councils and the GLA use innovation, data, and technology to be high performing organisations, improve services and tackle London's biggest challenges together (79%)

- Collaboration (79%)

This was followed by guides and resources (57%). Projects & events (46%) were deemed less valuable.

Figure 3: In general, how valuable (or not) are the following aspects of LOTI?
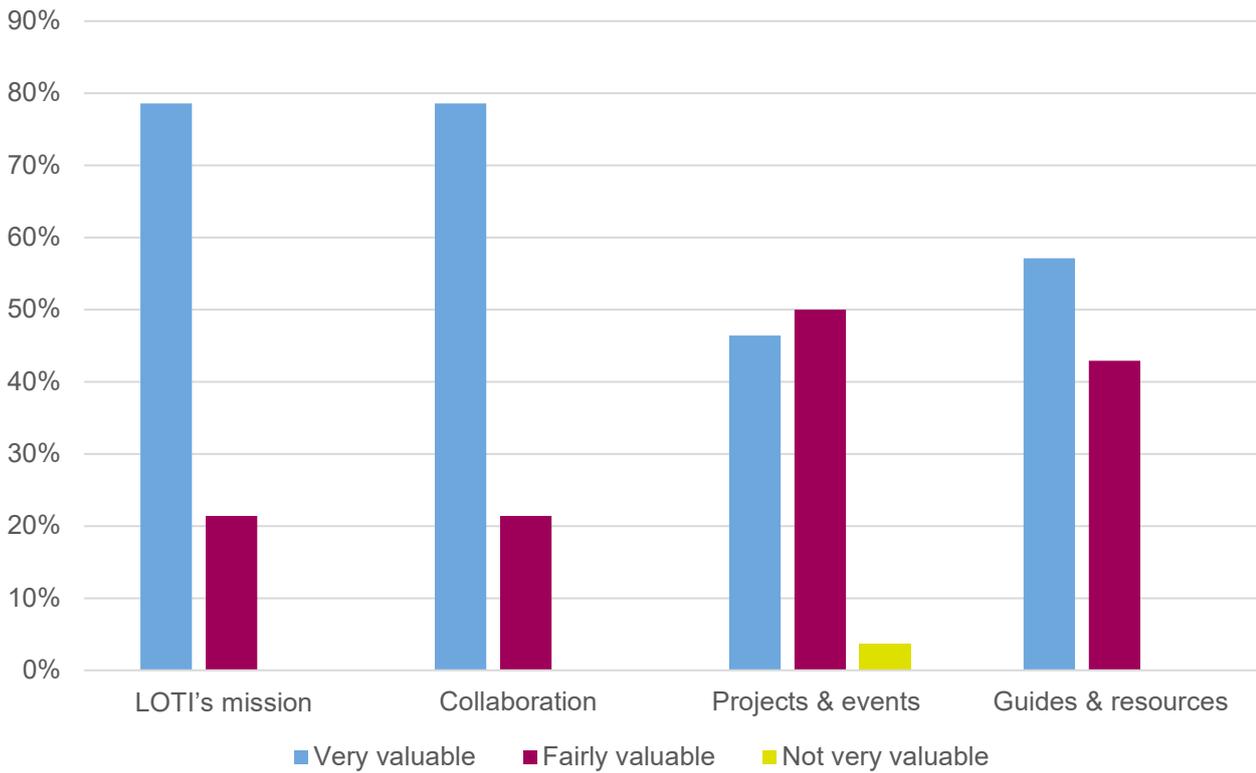
A few interviewees described LOTI as "nice to have" rather than a necessity, suggesting that they might terminate membership subject to financial constraints.

"It's not an essential thing, but in the grand scheme of things, if it is giving us an advantage then we'll have it, but if it ever reaches a point where there are massive financial pressures on the council and if they say that we're going to have to decide, and come out of some of these partnerships, then LOTI will be part of that as well." (Interviewee, borough member)

LOTI has a strong branding and supportive community

All survey respondents (100%) said they felt part of a supportive community. Within this total, 75% said it was 'very' supportive' and 25% said it was 'fairly' supportive.

Figure 4: Since becoming a LOTI member, to what extent do you feel part of a supportive community?
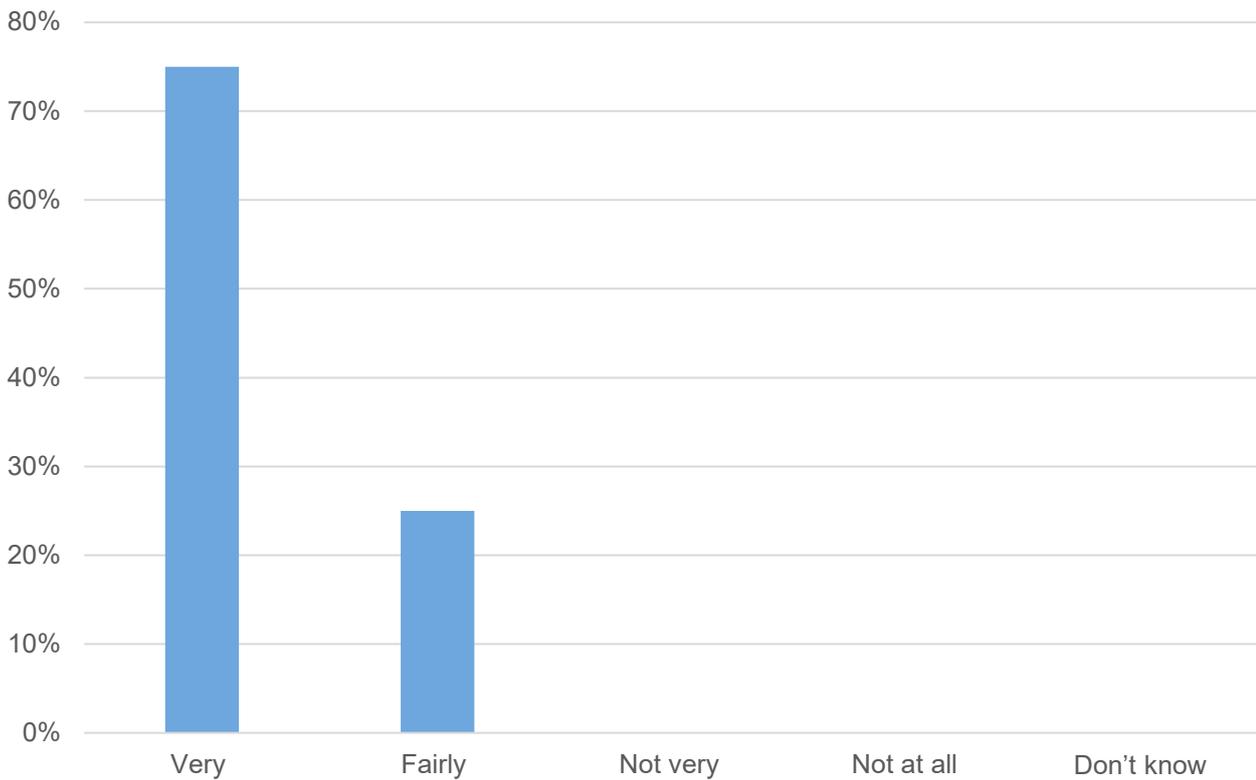
Most interviewees praised LOTI's branding and its robust reputation, which provided credibility to their work. Over the last four years LOTI has become very well established, gained popularity and "acknowledgement". Several interviewees said that LOTI's reputation adds value and weight when they enter conversations with external organisations.

"It gives us a lot more credibility when we're trying to do things and have decisions made that we're doing it via LOTI. There's a little bit of a Gartner rubber stamp that I think exec directors when they hear, 'Oh we're doing it with LOTI. We're doing the good things with LOTI.' They feel like okay; a sensible check has happened and so forth (Interviewee, borough member)

"…[the] brand of LOTI has become quite well-known as well now, which helps from an organisational perspective". (Interviewee, borough member)

LOTI has created a strong community in which it is perceived as beneficial and encouraged to have active conversations and access to a supportive space where members can collaborate and seek advice or help from each other.

The community LOTI has created is widely supported and perceived as useful by many members in enabling conversations with bodies within the civil services which were previously hard to reach such as the Centre of Data Ethics and Innovation and Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government. The collective nature of LOTI and its community allows people to incorporate diverse approaches in delivering outcomes, which they may not have been able to achieve previously. This relates to bringing in different external expertise, views and alternative methods into their collaborative work on projects and therefore enhancing

sharing learning. For example, a member borough spoke of benefiting from data and skills via projects on digital inclusion such as Get Online London[10].

"LOTI has become a bit of a stronger brand and community". (Interviewee, borough member)

"The fact that it gives us a community. There would have been already, but a stronger community for peers to talk to each other and to share problems and challenges and ideas…That's amazing, and that works well." (Interviewee, borough member)

LOTI promotes a 'positive' culture based on collaboration

LOTI's culture is distinctive and innovative within the realm of local government. Their staff exhibit a unique approach to work that fosters a positive culture emphasizing outcomes, collaboration, and mutual learning. For example, they strive to facilitate a working environment for their members in creative ways (and with humour at times) to help members think freely. For instance, they used a "tree of despair" in a session for members who had doubts about a topic or idea. In this activity, participants added all the reasons why they were skeptical to the "tree of despair."

"…we definitely consciously try and model different behaviours… we deliberately inject humour into some of our work, or silly exercises, so it actually feels different." (Interviewee, internal stakeholder)

LOTI encourages a culture of participation where members are encouraged to contribute to the creation of a supportive space.

"We're not a service provider, it is a community. The team facilitates the community." (Interviewee, internal stakeholder)

"You know, we're able to support each other… We can support each other and that's great actually." (Interviewee, borough member)

LOTI is fostering a new way of working and behaving, promoting the value of collaboration and shared learning. For example, interviewees mentioned how their behaviours have changed as they are more 'open,' and it is not about 'egos' or 'politics'.

"It catalysed people to think and work differently, brilliantly…." (Interviewee, borough member)

"…I think you can see the right fostering of culture happens in LOTI, it's not about personalities, there isn't ego in there, it's focused on outcomes, so it removes a lot of the politics…" (Interviewee, borough member)

"if my team come to me with something, asking that question of 'Well, have you looked to see if others have already done it? Have you gone and talked to LOTI to see what is out there?' That's one of the questions I'll ask and one of the things we will do" (Interviewee, borough member)

"It has made me more determined and more passionate about the value of collaborating because I think the way that LOTI have gone about developing themselves and positioning themselves and their approach, it makes it easy to collaborate through LOTI. And then the value of doing it, it just becomes more and more apparent, which is why I am keen we become more and more ambitious on it" (Interviewee, borough member)

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[10] Get Online London - LOTI

LOTI is having a significant impact in teaching members a different way of thinking and framing challenges with a more holistic approach to problems by looking at them from different angles.

"…it is that shift away from looking as an IT problem and looking at it more as a digital server opportunity. I think, that opens up a lot of collaborative bits."

LOTI's supportive staff and resourcefulness helping members 'get things done'
Survey respondents were satisfied with their relationship with LOTI's staff. This included 82% of respondents who said they were 'very satisfied' and 18% who said they were 'fairly satisfied'.

Figure 5: In general, how satisfied, or dissatisfied are you with your relationship with LOTI's staff?
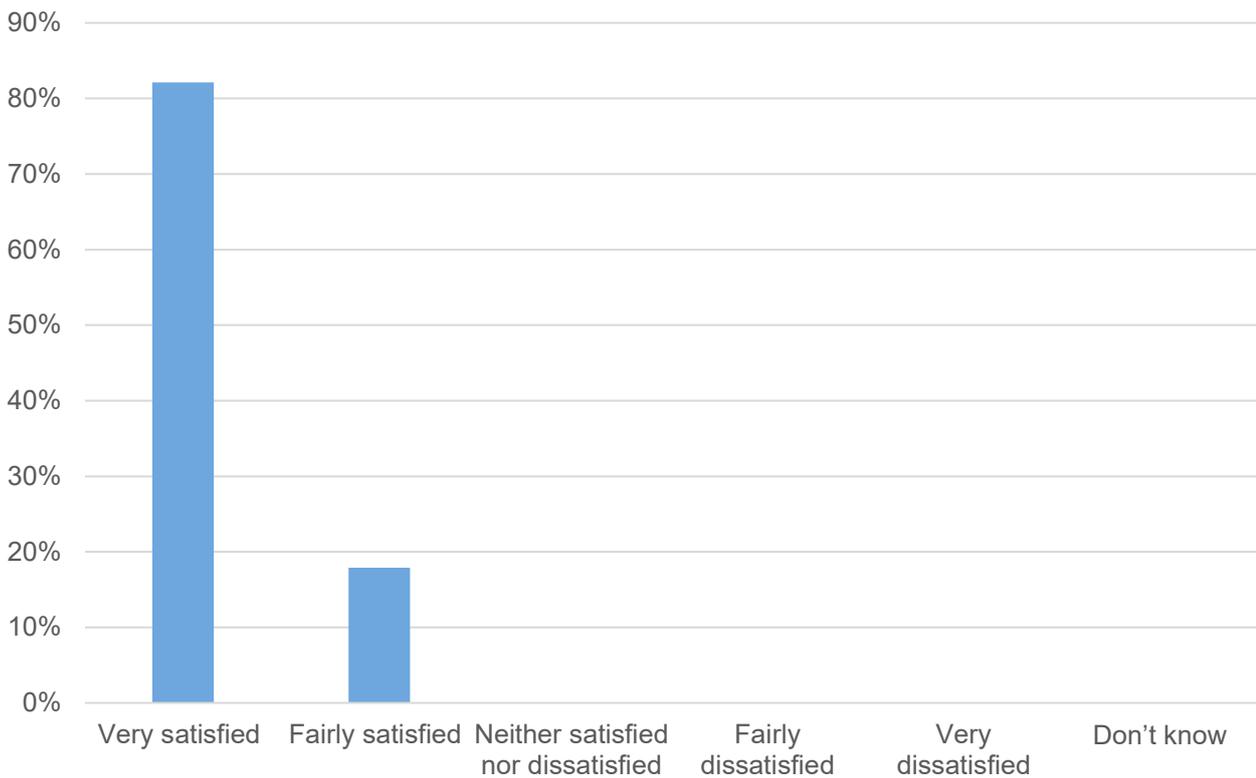
Overall, interviewees praised LOTI staff's enthusiasm, energy, and resourcefulness in terms of their capabilities, platforms, and finances to act in a way that boroughs on their own cannot. The LOTI team was described as 'very responsive' and with a unique and valuable pan-London and national perspective. For example, an interviewee mentioned how LOTI supported their learning of ways to access grants via central government.

"Personally, for me, I just think the exposure that I've had, understanding how civil services or how central government has a role to play, how grants can be applied or how we can tap into funding and things like that, that has been absolutely fantastic… LOTI provides that information to us in a ready-made platform and that makes a huge difference." (Interviewee, borough member)

"Where I think LOTI is really helpful is that they actually have horsepower to make things happen, they have platforms, they have investment and the model I think really works where, you know, you have to buy into the service and then that gives LOTI the ability to do stuff so that's why I think LOTI is a great thing for

those reasons because it's a really collaborative space but they also have the tools to be able to be collaborative". (Interviewee, borough member)

"I've got access to this amazing team, in the sense that they have a perspective that my team don't have, because they're seeing things more broadly across London. So, that's the number one for me, I would say, out of all of those, access to that team is really key." (Interviewee, borough member)

"LOTI has an extremely energetic and enthusiastic team that do an excellent job of bringing the member councils together to discuss the issues and ways of better collaboration to tackle the problems that we are all facing" (Survey respondent, borough member)

"This is a team of highly energetic technically focused individuals who wish to collaborate and innovate for the benefit of its members and the residents it serves. They are a great team to be around and to openly discuss the topics that most affect us as a community of local authorities." (Survey respondent, borough member)

Interviewees praised LOTI's leadership for their frankness and willingness to listen.

Members feel supported by LOTI's staff

All survey respondents felt supported by LOTI staff. This included 64% of respondents who said they were supported 'a great deal' and 36% who said they were supported 'a fair amount'. Also, 78% of survey respondents said that the aspect which most helped collaboration between members and LOTI was having support from LOTI's staff. Such support included removing obstacles such as workload and 'pain away from the councils' to help them engage with LOTI.

Figure 6: To what extent do you feel supported by LOTI's staff, if at all?
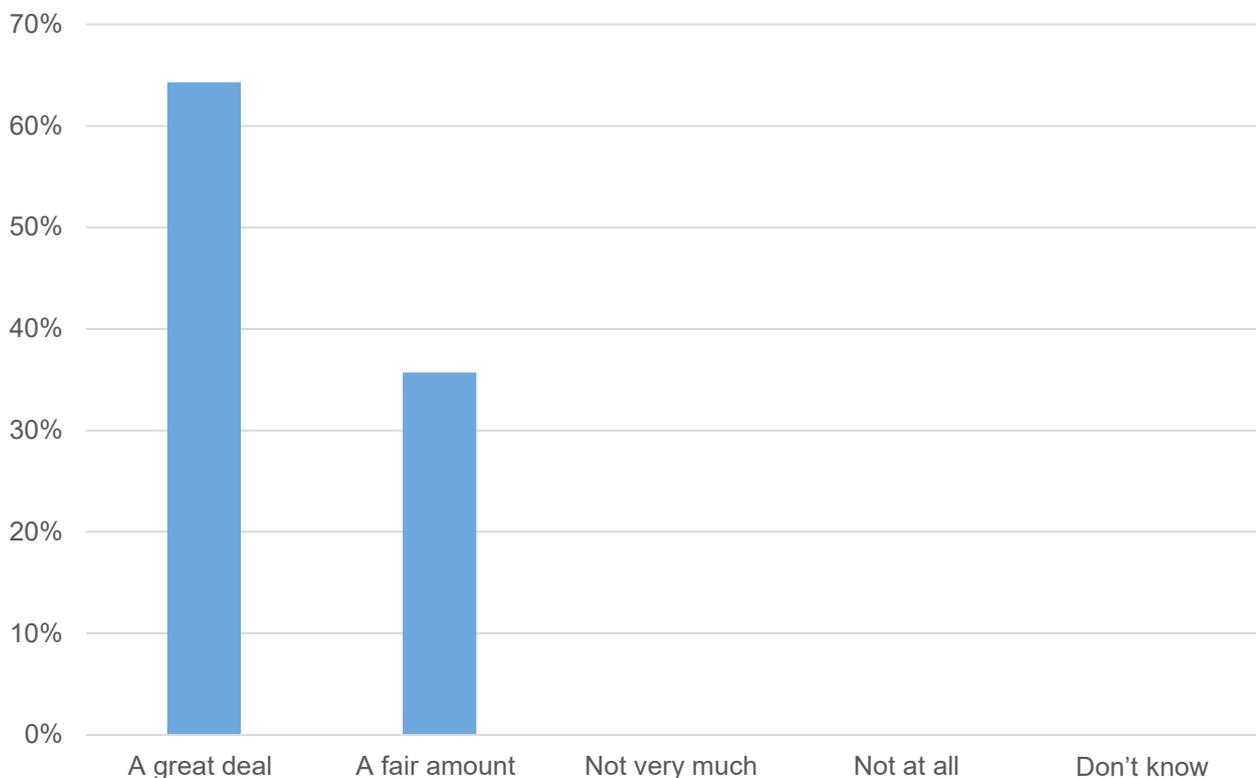
"…they have dedicated people that are focused on these things [LOTI's projects] and can coordinate and take these things [LOTI's projects] to conclusion, I think it's useful." (Interviewee, borough member)

"I find their team to be very, very responsive. If I've reached out to them for something, they'll be like, 'Yes, not a problem. We'll jump on a call with you, and we can give you the advice.' They're very, very friendly, but I also find them very knowledgeable and well connected." (Interviewee, borough member)

LOTI staff also exhibit an ability to self-reflect on what is working or not and to think of new ways to overcome challenges. For example, as members sometimes lack capacity to complete actions, LOTI introduces innovative approaches to help members complete actions. To illustrate this, they have facilitated a space where members can complete quick actions on the spot rather than adding actions to a long to-do list.

"…what we are trying to do is to try and break up the ask into much smaller chunks and try and make it a much more interesting conversation. So for example, next week we've decided to do a deep-dive on housing services, and one of the elements of that will be, whilst you are literally in the room with us, jot down on post-it notes the major systems you use and on a board, stick them at this end if you love the system, stick it at the other end if you hate the system, and stick in it in the middle if you're somewhere in between. And just, so we can say, you are here anyway, this is no extra burden… (Interviewee, internal stakeholder)

Members value the LOTI team's facilitation skills

All survey respondents said that LOTI's team were effective at facilitating collaboration between members. This included 57% of respondents who said that LOTI was 'very effective' and 43% who said that LOTI was 'fairly effective'. For example, an interviewee explained how LOTI had effectively facilitated collaboration between members and key stakeholders within central government in a structured and effective way.

Figure 7: How effective or ineffective is LOTI's team at facilitating collaboration between its members?
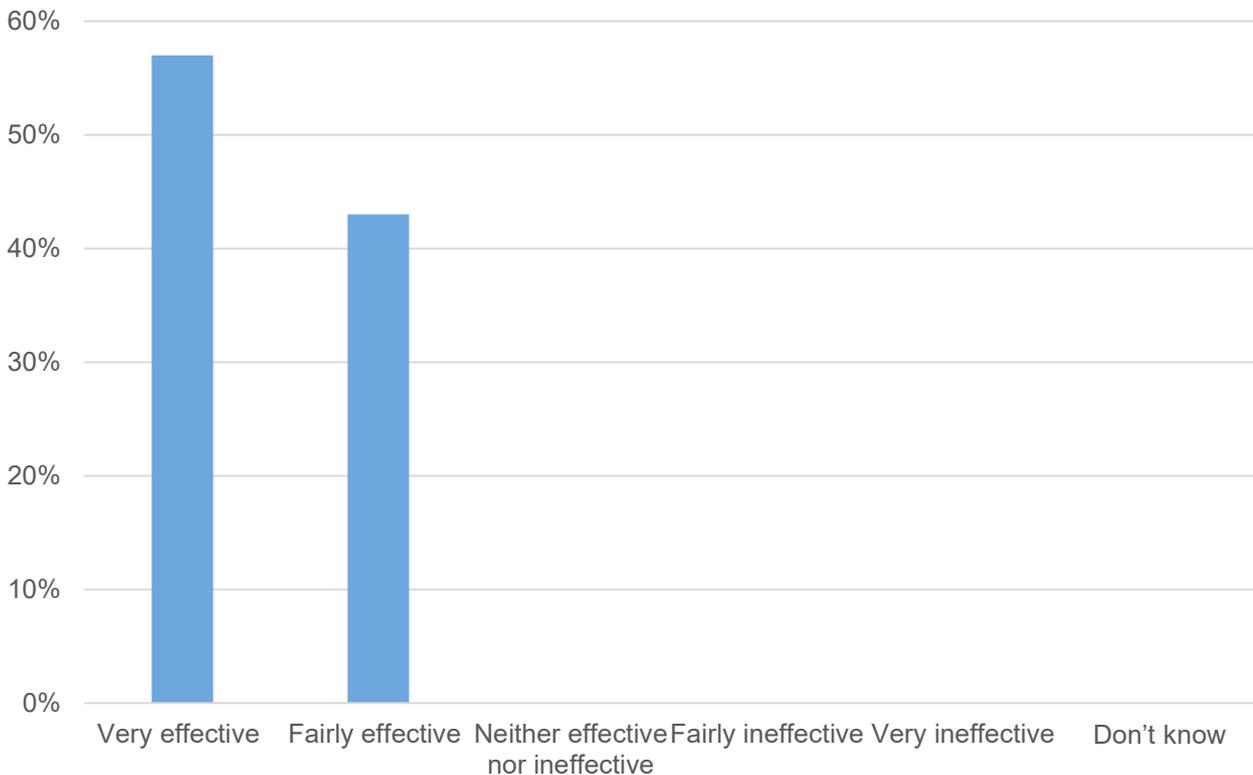
"They're very structured, they always share the agendas beforehand, they run it very effectively, they're quite smooth, they start on time, finish on time, they're very focused, but at the same time they give us a lot of space to articulate our thoughts or to reflect. They run it in a very inspiring space, in the sense that we do get to contribute and there are really good, healthy discussions. There are good challenges, pushback, I think they conduct it very well." (Interviewee, borough member)

LOTI's facilitation skills helped effectively take into account members' different levels of expertise, knowledge, and capacity.

"…each borough has different expertise and knowledge, different levels of capacity. I think that's worked well and does work well. I think the LOTI model, in terms of the facilitation element, enables that to happen. Because I think we've always tried to think that we can collaborate but unless somebody is actually doing the facilitation for that, it tends to fall apart." (Interviewee, borough member)

LOTI has advanced members' understanding of best practice in technology, data, and innovation
Most survey respondents (97%) said that LOTI staff had advanced their understanding of best practice in technology, data, and innovation. This figure included 61% who said the extent to which their borough had developed its understanding of technology, data and innovation-related best practices was 'fairly' and 36% who said it was 'very'. Only 3% said it had not advanced very much.

Figure 8: To what extent has your borough advanced its understanding of best practise in technology, data, and innovation?
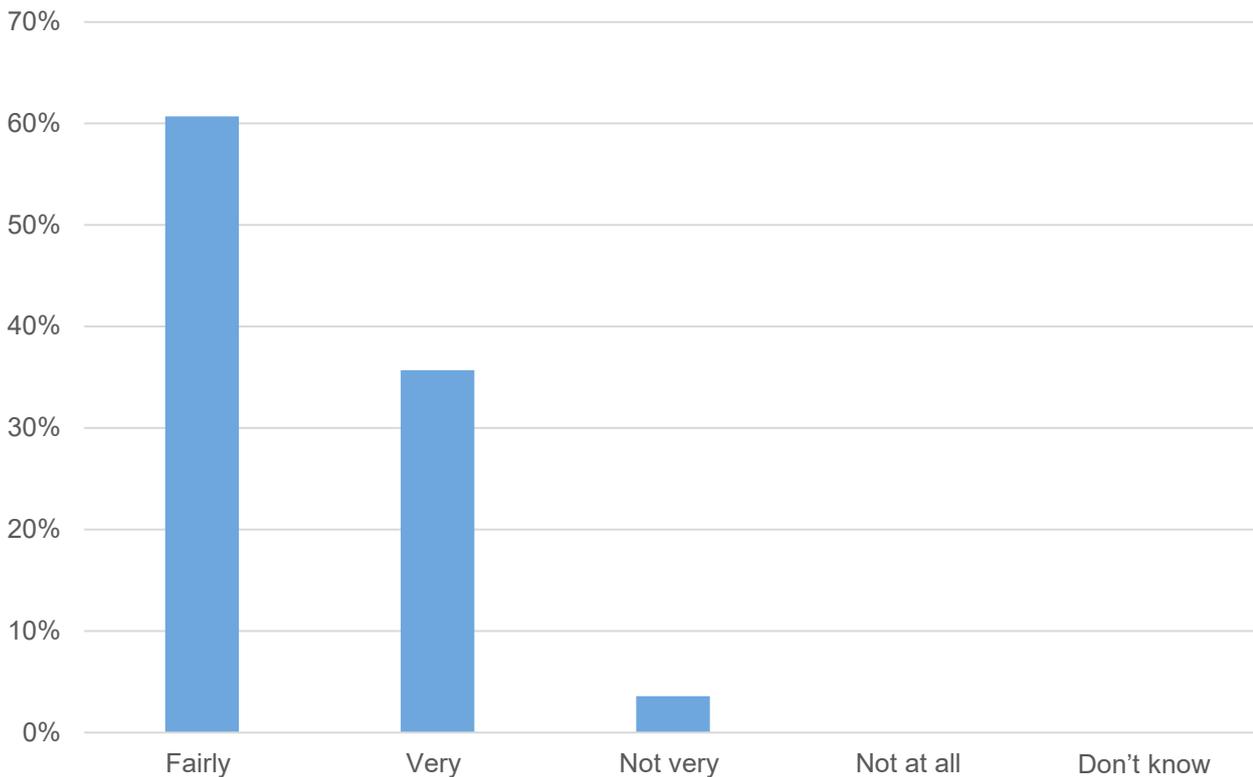
Another survey respondent said that LOTI helped them develop more design thinking and innovation techniques.

"More design thinking and innovation techniques to enable digital change. Support digital leadership outside of the direct digital/IT community." (Survey respondent, borough member)

C. LOTI's role in promoting collaboration and knowledge-sharing

LOTI's focus on collaboration is very valuable to members
All survey respondents (except for one) said that LOTI's focus on collaboration was valuable. This included 75% of respondents who said it was 'very' valuable and 21% of respondents who said it was 'fairly' valuable. This was also supported by interviewees who also found collaboration the most valuable aspect of LOTI's membership.

Figure 9: To what extent do you feel that LOTI's focus on collaboration is valuable to your borough, if at all?
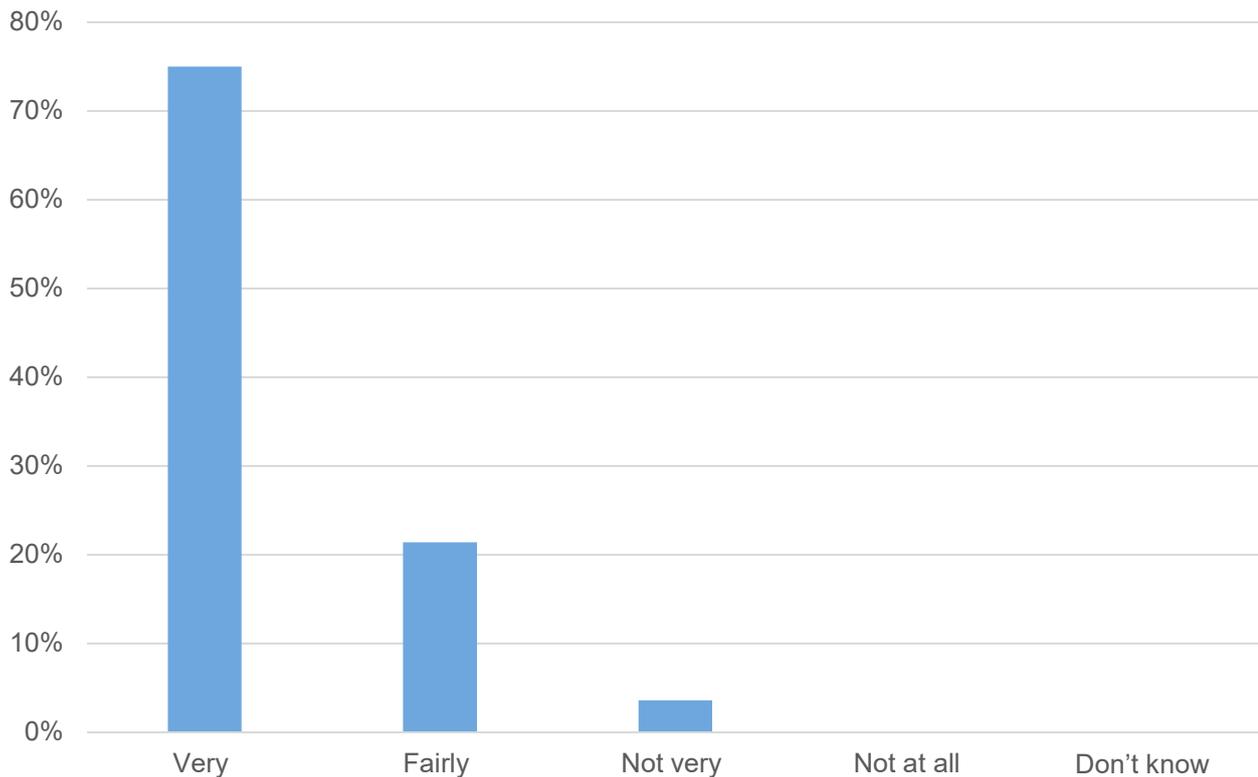
Most interviewees said that collaborating with other boroughs is beneficial and adds to their effectiveness. A collaborative approach offers access to a full range of expertise, resources, and capabilities. For example, collaboration has been instrumental in the work around digital inclusion.

"Get the rest of the boroughs on board, because I think that, again, the more minds the better." (Interviewee, borough member)

"I think the collaborative stuff…I think what it does do is harness so many different perceptions and views and alternative methods when we do a project or whatever, that's actually quite helpful…More heads, the diversity in approaches sometimes helps you come to a conclusion quicker or helps you have a more educated conclusion to what you're doing." (Interviewee, borough member)

"Yes, with digital inclusion I think that it's almost what LOTI does well in terms of that network and collaborating with West London, because it's a classic-, you know well not one borough can solve digital inclusion on its own. And there's that collective effort then from a resource perspective and otherwise." (Interviewee, borough member)

Only one interviewee said that collaboration was not as valuable for their borough because they felt they were ahead in comparison to the other members.

"we are so ahead in what we are trying to do, right? And other councils are not. So, the ones who aren't, I think for them it's outstanding, because they don't have to start from scratch, they don't have to reinvent the wheel. But from my perspective, what I'm looking for, there isn't much from the members that I can get …I haven't signed up for collaborative projects a lot with LOTI members because they're all in different headspaces, or they're slightly behind in the curve" (Interviewee, borough member)

Most survey respondents (all except for one) said that all of LOTI's main areas of collaboration activities were of value. 'Sharing Knowledge' was identified as the area of most value (64%). This was followed by 'Running collaborative projects' (46%) and by 'Building capacity' and 'Influencing change – building partnerships' (43%).

Figure 10: To what extent are LOTI's main areas of collaborative activity (as listed below) valuable for your borough's work?
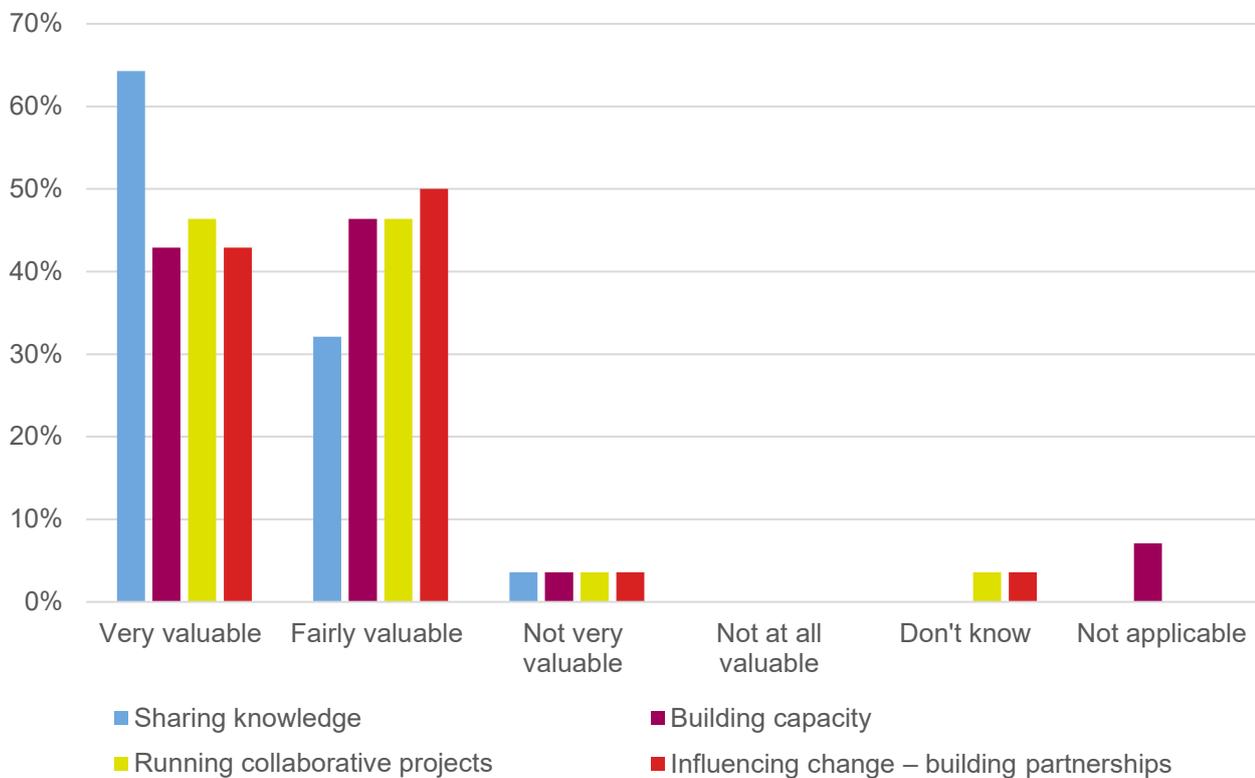
The power of sharing knowledge (including failures and not just successes)
Most interviewees said that sharing knowledge, experiences and learning from other members was very valuable. The community and networks LOTI provides are effective platforms for sharing knowledge. These platforms have enabled members to connect and have effective conversations to share best practices, learn from past mistakes, develop skills, and learn from different ways of working.

'Sharing of information between members, outputs from some of the pieces of work for example the Housing system specification has been extremely useful.' (Survey respondent, borough member)

"LOTI gives me a ready-made platform every month to speak to other councils, to understand what they're doing, to be able to share my best practice, for me to learn from what others have done, so I think having

that networking platform… which is actually effortless brilliant, because there's just so much knowledge in a collective space that you can tap into." (Interviewee, borough member)

"So, that ability to go to the lead who's looking at AI or who's looking at cyber, who's doing stuff on social care, and being able to talk to them and get their input and their ability to make things happen, I think, for me, is one of the most valuable things of being a member…" (Interviewee, borough member)

The power of sharing knowledge of successes and failures is that it can lead to members saving significant amounts of money or helping them avoid mistakes that could cost them significantly. For example, an interviewee explained how they were able to learn from a member sharing their experiences of having a cyber-attack during the pandemic.

"About what goes wrong as well… If a few boroughs want to try something, great, and if it does not work and you've learnt something, great as well" (Interviewee, borough member)

"Hackney suffered the worst cyber-attack ever in local government. They were very much impacted by a ransomware attack, which took almost everything down, and they're still recovering, years later. It happened in the middle of COVID. What they did, was shared… what went wrong, and their advice of what you'd do differently. It was brilliant, really brilliant" (Interviewee, borough member)

An interviewee gave an example of how through asking for advice regarding Java software in the WhatsApp group, they had been able to save hundreds of thousands of pounds as another member gave them a tip on how to get it for free.

"We've got a WhatsApp group… We've just had a case where we have to upgrade to a new version of Java, we weren't paying any money, now it's going to cost us a fortune. So, I posted that on the group… and then someone says, 'Oh yeah, we tried this.' …and it saved us loads of money, a few hundred thousand pounds or something" (Interviewee, borough member)

A survey respondent said that occasionally, a speaker/provider makes a sales pitch rather than knowledge sharing.

'Occasionally a speaker/provider uses time as a sales pitch rather than a knowledge share.' (Survey respondent, borough member)

Collaboration is hard, but the cross-borough work coordinated by LOTI would not happen otherwise

Collaboration is a challenge because LOTI aims to encourage working together among 33 boroughs, each with its own processes and systems. Nevertheless, LOTI is successfully benefiting its member boroughs, which wouldn't be happening without its efforts.

"You know, could never have done the cyber project without the work that LOTI did in managing it, and making it happen, and striving it forward. So, I feel, you know, I think it's one of their biggest strengths, is the team, and the way they approach stuff, is just fantastic, and we wouldn't get anywhere without it." (Interviewee, borough member)

"Because I think our ability to cooperate and to learn from each other, brings everything up. It is a stupid, mad system, right, that we are divided into thirty-three, you know, and costly. But no one's going to change it any time soon. So, if there is anything we can do to really make a difference, you know, across the borough and to learn and just be better. LOTI has to be it and it is making a difference and you only have to look about the kind of brand recognition." (Interviewee, borough member)

"I have been in the sector for eight years, and I think this is the best vehicle I have ever seen for collaboration amongst a lot of boroughs… I look at the energy and the momentum in the rooms where people get together, this is the only thing of its type that I have seen that is able to get boroughs to work together. You know, the output might not be what we want it to be, but the effort is. So, I think that is the biggest impact, is getting boroughs who ordinarily would not have the ability to collaborate in this way, to come together. That is really powerful and just needs to get built on." (Interviewee, internal stakeholder)

"…the cyber programme that we have been doing, the idea of it was, 'Could we be more than the sum of our parts in how we're approaching cyber risks?' And I think the collaboration, and getting the teams talking and working together, even regardless of the outcomes of some of the stuff we did, that has been really valuable. Because it has built a community and built a set of knowledge sharing and conversations." (Interviewee, borough member)

LOTI has helped boroughs with their shared problems
LOTI has a particularly profound impact on facilitating a space for collaboration to resolve shared problems between members.

"LOTI provides an excellent support network of like-minded individuals. Regardless of which borough we work in, we share the same problems and experiences. There are shared-learning and improved efficiencies that come out of the collaboration with other councils and LOTI in part is an extension of our internal teams on which we can continually and consistently rely. (Survey respondent, borough member)

Collaboration means that boroughs become one strong and united collective in the sector, and this gives them leverage when engaging external suppliers.

"It is also giving us the ability to work with our suppliers, not as individual boroughs, but as a collection of boroughs, which is definitely more powerful. You get much more attention from them than, if I just went in as [my borough]… But, with coming at you as London Office of Technology and Innovation, and '10 boroughs have been part of this, and we need you to respond to this.' We are getting more response from that. So, that power of having more of us, is the real value around the collaboration for me." (Interviewee, borough member)

D. Feedback on LOTI projects and initiatives

LOTI projects are valuable and an effective way to tackle the lack of capacity constraints
Projects are a valuable aspect of the LOTI membership. Indeed, survey respondents shared their views on this as follows:

Project outputs most used included:

- Get Online London – London's digital inclusion service (82%)
- Mapping digital exclusion (75%)
- Pan London Data Sharing Agreements Project (71%)

Project outputs least used included:

- Electric Vehicle Charge Point Map (86%)
- Supporting Dementia Care (78%)
- Preventing vulnerable residents from reaching crisis (78%)

Project outputs used by approximately half of members:

- Attack Surface Mapping Pilot (43%)
- Data Ethics service (50%)
- Digital Apprenticeships (50%)

Figure 11: Have you used outputs from any of the LOTI projects below?
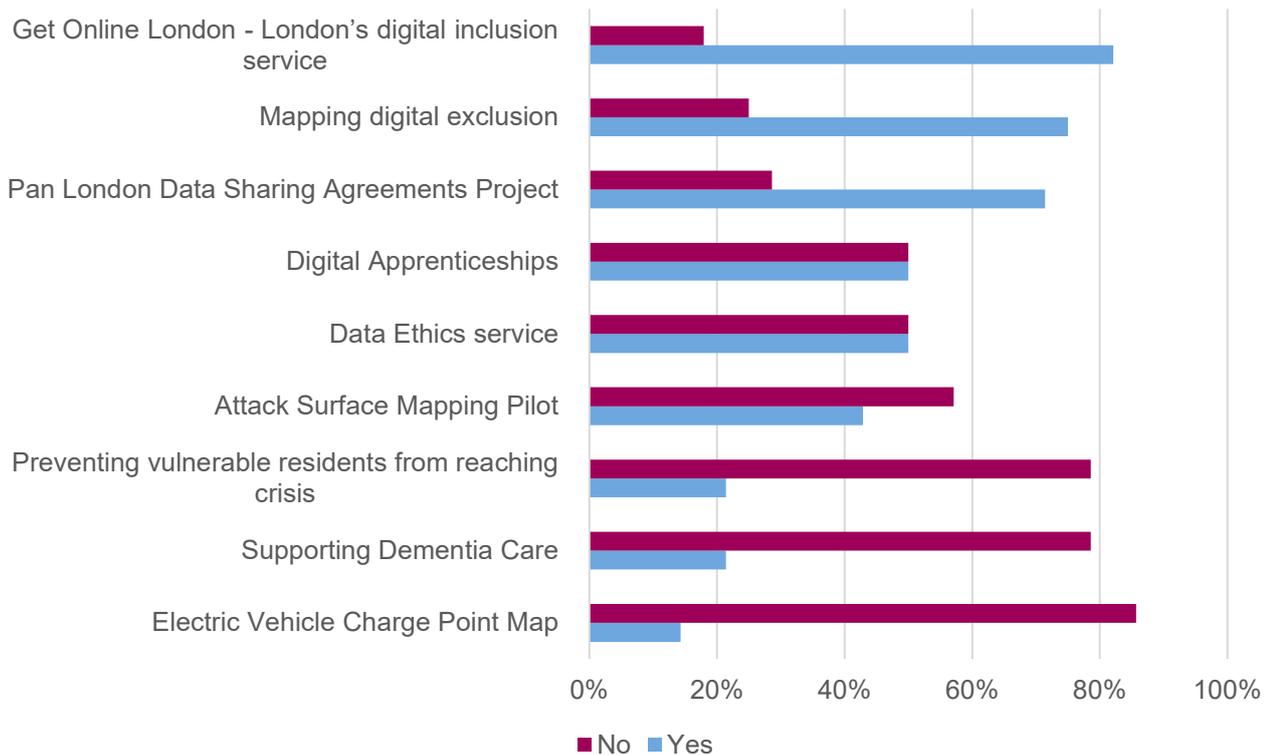
Overall, interviewees said they had benefitted from LOTI's projects. They highlighted how these projects are well-resourced in terms of finances and technical expertise which helps tackle the challenge in local government of insufficient resources and time.

'I think the digital inclusion 'Get Online London' stuff we have definitely benefited from. We have quite a strong digital inclusion programme anyway, so we kind of dip in and out of that, but it is definitely something that we have been involved in and have benefited from. I think for me there is something about the benefit for us comes because, you know, we do not necessarily have lots of technical resources.'
(Interviewee, borough member)

Projects are an effective way to help members set up processes and systems that can be reused.

'The Pan-London Data Sharing Agreements Project meant, gave us something we could reuse. Thumbs up. Yes, and then there was a digital platform as well' (Interviewee, borough member)

LOTI's projects offer members the opportunity to coordinate and optimize efforts in order to achieve objectives at a faster rate, all of which members would struggle to achieve separately, or they would achieve at a slower pace and more expensively. For example, an interviewee explained how they would not have

been able to do what was done with the 'Attack Surface Mapping Pilot' on their own. Another survey respondent said to be interested in projects with tangible outcomes, where boroughs collaborate together.

"I think what I have been particularly, what we have got particular value from, is what I've been leading the programme around cyber security which has been really great and having LOTI coordinate and help make that happen has been fantastic. Never could have got off the ground without it." (Interviewee, borough member)

"The logistics of doing that, the intel, and data that you need, it is never going to be feasible for us to run that ourselves. You would need a third party to do it. We do not have the global intelligence, the data from different attacks from all over the world." (Interviewee, borough member)

"I know it is not easy to achieve but actionable projects where cross borough collaboration is needed and with tangible outcomes for our residents is what I am really interested in. Good quality information sharing of successful projects at the borough level that would work in other boroughs is the next priority." (Survey respondent, borough member)

"The project stuff has worked well too; I think again because they have a lead with the projects. I think we have probably not been involved in as many projects as they have done, but we have certainly been involved in quite a few. Again, that comes down to our own priorities, but in general they meet what we would expect and so we have been involved in some of those."

Survey respondents and several interviewees acknowledged the benefits from having 'Pan London Data sharing agreement', especially during the pandemic.

"Pan London Data sharing agreement proved to be really useful, especially during Covid and it helped by not having to sign individual sharing agreements with multiple councils." (Survey respondent, borough member)

"…the ability to share data quickly but securely across London is a major benefit especially when responding to emergencies such as Covid." (Survey respondent, borough member)

Projects such as 'Get Online London – London's digital inclusion service' and 'Mapping digital exclusion' produced outputs quickly and were of great relevance to most member's needs.

"I lead on digital inclusion…and the sessions and resources around this from LOTI have been a huge help in us moving forward with these, very quickly." (Survey respondent, borough member)

"Digital exclusion is an important topic for us at the moment as we are redefining our front door and understand how to approach those who can't/don't use digital devices is key to designing an equal system." (Survey respondent, borough member)

Another interviewee spoke of a project on adult social care system they are currently developing with colleagues in social care and housing which is in the development stages. LOTI is helping this work via its resources such as information sharing agreements, data work and funding.

"So, the data work, the information-sharing agreements and the coming together, the data all been approved. We are working with a company called Social Finance to do the development. So, yes, it is actively happening now, so we are in the sprints of the designs and so on."

Communities of Practice & Networking are valuable

Most survey respondents (95%) were satisfied with the overall value of LOTI's communities of practices and networks. This included 65% of respondents who were 'very satisfied' and 30% who were 'fairly satisfied'. This was also supported by interviewees who also found communities of practice and networks of significant value. In most cases it was their staff attending rather than themselves. Some of those who were not involved already expressed an interest in attending some networks, for example aimed at digital leaders of organisations.

Figure 12: To what extent, are you satisfied with the overall value of LOTI's communities of practise and networks?
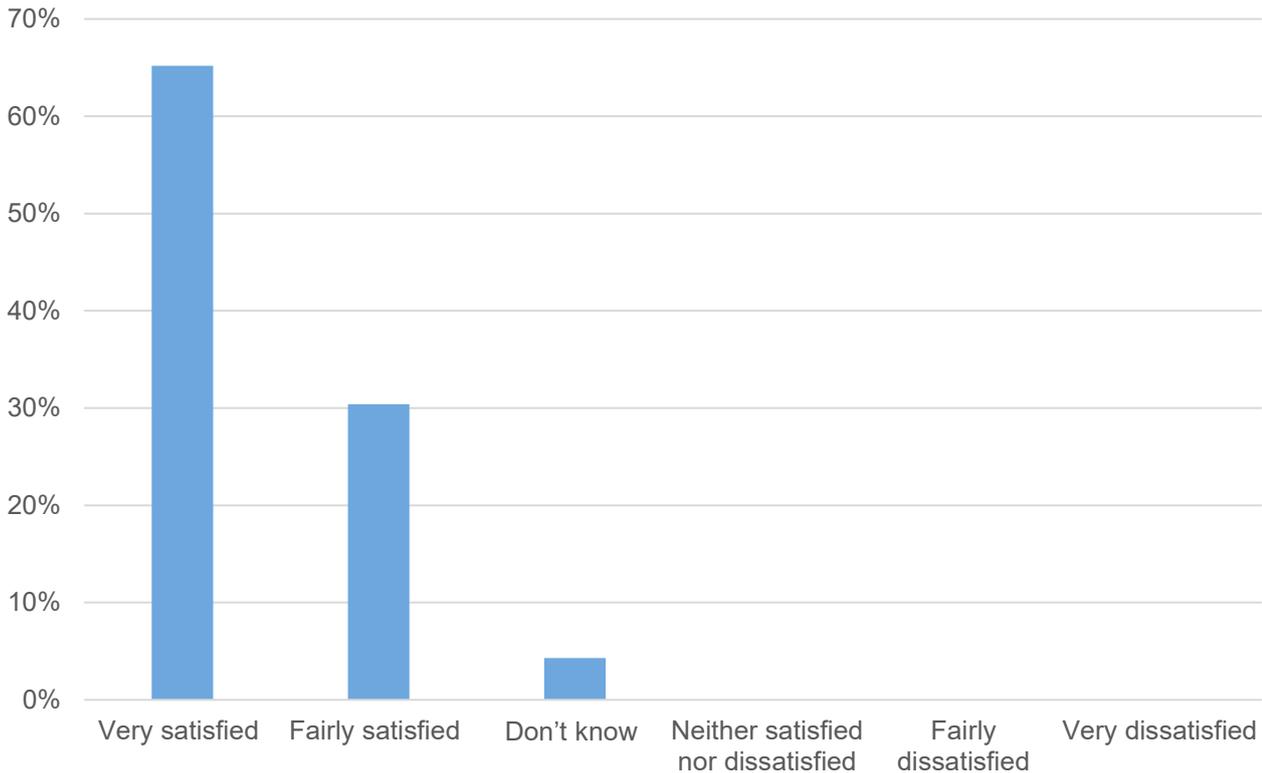
The vast majority of survey respondents (96%) said that connecting with peers via structured conversations was valuable. This included 71% who said it was 'very valuable' and 25% who said it was 'fairly valuable'. Most survey respondents (68%) also said that networking sessions with other LOTI members helped their collaboration.

Figure 13: What is the value of connecting with your peers via structured conversations hosted by LOTI?
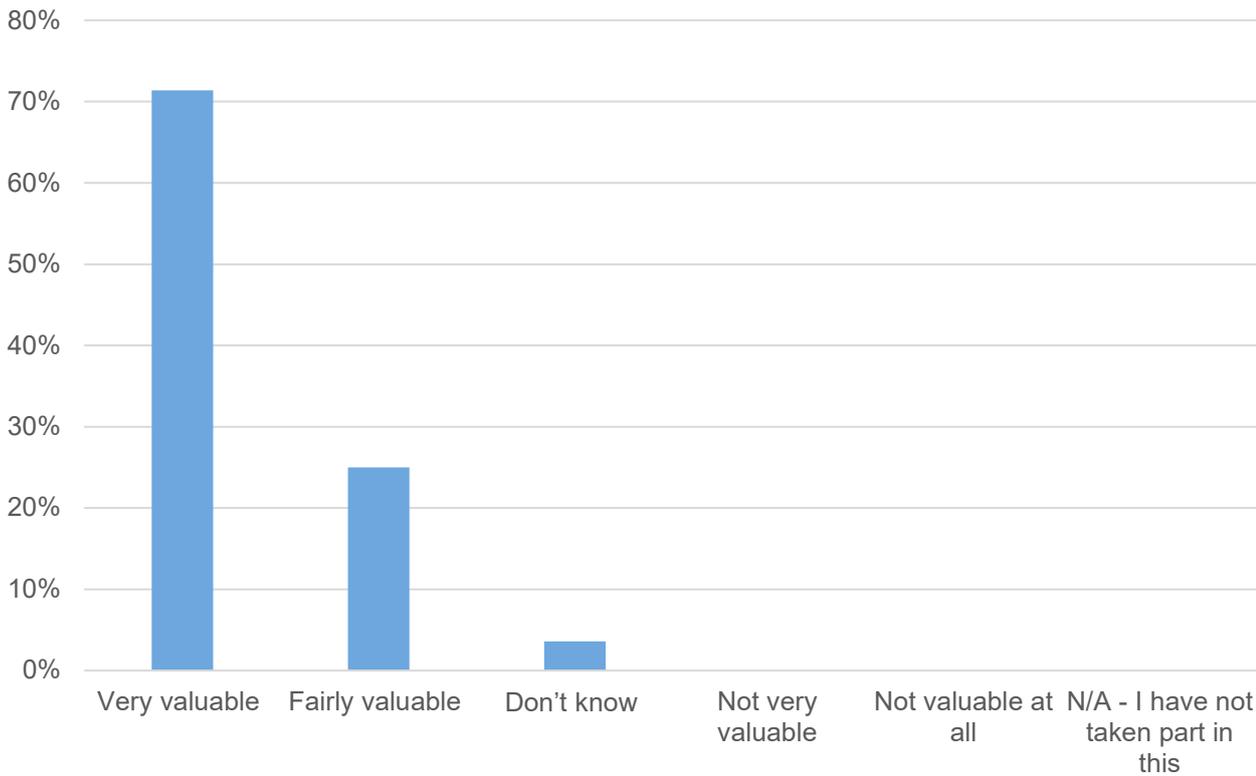
"Enabling peer to peer networking across the boroughs and facilitating a broad range of discussions is incredibly insightful and helpful." (Survey respondent, borough member)

Most survey respondents have participated in LOTI's Communities of Practice or networks. Only a minority (18%) had not participated.

- 46% participated in LOTI HQ – for the digital leaders of each member organisation.

- 46% participated in LOTI Digital Inclusion / Get Online London Network – for those working on digital inclusion.

- 29% participated in Data Leaders – for those looking at the strategic use of data.

- 25% participated in Data Practitioners – for analysts and managers who are using data daily to improve operational decisions.

- 11% participated in Data Scientists – for those using tools like Python and R.

- 11% participated in LOTI Women's network – dedicated to promoting the career progression of women in tech, digital and data roles.

- 4% participated in Architects Network – for borough technical architects.

- Overall, interviewees had attended fewer communities of practice but said that their staff had attended and provided positive feedback.

"Yes, I don't use them, personally, but I know people do in the organisation... I think we've got people in the digital inclusion network, women's network, data scientists… and the feedback's generally good, to be honest" (Interviewee, borough member)

There were mentions of some specific sessions which members found particularly valuable, such as the enterprise architect network or data-focused ones with participants from a range of seniorities which was also useful.

"There was an enterprise architect network meeting yesterday, day before, one of the first ones, and they said it was really, really good, really useful. Useful coming together, useful to share information… The data stuff has been really useful, I do keep an eye on that, the data network, so I'm a member of that as well but that has been useful, sort of, bringing together like-minded people, I think, outside of that CIO level, is really an important part of this that we need to do more of probably." (Interviewee, borough member)

An interviewee appreciated LOTI's network in central government.

"Because generally local government, we're probably talking to our counterparts in other local authorities, we don't necessarily, kind of, readily have conversations with specific departments, like the Centre of Data Ethics or Innovation" (Interviewee, borough member)

Recruitment and training have helped to build capacity

Most survey respondents (69%) said that LOTI helped them recruit successfully. This included 42% who said that LOTI helped them 'a little' with recruitment and 27% said that LOTI helped them 'a lot' with recruitment. Approximately one quarter (23%) said that they had not been involved in recruitment. And a minority (8%) said that LOTI had not helped them recruit.

Figure 14: To what extent, if at all, has LOTI helped you to recruit successfully?
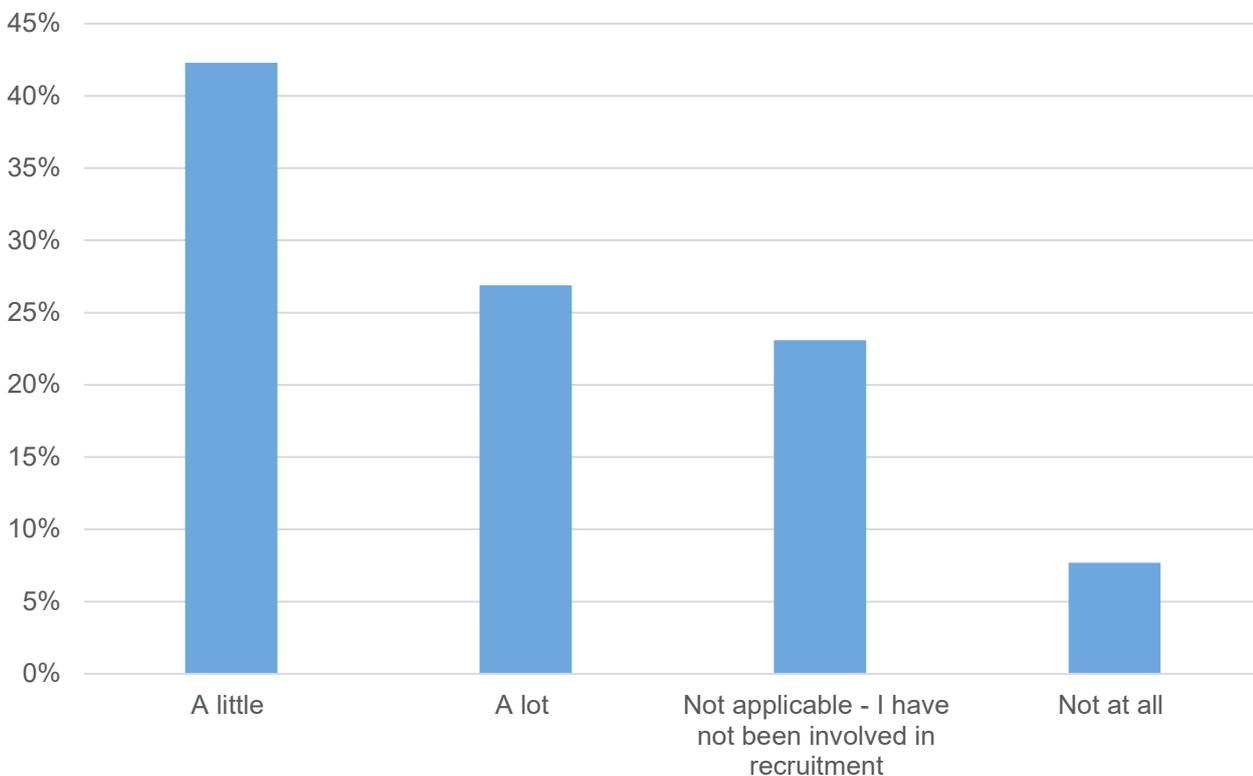
Survey respondents explained how they had found it useful to receive support with job specifications and been able to successfully recruit IT technology and digital roles which had been challenging to recruit previously.

"I particularly find the support that we are getting around job specifications and recruitment very useful, since we have been able to recruit roles that historically have been difficult to hire." (Survey respondent, borough member)

"I also very much rate the recruitment arm; they have been invaluable to me in helping resolve my recruitment issues and finding great candidates!" (Survey respondent, borough member)

Interviewees also acknowledged that LOTI had helped them with capacity building via offering recruitment support and access to skills.

"…lots of staff that we've been able to skill up quickly… LOTI's not done that for us, but it's given us the kind of springboard to do that and accelerate that to an extent that then you get that critical mass internally that does the work on its own." (Interviewee, borough member)

"The building capacity has been useful for us. I haven't talked about that actually. So, the recruitment stuff has been really useful. So, I think that deserves a mention." (Interviewee, borough member)

An interviewee said that LOTI allowed their team to publish adverts on their 'job boards' and expand their networks which is particularly helpful with digital vacancies. Several interviewees praised the work of LOTI's part-time recruiter. They also appreciated having access to a library of job descriptions which not only saves them time but also helps standardise jobs and pay across London.

"I think having the capacity to have a bit more of a specialised recruitment for IT technology and digital has been really helpful. Because we don't have that internally, and we would probably have to go through an agency… even things like being able to publish our adverts on the LOTI job board… it just expands the network that we've got because it's just such a critical area for us and a big difficulty to get the right recruitment around digital." (Interviewee, borough member)

I think all the job stuff is really good, and having a jobs board, but also having a recruiter… I think that's great… I think it is successful. And the thing that goes with it, which is enormously successful, is job descriptions. So, having a bank of job descriptions that's, kind of, based on the GDS, or the central government job descriptions… for us it's been very useful because, you're creating a job view, that's the first place you look, at the job description… It does save a bit of time, and this is the idea, standardise the jobs. And that has been an issue actually because sometimes, I mean, people move. What I think a lot of us would like to see is, kind of, a better career progression in London boroughs, and more standardization. (Interviewee, borough member)

Conferences on digital inclusion were the most valuable
According to Eventbrite, LOTI has held more than 40 public-facing events in the last three years, to which 2059 people registered. Survey respondents said that the most valuable events hosted by LOTI were:

- Digital Inclusion Conference – June 2023
- Digital Inclusion Conference – May 2023
- New Services Modes in Adult Social Care Conference – November 2022
- Innovation in Resident Participation Conference – Feb 2022

A significant proportion of survey respondents had not attended events (listed in the graph 'LOTI's events value'). For example, 71% had not attended Climate Change design sprint – May 2023 and 68% had not attended New Services Modes in Adult Social Care Conference – November 2022 and Innovation in Resident Participation Conference – Feb 2022. 64% did not attend London Data Week – July 2023 and Digital Inclusion Conference – May 2023. Lastly, 57% of respondents had not attended the Digital Inclusion Conference – June 2023.

Figure 15: The value of LOTI's events
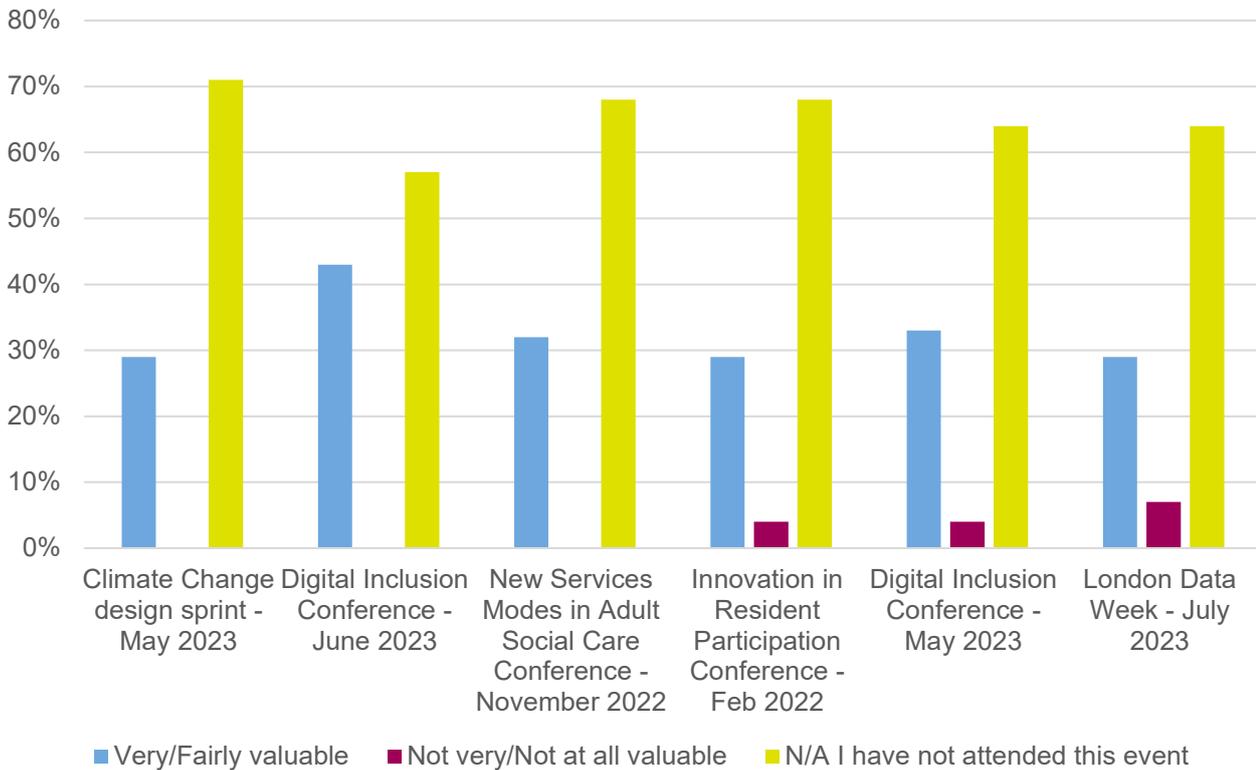
Interviewees said events were valuable and productive, allowing for useful discussions to take place as they brought people together and allowed them to connect. They acknowledged the importance of building connections face to face across boroughs.

"…it's an opportunity to build relationships with other boroughs and LOTI almost forces you in some ways to actually get out and meet in person and I think those relationships have far more value than we give them credit for when you're actually meeting people face-to-face. So, the all-day sessions that have been organised have been quite good from that perspective, yes. I think they're really valuable. I would encourage more people to go…" (Interviewee, borough member)

"…events I just think they just do get that right, like, when they bring everybody together there is some really useful discussions, and you walk away getting something out of it." (Interviewee, borough member)

Resources & Guides are valuable

All survey respondents (100%) said that LOTI guides and resources had been useful. Examples of guides and resources include; LOTI's Service Innovation Cards, Guidance on Generative AI, Data Protection Guidance – Rough Sleeping Project and Triaging Digital Inclusion Needs amongst others.

Figure 16: To what extent are LOTI guides and resources useful to you, if at all?
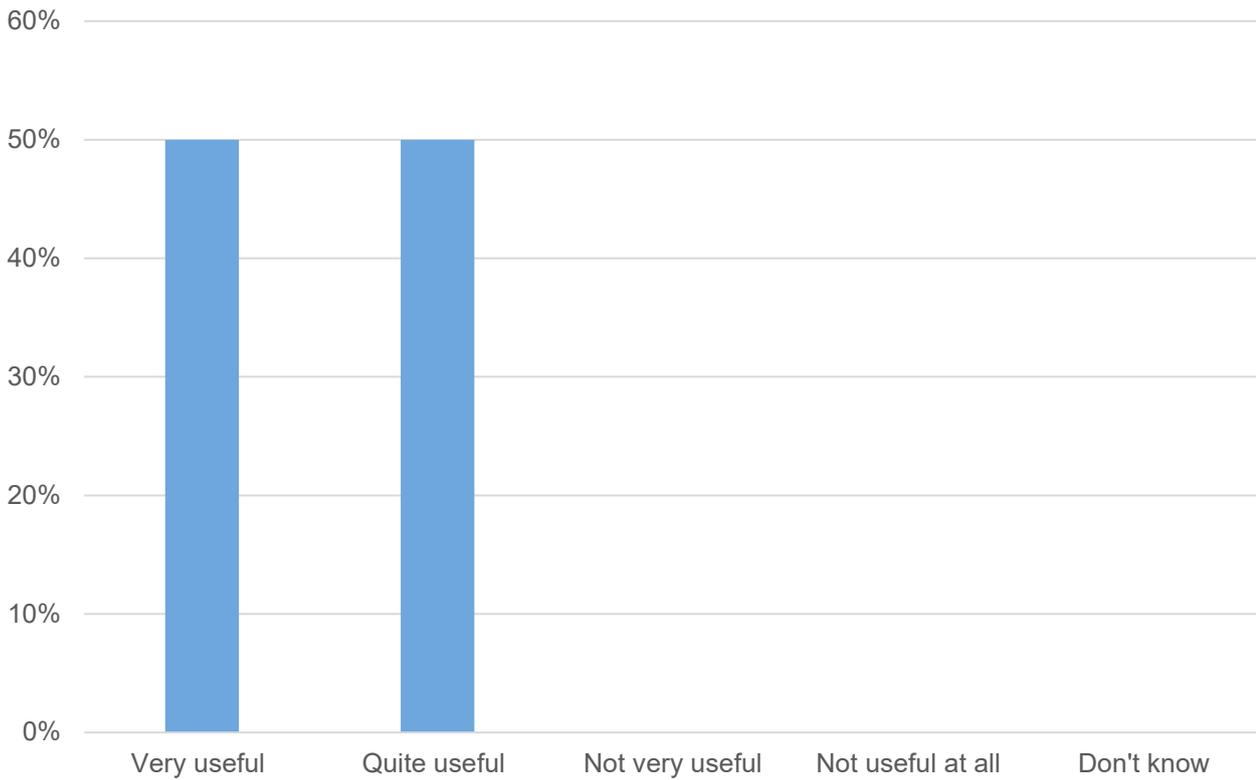
A majority of survey respondents (65%) said that they had used LOTI guides and resources very or quite often. A sizable minority of survey respondents (36%) said that they did not use LOTI guides and resources very often.

Figure 17: How often do you use LOTI guides and resources, if at all?
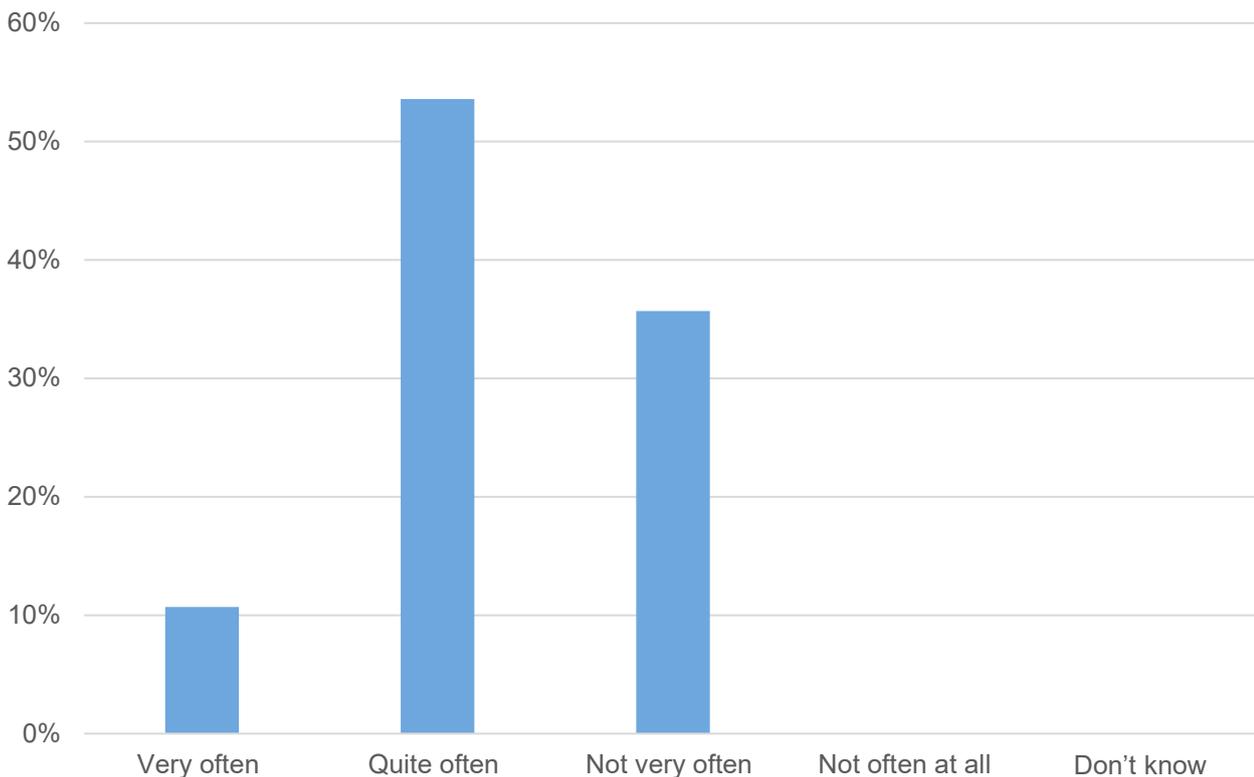
Overall, interviewees said that guides and resources were beneficial for their teams. For example, an interviewee said they had adapted AI guides for their own internal policies. Other examples include information governance, data sharing agreements, remote working and ethics amongst others.

"…they've done a guide on the ethics boards that I've setup for the rest of them… I think the resources that they have are really good..." (Interviewee, borough member)

"The more recent AI guides that they've put together, we've adapted them, and we now sign them off as our own policy internally. Some of the data sharing agreements that were put together, we've certainly reused them and utilized them internally." (Interviewee, borough member)

"The one that really sticks in my mind was the work that LOTI did around remote working at the start of the pandemic. So, they did a piece of work assessing the different tools, doing an assessment around good practice and any, sort of, concerns, and that was really, really helpful, just in answering loads of questions really quickly" (Interviewee, borough member)

However, some members struggle with the volume of guides and resources

Several interviewees highlighted in reference to the resources and guides that there was 'too much available', to the point where they found it overwhelming and hard to keep track of what is on offer. There were concerns that they might be missing out important resources and not making the most from their memberships.

"What I think is a challenge is, particularly around some of the resources that we've got, so LOTI is almost a victim of its own success, there's so much going on that I lose track of everything that we could be involved in, should be involved in, want to be involved in. I think there's so much potential for things to be missed, opportunities to be missed, opportunities for colleagues internally as well as the community that we are

missing out particularly because we are doing a lot with the digital inclusion side of things. Have I missed something? Have I really taken advantage of the membership and what's on offer?" Interviewee, borough member

At the same time, some members struggled to make time to use guides and resources due to workload priorities and capacity, as well as not being on top of what they could benefit from.

"Well, firstly the toolkit is just sitting there. I don't even know if anyone reads it, and it's pretty good. And we spent money on it." Interviewee, borough member

E. LOTI's impact and value to members

LOTI is having an important impact on members, but it is not always easy to quantify
Overall, survey respondents and interviewees were happy with their membership of LOTI and said to have benefited from it. This included references to their excellent resources, supportive and proactive staff, and benefitting from a collaborative and forward-thinking space.

When we asked interviewees to answer the question of LOTI's impact, they found it hard to elaborate even though they all said it is beneficial and making a difference to their work.

"That's a really difficult question… So I don't think you could say there has been a massive profound difference, on an individual borough level, but we have certainly had benefits and I have talked you through those and it certainly, in my view, well worth the £30,000, it's going to be £33,000 next year, you know, that's nothing compared to the benefits but I think the impact is greater than the sum of the parts, if that makes sense. So, I think London, as a city has benefited in all honesty from it" (Interviewee, borough member)

LOTI has advanced data maturity and implementation of project outputs
LOTI's projects have helped build capacity in boroughs and helped them work collectively in a unique way. This has meant that they have produced collective outputs that would not have happened without LOTI.

"Without LOTI, we would not have, the data practitioner and data leaders… we wouldn't have advanced so quickly in terms of our maturity around data and the practitioner element… so we've got a lot of people that have been skilled up, trained, apprenticeships around, kind of, data and knowledge, and it's really helped our implementation, we implemented Power BI[a technology-driven business intelligence tool provided by Microsoft], which is a tool for data stuff. And I think we wouldn't have got to where we got to so quickly without LOTI". Interviewee, borough member

LOTI's projects help boroughs save money and time
Interviewees acknowledged that despite being able to do this work themselves, LOTI allowed them to do everything faster and also save money through making use of the economies of scale and the match-funding facility LOTI provides.

"…Having said that, we've got our own digital inclusion programme, so we have got resources around us. So, we would do some of that stuff anyway, it might just be that we get through it quicker or more across London output I suppose." (Interviewee, borough member)

"I think everything I have achieved I would have been able to achieve. It would have cost us more money and required more effort… They were our Council priorities so we would have had to have made them happen anyway." (Interviewee, borough member)

I think it's opened up a completely new set of capabilities that we wouldn't have had... Because, part of the challenge with any sort of new project is also, where are you going to get the funding from? …So, having LOTI in by collaborating, we can drive the cost of it down, because we can have more economies of scale. But, also, LOTI was able to, kind of, pump-prime it a little bit. So, provide a bit of match funding, which just makes it easier to get an experiment up and running, does it show value? And that helps build the case. So, you know, some of LOTI's role, is that ability to kind of, enable us to try something, through coordination, through economies of scale and through, you know, where possible, a bit of pump-priming funding (Interviewee, borough member)

Members think LOTI offers good value for money
Interviewees appreciated that working with LOTI is good value for money.

"Excellent resource providing insight, support and events providing an open united space for speaking aloud about the issues facing councils and resources addressing those concerns. Forward thinking, unbiased and positive, Great team, great org, great price!" (Survey respondent, borough member)

"I would be surprised if anybody would turn round and say, 'I don't feel like we're getting value for money,' because the access that they have to people is quite big. Then the exercises, the workshops, yes. I pay [a large technology consultancy firm] much more than I pay LOTI and I get more value out of LOTI than I do from them" (Interviewee, borough member)

"…some of these projects. They may have happened, but they may have cost us more because we are doing it on our own. I have never sat down and, kind of, mapped that." (Interviewee, borough member)

"I feel like from a funding perspective, like you know the funding that we provide I think we do get good value back because we have access to quite a few people nowadays…. In terms of value for money. I would pay more for the service that we are getting." (Interviewee, borough member)

"These are the projects, this is the financial benefit, the organisational benefit.' Maybe that just needs to be a bit clearer sometimes." (Interviewee, borough member)

F. The future of LOTI

Some stakeholders would like to explore the next steps for LOTI (beyond digital and IT sectors)
Several interviewees said that it was important for LOTI to look beyond its field and to be bold to take on board transformative tasks. They said that LOTI was in a strong position to have the ambition to encourage collaboration across other sectors and build on relationships with important stakeholders such as the MET police and Microsoft amongst others.

"How do we build services for residents that are modern, innovative, digital services that help them navigate social care more effectively? 'So, it is that shift away from looking as an IT problem and looking at it more as a digital server opportunity. I think, that opens up a lot of collaborative bits…. there is something for us in LOTI to be thinking around it. If we are really going to tackle some of these core intrinsic challenges… what is the model and the approach that enables us to do those pieces of work in a joined-up way? I think that LOTI is really well placed to be in that space to be helping" (Interviewee, internal stakeholder)

"So particularly around the information governance stuff has been huge... So, I think we have benefited collaborating with other local authorities in London, I think the real benefit is around where we have collaborated with health, with the MET police, around some of that information sharing agreement… So that I think is huge, and we probably could and should do more of. I wonder whether there is more we can do with the relationships we have with some of our partners. So, we do obviously stuff with Bloomberg, with

AWS, with Microsoft. I am saying that I wonder if we can do more in that area, which then says in my head that maybe that is an area that is quite weak at the moment." (Interviewee, internal stakeholder)

"And then I think it's, 'Be bold.' I think it's time to be bold. That's my view. We've got to be bold. We can't, kind of, playing in the space that we've got complete control over. I think at some point we've got to go 'Actually, we've got a really great thing here. Let's treasure it and let's be bold with it and, over the next four years, let's do something that's genuinely impactful on a really tough challenge" (Interviewee, internal stakeholder)

However, there is a big question around whether LOTI can balance tackling London's big issues while looking after its growing membership

LOTI has put itself in a strong place, with its growing membership and four relatively successful years under its belt. LOTI has expressed a desire to move towards thematic work in areas like social care, housing, and environment by bringing its tools and methods to help tackle London's big issues around the crisis in social care, homelessness, and climate change amongst others. However, the challenge will be balancing this systemic and thematic work with its membership model and ensuring that they can still support their members the way they do at present.

'…there's an innovation vacuum in London local government. We've now got digital capabilities, and data capabilities, but at some point, why have we bothered doing any of that unless it's to try and direct them at London's big issues? We've got to be mindful we're a membership organisation and we've got to do that in a way that feels right for the members' (Interviewee, internal stakeholder)

A challenge for LOTI's growing membership is that it creates difficulty in producing change when too many people are involved. Careful consideration is needed on how to continue to manage the growing membership.

"…the more people you're trying to get to do a thing, often the harder it can be to get it up and running and moving." (Interviewee, borough member)

Important for LOTI to focus on building capacity and skills moving forward

Since lack of capacity and skills is an endemic problem in local government (as per survey findings), it is important that LOTI continues to tackle this challenge.

"I think the area of access to talent and skills is vital. As I said, if you don't have enough people, or people with the right skills, nothing else follows… Is it some sort of shared pool of talent? Is it strategic partnerships with universities? I don't know the full answer, but I think we've got to do something there." (Interviewee, internal stakeholder)

"I think the skills and capability agenda is a big one" (Interviewee, internal stakeholder)

"…Maybe invest the additional money in helping the councils achieve the current priorities more easily. The more we can take away or support the councils, I think the more chance of their collaboration, the more chance of success…It's tricky, because LOTI can't do the work for them, but it's just how far can LOTI go in assistance with the council priorities…" (Interviewee, borough member)

Members may be missing opportunities due to lack of capacity, and so LOTI needs to facilitate engagement

There was a recognition that the leads from a borough may not always have the capacity or sight to filter down to their staff what LOTI offers and therefore could do with LOTI's support in doing so. This could include LOTI monitoring and communicating to the Chief Digital, Information and Innovation officers

(CDIOs) members who (from their technology, digital and data teams) are attending which events so that they can keep sight of what is happening and not miss out. For example, one interviewee identified a weakness in that it was unclear to them which members of their team were attending the Communities of Practice. He suggested it would be helpful if LOTI monitored attendance.

"I think the events stuff is really good, what I find, and this is me personally, at times I don't know how much it filters into my two organisations. I don't have time to go and check, are people aware of all this stuff that's going on, and are you taking advantage of it? I think some people are, but that line of sight, as a member– It would be really helpful to know, you know, 'We ran 20 events last year and we didn't have any representation from Kingston and Sutton at any of them, and these are the people we communicate with and advertise this stuff through." (Interviewee, borough member)

"Do my heads of service feel they have the opportunity and are connecting?' I do not know that is the bit I am less clear on... otherwise you have got bottlenecks. So, you talk about that list of projects, they are all of interest, I could not be involved in all five or six of those, it is just impossible… I have some staff leading on digital inclusion. If they are not involved. I suppose is having that line of sight of those connections.... At least then the question I could be asking internally is, 'Is there a reason we're not connected with LOTI work?' And they might go, 'Oh, I do not know anything about it… But, you know, I do not have the space to go and proactively do that all the time. I kind of almost need, I suppose, a bit of a prompt sometimes from LOTI to go, 'Why haven't you joined this?" (Interviewee, borough member)

It is important that LOTI grows sustainably
Moving forward, it is important that LOTI grows in a sustainable way.

"I think it's really important that LOTI build sustainability into their model. So, what's the succession plan [if the leadership and team changes], you know, LOTI needs to be more than just the people who are in it. As those people come and go, LOTI needs to grow, so London Councils needs to put some real, specific effort into building sustainability into the LOTI team and people." (Interviewee, internal stakeholder)

It is important to ensure that LOTI is known beyond its sector
Some interviewees suggested that LOTI should continue its attempts to market itself beyond the world of IT, data, digitalisation, and innovation.

"They would not know [LOTI]. Some would. So, I do try and have those conversations wider than just digital and my team, but it doesn't happen all the time. So, the leader, the portfolio-holder, chief exec, quite a few of the senior management team know and are aware of LOTI and what we're doing, so that's positive. You know, a colleague in finance, probably not so much. There are some more than others, but it is certainly an area that we could do more of, spreading the word a bit more. (Interviewee, borough member)

"It's nationally recognised, in my work with other boroughs, people want to join, and they value any response that has got a LOTI brand attached to it. So, they hold it in esteem, it has got credibility and reputational impact now, so now I think it's a better time to be able to have those more difficult conversations about what the members need to do differently." (Interviewee, internal stakeholder)

LOTI could do even more than it does now to demonstrate its value and impact
Several stakeholders said that LOTI could do even more than it currently does to communicate its value to their members and beyond. This could include doing 'show and tell' activities where LOTI demonstrates its tangible impact as well as quantifying the monetary value of its activities. Also, an interviewee said it was important that LOTI prioritises on 'pragmatic' work which make a difference.

"LOTI could do more to show the value of the work that is being done. So, it could be in efficiency savings, in financial returns, it could be in time, effort, energy saved." (Interviewee, internal stakeholder)

"...is there enough of … 'What "tangible" difference have you seen from LOTI?' And if I struggle to answer that, then I think there's something for LOTI to make sure that they are really clear… it's about what's the tangible impact that's made back to, ultimately, communities in London." (Interviewee, borough member)

"Make sure you're doing useful, pragmatic things that can make a difference." (Interviewee, borough member)

LOTI should continue to be transparent on how projects and priorities are chosen to avoid misunderstandings

It is important that LOTI ensure that members understand the process of project selection so that there are no misunderstandings. For example, a few survey respondents said that LOTI should strive to ask about what members would like to focus on more frequently and that there was a lack of clarity on how projects were chosen and prioritized.

"Delivery of specific projects – not clear how these are chosen and prioritised as I don't think boroughs are consulted on what's most useful." (Survey respondent, borough member)

"LOTI should do more of asking boroughs what they want to focus on. I am in all of the data networks, and yet am surprised to hear when they have commissioned new AI guidance and are starting a closed apprenticeship cohort. I do not think anyone in the community has asked for those things, at least they have not been discussed as a group before they set out to do them." (Survey respondent, borough member)

"The particular projects, I think sometimes, I could not tell you why they have been picked. And that might be because I've tuned out, because they're not top of my list, and if I was going through a list of things that need to be transformed, you know, social care's the top one, I think housing follows really closely behind it, AI is probably behind that, and then I think the data stuff, you know the really strategic areas, those would be the sort of four. But I want to be a bit careful that does not mean that what has been picked is wrong, because some of those projects are not as strategic, they are more focused, and you need that as well." (Interviewee, borough member)

It is important to ensure experts are involved in the facilitation of as many projects as possible (when relevant)

One interviewee pointed out that for the project on Attack Surface Mapping Pilot, it would have been useful to have an expert facilitate the discussion.

"…I'm going back to cyber again. At the beginning of some of the exercises, people that were involved weren't necessarily experts in those industries. So, when we were having conversations, it was difficult to explain the problems. The problems were easy to explain, but the mechanisms to resolve them weren't clearly understood by LOTI and some of the other councils as well." (Interviewee, borough member)

It is important to continue encouraging wide participation across seniorities to events

One survey respondent said they would welcome more varied participation from members at events (i.e., diversity by profession, expertise, and level of seniority).

"Maybe more varied participation from members at member events." (Survey respondent, borough member)

It is important to have an accessible catalogue of guides and resources
Since members are very busy and there is a lot of guides and resources, it would be beneficial to ensure easy accessibility to encourage members to use them.

> *"…I wonder whether there is something that we can be clearer on what is available, what the different bits and pieces are that could be available to our teams and communities." (Interviewee, borough member)*

It is important to ensure that workshops do not overload members with information
One interviewee identified a weakness in the sessions, which were sometimes over-detailed and condensed with too much information, and expressed a desire for more interactive sessions instead.

> *"And it's a difficult balance, I suppose, because you probably get more out of it if it's more interactive, rather than just, sort of, an '80's slide deck that you're going to go through and this is all the updates…there's a lot going on, but if it's just a sort of, communication dump, it's hard to concentrate sometimes with all the other stuff you've got going on. You're trying to pick out the bits that are, kind of, relevant to you most at this point in time. It can be difficult." (Interviewee, borough member)*

It is important to continue ensuring that ideas can turn into concrete actions by tackling the silo culture in local authorities
LOTI should continue to help local government move away from working in silos.

> *"LOTI has good ideas, and the members have good ideas. And sometimes we start off things with great excitement and enthusiasm, but I do not think they have materialized that the way that they do" (Interviewee, borough member)*

> *"LOTI can play a unique role in helping to stop that siloing across 33 boroughs, you know, really calling out, 'We can't be siloed on this, we have to do this together.' And those priorities, you know, kind of spinning off the back of that, I think is key." (Interviewee, borough member)*

LOTI could explore a potential offer of tailored support
Some interviewees were interested in the idea that they could access some individual support from LOTI according to their needs.

> *"…maybe they can look at one topic that they will help a particular council with for that year and then I can decide that I have an issue with this one particular thing, and I need LOTI to help me if that makes sense. I will be part of the generic stuff, but for what I am paying for, for that one year, there is this one priority, I want LOTI to factor in some time for me. Maybe that will help, because my problems might not be everybody else's problem, but my problem is a big problem for me." (Interviewee, borough member)*

5 Value for money analysis

This chapter provides a high-level assessment of the value for money offered by seven of LOTI's key activities. Each strand was assessed against the framework described in Chapter 3 and covers the context for the intervention, our interpretation of the underlying rationale and the logic chain, the outputs or outcomes that were achieved and a high-level assessment of the potential value for money.

A. LOTI recruitment support

London boroughs report difficulty in hiring for leadership roles in the fields of digital, data, technology and innovation. Often, local authorities cannot compete on salary with private sector firms. They also tend to undersell the significant benefits of working for a local authority, which include the crucial role senior digital and data leaders play in transforming public services, the social impact of these roles, flexible working benefits and job security. Further, often the job descriptions of roles in boroughs can be badly formatted, or simply not look appealing to a candidate. Boroughs therefore have to be more creative and mindful in their approach to recruitment to attract the right talent.

The recruitment support received by boroughs as part of LOTI membership gives them access to:

- 1-2-1 support from an expert recruitment consultant (2 days of time per member organisation)
- A LOTI jobs board, on which boroughs are able to post vacancies
- Salary benchmarking data and Job Description Library
- Careers days hosted by LOTI to attract out-of-sector candidates

Rationale for intervention

London boroughs struggle to recruit and access the skills required to realise the full value of digital, data tools and methods. There are several market imperfections that could explain this. First, there's a scarcity of data science and digital skills in the job market. For example, a 2021 study found that in the UK, the supply of data scientists from universities was unlikely to exceed 10,000 per year, yet there were potentially at least 178,000 unfilled data specialist roles[11]. Many candidates with these skills can be drawn to the private sector due to higher salaries and more attractive compensation packages, making it challenging for the public sector to attract and retain top talent[12]. There's also competition within public sector organisations for these skills.

Second, a lack of information in the market hinders candidates from applying for local government roles as they may not be aware of the role's benefits, such as the meaningful impact they are delivering. LOTI addresses this by increasing awareness to external candidates through initiatives like the LOTI jobs board and career days. They've also enlisted a specialist recruitment consultant to advise on job advertising and reaching a wider audience. Additionally, the project provides salary benchmarking data to encourage boroughs to align their roles with market standards.

Although LOTI has addressed some recruitment challenges anecdotally, more documented evidence of the issues boroughs face would have been beneficial for this evaluation.

Logic chain

Having discussed the project with LOTI colleagues and reviewed the supporting material, our interpretation of the logic chain, including the intended outcomes and impacts of the programme, is set out below:

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[11] UK Parliament (2023), Data science skills in the UK workforce

Figure 18: Logic chain for Recruitment support for member boroughs

Inputs	Activities	Outputs	Outcomes	Impacts
LOTI central resources (funding + staff time)	LOTI Borough members given 1:1 support from specialist recruiter	Number of sessions boroughs have with specialist recruitment consultant	Shorter recruitment times / fewer persistent vacancies	Tech workers matched more effectively to jobs in local government
Specialist recruiter funded by LOTI	LOTI job description library	Number of jobs posted on LOTI jobs board	Greater awareness among data & tech workers of jobs in local government, leading to increased quantity and quality of candidates	Fewer tech skills gaps in local government
	LOTI "how-to guide" on recruiting to hard-to-fill posts	Unique views of jobs posted on LOTI jobs board	Recruitment cost savings for boroughs	Better local services/ Improved productivity
	Salary benchmarking	Number of people attending LOTI career days/ satisfaction of attendees	Improved productivity of borough staff	Improved retention of digital/technical borough staff
	LOTI jobs board to advertise posts			
	LOTI career days			

Outputs and outcomes

Recruitment support provided by LOTI delivered the following outputs:

- LOTI advertised and helped promote jobs on LOTI jobs board.
- LOTI paid for two days of specialist recruitment consultant time per member organisation.
- LOTI collated more than 600 job descriptions and salary information in a LOTI Job Description Library.

The following outcomes of the project were reported:

- The LOTI specialist recruitment consultant filled 35 roles up until end of financial year 2022/23, which will have delivered cost savings compared to commercial recruiters (described in the next section on value for money).
- Many boroughs report that the job descriptions library "saves them hours" by not having to write job descriptions from scratch.
- Some qualitative evidence suggests that LOTI recruitment support has increased awareness of borough roles through LOTI. A consultant Chief Information Officer said: "Just anecdotally supporting the LOTI brand in recruitment… I've interviewed a few "Head of/Assistant Director" roles in the last month and there have been a couple of people who have no local authority sector experience who have specifically mentioned LOTI in their interview answers to evidence their research of the sector."

Based on the above outcomes reported, there is some evidence to demonstrate that LOTI has helped reduce recruitment resourcing required for boroughs. In addition, the evidence suggests that LOTI has increased awareness within the digital, technology and data sector of relevant job posts in London boroughs.

Value for money

We provide an indicative estimate of the cost savings achieved through the LOTI expert recruitment consultant. This estimate is based on data provided by LOTI, comparing the cost of LOTI recruiter support to the likely alternative scenario (the costs boroughs would have incurred if they had used commercial recruitment consultants).

Boroughs were offered support by the LOTI expert recruitment consultant, with charges based on the time and resources utilized. Under LOTI membership, each borough receives an allocation of two days of recruiter resources, and additional days are subject to charges. In contrast, commercial recruiters typically charge a fee equivalent to 20% of the candidate's salary.

The total cost of recruiter services for LOTI boroughs, which includes additional days of resource utilization, amounted to £131,000[13] over the financial year 2022/23. By comparing this cost of recruiter services to the estimated costs of commercial recruiters to place the same number of roles, this results in estimated savings of £301,000.

Besides cost savings, recruitment support is likely to have helped fill 'hard-to-fill'[14] roles more quickly, preventing productivity losses due to vacant positions. This support includes regular collaboration with LOTI stakeholders to understand recruitment plans and challenges, offering advice, feedback on recruitment methods, and helping attract talent from outside the sector. Similarly, resources like salary benchmarking data, the Job Descriptions Library, and careers days, enhance role attractiveness and awareness, with the aim of filling roles more quickly. However, these benefits are not factored into our analysis.

B. Training and skills

London boroughs often struggle to access the technical skills needed to be truly effective and responsive to residents' needs. This includes a wide range of skillsets such as information governance, data visualisation, data science and data architecture among others. These skills gaps prevent service optimisation, data analysis and interpretation and development of the correct tools and methods.

LOTI played a crucial role in identifying what skills are required by boroughs to tackle the skills gap, something that would have been difficult to achieve individually or perhaps fill with "off-the-peg" training solutions. LOTI then developed several initiatives to address these skills gaps. This includes training and supporting the career development of boroughs' existing data teams, and raising the level of awareness about how to use data amongst all council staff.

Below, we focus on three bespoke training courses offered to LOTI members:

- In February 2022, the **LOTI Community funded 88 women or non-binary staff to attend the Upfront course[15].** This course encourages career development of LOTI members in the tech, digital and data community who are women or non-binary. By helping participants to be more confident and assertive at work, the course aims to enable members to increase their professional visibility, and ultimately aid career progression in the sector. LOTI paid for two women per member organisation to attend, with each place costing £1,300 plus VAT.

- In summer 2021, **LOTI partnered with the Office for National Statistics (ONS) to train 15 analysts from LOTI boroughs** in data science methods. The 12-week course focussed specifically on skills and techniques for data matching, and the application of data science within local

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[13] This includes LOTI contribution= £60,000. Additional costs to boroughs, above membership fee = £70,975.
[14] Defined as 'hard-to-fill' by boroughs themselves.
[15] Note that some boroughs chose to pay for additional places, with 88 women attending in total.

government. Participants dedicated one day a week to the programme, and were given access to direct teaching, ONS mentors and peer-to-peer support.

- In 2020, **LOTI ran three digital training sessions open to 104 apprentices** with major tech companies. Sessions connected them with companies such as Microsoft, Google and Amazon Web Services. The sessions helped apprentices explore their futures in the tech sector, network, and develop understanding of techniques used to tackle challenges and solve common problems across boroughs.

In addition to these three training programmes, LOTI also runs a range of other training and knowledge-sharing sessions with its members. For example, there are several communities of practice which involve almost 500 data leaders, practitioners and data scientists across LOTI, set up to discuss shared challenges in day-to-day work, and how to use data more strategically. Evaluating these sessions is out of scope for this evaluation; instead, we have focussed our review on the three training sessions described above, given they are among the larger and more resource-intensive options.

Logic chain

Our interpretation of the logic chain, including the intended outcomes and impacts of the programme, is set out below:

Figure 19: Logic chain for Training and skills

Inputs	Activities	Outputs	Outcomes	Impacts
Financial investment, In-kind resources (staff, facilities, materials etc) & LOTI staff facilitation resource	Run a 6-week 'Upfront' confidence course for female and non-binary staff in borough members	Number of attendees on training courses and workshops	Improved data science skills of participants	Reduced data and digital skills gap
	Partnered with the ONS to train data scientists in advanced methods over 12-weeks	Satisfaction of participants	Improved confidence/ self-esteem of participants	Improved career prospects for participants (and associated salary improvements)
	Organised 3 training sessions with major tech companies for LOTI borough apprentices		Improved wellbeing	Improved productivity (and associated GVA)
			Improved soft skills (e.g. communication, negotiation) of participants	Improved service provision across LOTI boroughs

Rationale for intervention

There are several market imperfections that could explain the reason boroughs struggle to access skills in the digital, data and tech fields. First, as the digital and tech world is constantly evolving, the skills demanded by employers change rapidly. This complicates efforts to recruit individuals with the relevant skills needed at the time for a particular role. Moreover, the labour market may still be undergoing a period of adjustment, with workers needing to retrain and skills providers needing to offer courses that reflect employer requirements. Third, skills gaps may be due to underinvestment in training as the returns to individuals, organisations and society are either not fully recognised, or undervalued.

Skills shortages and gaps in data science and other related technical disciplines are well documented nationally,[16]. LOTI was also able to determine anecdotally some of the specific gaps facing boroughs, which they sought to address by upskilling current employees in data, digital and tech to improve their capacity. For the purposes of this evaluation, it would have been helpful to see more of a needs assessment on why the three courses (and not others) were identified by LOTI as areas of focus since they are the largest courses funded, or facilitated by LOTI in terms of resource intensity and length.

Outputs and outcomes

LOTI successfully delivered the three courses and the following outputs were achieved:

- 88 women in total participated in the Upfront course. Two places were funded by LOTI and some boroughs funded additional places on the course.
- 15 data analysts from LOTI boroughs completed the ONS Data Science Bootcamp.
- 104 apprentices received training with Google, Amazon Web Services and Microsoft.

LOTI conducted surveys of participants to determine outcomes of the training courses. The following comments from Upfront course participants suggest it was well received and helped to address a gap in the market:

- *"[I] think it is a really valuable offering for LOTI – women in tech [are] still outnumbered and also dealing with senior leaders who are generally male…also a good course for Senior leaders to think about their privilege and what they can get changed from positions of power- create ladders."*
"I think this course really promotes women in the workplace and also shines a light on behaviours, communicating and presenting to a wider audience which is very positive."

Similarly, ONS Data Science Bootcamp attendees commented on the benefits of working collaboratively, and the need for more training and support across wider skillsets:

- *"The shared understanding of the London Local Gov context is invaluable. This works best when there is also expert mentoring involved."*
- *"There is demand for more training and support for data scientists across multiple skills sets and topics."*

Based on the anecdotal comments above, there is some evidence to suggest that participants have benefitted from the training courses provided by LOTI. However, our ability to draw conclusions on attainment of intended course outcomes is constrained by the lack of quantifiable data. Additionally, certain intended outcomes, such as enhanced career progression, may manifest over a longer time frame. In future, it would be beneficial for LOTI to implement beneficiary outcome tracking to aid evaluations of LOTI-funded training.

Value for money

Workplace training offers substantial benefits to both individuals and their employers. For individuals, it is an opportunity for them to enhance their skills and knowledge without paying off-pocket, thereby increasing their human capital and employability. Empirical research shows that investments in human capital, like workplace training, lead to higher lifetime earnings and better career prospects[17]. Research also shows small but significant wellbeing improvements associated with workplace training which are comparable to the wellbeing gained from a 1% increase in wages[18]. Workplace training is a win-win because

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[16] UK Parliament (2023), Data science skills in the UK workforce
[17] OECD (2022), The importance of human capital for economic outcomes
[18] What Works Centre, (2017), Wellbeing benefits of job-related learning

employers also reap rewards from these initiatives, including improved productivity and performance among trained employees[19], as evidenced by the study conducted which highlights the positive correlation between training investment and firm-level productivity gains.

To conduct a cost-benefit analysis in line with HM Treasury Green Book methodology, the impact could be measured using a human capital approach. This approach is typically used to monetise benefits to the individual by measuring changes in productivity or earnings over a whole lifetime. One method of doing so is to apply an economic value of an individual achieving a specific qualification, which can be taken from sources such as the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) Unit cost database[20]. For example, the economic value of the City & Guilds level 2 qualification is £1,350 per person per year over 40 years (adjusted to 2022 prices).

However, for courses on the scale of those provided by LOTI it is not appropriate or proportionate to quantify the benefits in this way. And as mentioned in the previous section, to measure the value of these bespoke courses would require information about the medium or longer-term improvements in outcomes (such as skills improvements) for beneficiaries, and what would have happened in the absence of LOTI training. Without this information, we are unable to provide an estimate of value for money.

From a financial perspective, the ONS Data Science Bootcamp and Apprenticeship training sessions utilized in-kind resources, and the Upfront course had a total cost of £120,000[21]. Considering the required LOTI staff resources for facilitation[22] and the cost of each training session, this results in the following costs per participant, as shown in Table 2:

Table 2: Training and skills costs

Course	No. of participants	Cost	Cost per participant
ONS data bootcamp	15	£6600	£440
Upfront	88	£124,400	£1414
Apprenticeship training	104	£2750	£26

In terms of the output relative to the resources used, the apprenticeship training sessions are the most efficient. However, it's important to note that this assessment doesn't consider the duration or intensity of the workshops or courses.

C. Preventing vulnerable residents from reaching crisis project

In late 2020, LOTI launched the Covid-19 Innovation Fund, to expedite London boroughs' efforts to address pandemic-related challenges through digital and innovative solutions, aiming to reduce risk, time, and costs of trialling new approaches.

This project built on a new model of frontline services that emerged in response to the pandemic, focusing on preventing crisis situations (such as becoming homeless) for those who are already vulnerable. The approach called the *Here to Help* service was developed by Hackney and Newham council, and involved improving staff-resident interactions through training, by equipping staff with the right resources and knowledge to enable them to have better conversations with residents to identify signs they may be facing

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[19] Black and Lynch (2001), How to Compete: The Impact of Workplace Practices and Information Technology on Productivity
[20] Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) Unit cost database, accessed 12 September 2023
[21] Including contributions from LOTI and member boroughs.
[22] Based on days resource multiplied by LOTI day rate of £550.

difficulties. The approach also involved hosting reflective peer support sessions, developing a digital referral tool to help signpost staff to relevant council and CVS services, developing a simple case management IT system and piloting a Link Worker model[23].

Rationale for intervention

There is a clear rationale for LOTI providing funding for this project. The impact of COVID-19 on existing inequalities is well documented nationally [24] and many Londoners facing multiple disadvantages became more at risk of catastrophic social and economic events, such as becoming homeless. In particular, MHCLG Index of Deprivation research[25] demonstrates Hackney and Newham's high levels of deprivation.

Local government services also tend to be designed around addressing a crisis, rather than a more preventative approach. This means staff are not trained to have the trusted conversations required to establish needs of residents at risk. Borough staff are also not always aware of relevant support services provided by the voluntary and community sector. These challenges were demonstrated using a survey of 250 frontline staff. Results indicated that unclear expectations, time pressures and the difficulty of working with other services to link residents with the right support were key barriers to helping residents[26]. This project acted as a catalyst to rectify these issues through several different approaches.

Logic chain

The project had developed a Theory of Change which sets out clearly the required inputs (along with LOTI funding), activities, outcomes for borough staff, for residents and the system, under the overarching goal of supporting residents' needed and reducing their risk of crisis:[27]

Figure 20: Logic chain for Preventing vulnerable residents reaching crisis project

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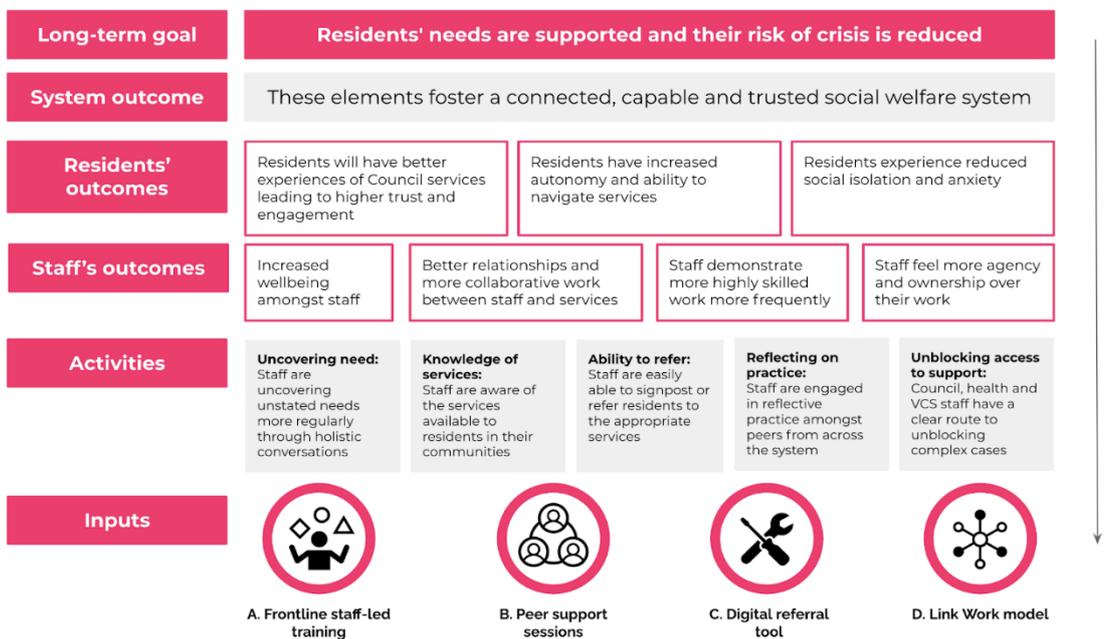
[23] Link Work involves spending time with residents to understand their needs, collaborating with other teams and agencies to find the right support, navigating Council services and partner agencies, acting as an advocate for residents or their key support worker, and obtaining consent to share resident details with other teams or agencies at each step. For more details see the Here to Help project.

[24] Greater London Authority. (2021). Beyond the Data: One Year On Report

[25] London Datastore. (2019). Indices of Deprivation 2019 Initial Analysis.

[26] LOTI, Hackney, Newham, Preventing Residents from Reaching Crisis: A toolkit to support the adoption of preventative approaches

[27] LOTI, Hackney, Newham, Preventing Residents from Reaching Crisis: A toolkit to support the adoption of preventative approaches. Note that inputs and activities are defined differ to logic models for other activities.

Outputs and outcomes

This project delivered the following outputs:

- A **digital referral tool** to help council staff identify relevant support services in their local area (this will be available for other boroughs to use).
- **Link work model (in Hackney):** Proactive contact with 300+ residents and 116 referrals to council services, VCS, Housing and Health partners.
- **Frontline staff-led training**, where more than 150 frontline staff have attended Core Conversations training in Newham, and more than 45 in Hackney. More than 1,300 frontline staff have attended the wider specialist training since November 2020[28].
- **A toolkit of project resources** that can be reused by other councils in implementing this preventative approach. This toolkit includes information on how to run training sessions, reflective peer support sessions, how to use the digital platform for identifying relevant support services and how to set the link-work model up.

Staff feedback has shown that some of the intended outcomes, including enhanced staff skills and well-being, along with improved experiences of council services, have been realised [29]:

- **Frontline staff-led training** gave some staff an insight into thinking about how to approach people with empathy and sensitivity. It also helped some staff broaden their knowledge when it comes to understanding the processes for those who are homeless.
- Staff described **peer support sessions** as a safe space to express themselves, and they have learnt a lot by listening to other team members about day-to-day experiences.
- The **digital referral tool** was described as making referrals simple, and allows staff to keep a record of referrals made, as well as keeping customers in the loop.
- One of the **Link Workers** was described as going beyond their role to help one resident access electricity and gas vouchers. The resident had been struggling financially and dealing with complex needs, including a postponed Personal Independence Payment (PIP) assessment meeting, which left her devastated. The Link Worker's empathy and compassion in signposting her for fuel vouchers lifted her spirits, as she had been trying to process her PIP application for a long time.

Value for money

Academics at the Institute for Innovation and Public Purpose, University College London (UCL) were commissioned to evaluate the service[30]. Researchers conducted qualitative research, interviewing 18 frontline staff in Hackney and Newham who had some role in the project. They attempted to understand how the new service model was working using the capabilities approach[31], by considering the following factors: knowledge, work culture and cohesion, engagement and trust, resource access and behaviour change, appropriate referrals and holistic care, and service system integration.

In doing so, the evaluation put particular emphasis on the perspective of staff, possibly because this is a necessary condition to achieving better services for residents. The researchers cautioned against adopting a traditional approach to assessing impact of the project using cost-benefit analysis because it relies on the assumption that the contextual environment in which the policy or intervention takes place remains unchanged[32]. They argue that "traditional targets and indicators anchored only to efficiency say little about service effectiveness, impact and quality"[15]. Nonetheless, establishing value for money is something local

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[28] LOTI, Hackney, Newham, Preventing Residents from Reaching Crisis: A toolkit to support the adoption of preventative approaches
[29] LOTI, Hackney, Newham, Preventing Residents from Reaching Crisis: A toolkit to support the adoption of preventative approaches
[30] UCL Bartlett School of Public Policy. (2022). Case Study: Strengthening Social Care System.
[31] UCL Bartlett School of Public Policy. (2020). IIPP Welfare State 5.0 Report.
[32] UCL Bartlett School of Public Policy. (2020). Alternative policy evaluation frameworks and tools

authorities will need to consider when deciding to invest in innovating services, versus spending money on other vital services.

The new service has the explicit aim of avoiding serious social and economic events, such as a resident becoming homeless, a child being taken into care or an adult needing long-term social care. For residents, averting these crises will have significant, life-changing benefits.

These crisis events also have significant financial consequences for boroughs. High-level estimates of the cost to local authorities are collected by the GMCA unit cost database[33]. Table 3 shows unit costs relating to rough sleeping, children taken into care and an adult needing residential care. Table 3 also shows the total cost of each crisis event over a period of 10 years (a standard appraisal period, although these costs could continue through an individual's lifetime).

Table 3: Local authority costs associated with crisis events

Crisis	Annual fiscal cost, £ (2022 prices)	Fiscal cost over 10 years, £ (discounted[34])
Statutory homelessness application[35]	3,189	26,522
Child taken into care[36]	67,877	564,506
Adult requiring residential social care[37]	26,260	218,394

The costs of piloting this service in two boroughs was a total of £82,500[38]. A total of 116 residents were supported during the pilot, which equates to £711 per resident supported. The cost of providing preventative services to residents is not included, but this is an important consideration as the increase in uptake of preventative services underpins how this new service is designed to prevent vulnerable residents from reaching crisis. Many of these services will be provided by the voluntary and community sector, so may not always represent an additional expenditure for local authorities, but should be included in any cost benefit analysis.

Considering the financial costs detailed above, avoiding two crisis events would represent value for money from the perspective of local authorities.

D. Pan-London data sharing agreements project

Organisations across London share personal data every day to deliver their statutory obligations, to prevent crime or harm, and improve their services for residents that directly affect wellbeing. A data sharing agreement (DSA) is an agreement between two or more parties that sets out the purpose of sharing data, sets standards and provides clarity to all parties about their roles and responsibilities. There are many DSAs in operation across London, between London boroughs and other London agencies such as the

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[33] Greater Manchester Combined Authority. (2022). Unit Cost Database

[34] Discounted at an annual rate of 3.5% as per HM Treasury guidelines. UK Government. The Green Book 2022.

[35] This cost is based upon four weeks of temporary accommodation whilst an application for homelessness is made, from the housing and homelessness charity Shelter. Data for the study were sourced from central government, the Chartered Institute of Public Finance Accountants, Shelter's local authority benchmarking service, and contributing local authorities.

[36] The cost is derived from Department for Education data on the average net current expenditure on the placement of looked after children (LAC) in different care settings England in 2020/21, across all English local authorities.

[37] This is an average cost for residential care for elderly people (which varies widely depending on the level of care needed), taken from social services expenditure and activity data.

[38] This includes £75,000 to set up the service, and £7,500 of LOTI staff resource. Assuming that borough staff costs are the same under the new service, as the same frontline staff are employed but work in a different way.

Metropolitan Police, NHS trusts, the probation and London Ambulance Services and voluntary sector organisations.

Before LOTI, each London borough had a separate creation and approval process for any DSA. This would involve information governance leads from both parties (e.g. a London borough and the Met Police) and several subject practitioners (i.e. housing or social care professionals). Although some groups worked together, achieving an agreed DSA across many partners was difficult. Sometimes relevant information governance professionals were not informed when deciding on data sharing and drafting an agreement, which resulted in data being shared without awareness of the risks involved. In other cases, staff with less experience of data sharing could be risk-averse, resulting in the sub-optimal sharing of data. Organisations also often had different preferences for the structure and branding of a DSA which had little bearing on the content. All of these factors resulted in delays to completing a DSA; in some cases it could take years to approve a DSA or else the endeavour might be abandoned altogether.

Description of intervention
Pan-London Data Sharing Pilot: January – March 2021

The Pan-London Data Sharing Pilot began at the start of 2021 with the ambition to create a single DSA for London for the purpose of multi-agency safeguarding of children, involving all local authorities in London[39] and the Metropolitan Police. To achieve this, the London Safeguarding Children Partnership Board and the Information Governance for London group (IgfL) created data standards and set up a working group approach[40] involving representatives from five boroughs and the Met.

New ways of working from April 2021

After the end of the pilot, IgfL began working with the police on several core DSAs that cover areas of statutory responsibility for the police and councils. Shared tools were created and a standardised process involving a working group was established and embedded. With the format of a pan-London DSA agreed as templates, a working group for each project was able to concentrate on the substantive issues involved in data sharing, typically with around five information governance officers and five "subject practitioners" such as housing and social care officers from pan-London organisations. All other parties then receive the draft agreement prepared by the working group, and decide whether or not to sign up to the agreement. This approach is now used to create and agree DSAs required for significant pieces of work between boroughs and other organisations across London.

Rationale for intervention
Sharing data can yield significant benefits, but these advantages may not directly benefit the data-owning agencies. Additionally, data sharing carries risks for both organisations and individuals, which likely contributed to the sub-optimal sharing of data prior to LOTI. LOTI intervention enhanced the efficiency of the information governance process, an outcome that might not have materialized without their involvement.

Prior to LOTI, DSAs typically involved an enormous duplication of effort, with each borough creating and agreeing their own agreements. With so many parties involved this led to inevitable delays to completion. In some cases it took years to approve a DSA and by the time an agreement was in place, it was time to start the review process. LOTI aimed to address this coordination failure across London by reducing the quantity of DSAs required for data sharing purposes.

[39] 32 London Boroughs, not including the City of London
[40] London Office of Technology and Innovation (LOTI). IG Framework.

The challenges faced in data sharing agreement processes were described anecdotally by LOTI colleagues. However, given the nature of the topic, it is unlikely that this evidence would be documented more formally. In our view, there was a clear rationale for LOTI's intervention to improve data sharing between public agencies.

Logic chain

Our interpretation of the logic chain, including the intended outcomes and impacts of the project, is set out below:

Figure 21: Logic chain for Pan-London Data Sharing Agreements Project

Inputs	Activities	Outputs	Outcomes	Impacts
LOTI central resources (funding £7.7k + staff time)	Pan-London DSA pilot for Multi-Agency Safeguarding of Children	No. of Pan-London data sharing agreements signed	Improved efficiency of boroughs and other agencies (time saved on DSAs)	Improved public services for Londoners
External funding: £120k Met Police + MOPAC	Established Pan-London Information governance lead role	No. of tools and guidance documents published	Easier to share personal data across London's public sector	
	Create standardised process, standards and tools to conduct IG		More data sharing projects go ahead (and/or sped up)	
	Information Governance for London (IGfL) working group approach to create pan-London DSAs		Reduced ethical and legal risks associated with data sharing	
	LOTI members given access to Information sharing gateway		Improved knowledge and experience for IG officers and subject practitioners	

Outputs and outcomes

The following outputs were reported by LOTI:

- During the pilot phase, the Pan-London DSA for multi-agency safeguarding of children was signed in three months.
- Twenty Pan-London Data Sharing Agreements (DSAs) have been signed, addressing various topics such as safeguarding, gang violence, licensing activities, risk management of offenders, youth offending services, adult safeguarding, and emergency response for individuals and children's services. There are also three further pan-London DSAs in progress.
- Eight published information governance guidance documents or tools on:
    - Sharing public information for vaccinations in school [41]
    - Serious Violence Duty data sharing requirements [42]
    - London Data Ethics Service [43]

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[41]London Office of Technology and Innovation (LOTI). Advice on Sharing Pupil Information for Vaccinations in Schools.

[42]London Office of Technology and Innovation (LOTI). Serious Violence Duty Data Sharing.

[43] London Office of Technology and Innovation (LOTI). London Data Ethics Service.

- o Data ethics recommendations and principles[44]
- o How to establish a data ethics governance board[45]
- o Data ethics case study library[46]
- o Dapian Data Privacy Impact Assessment tool (see below for a more in-depth review) [47]
- o 7-Step Framework for Information Governance[48]

In terms of outcomes, Pan-London DSAs are expected to lead to efficiency savings in the public sector by streamlining the process and involving fewer officers, which will be detailed in the next section on value for money. These agreements are also likely to bring about long-term social and economic benefits, advancing projects aimed at improving the well-being of vulnerable Londoners. Additionally, it's probable that there will be increased ease of sharing personal information and reduced ethical risks, although this information has not been collected. The transformation of the pilot into a new way of working serves as evidence of the achieved outcomes.

Value for money

To assess the potential value for money of this initiative, we compare the standardised process for developing pan-London DSAs via working groups that was established after the pilot, to a 'business-as-usual' scenario without LOTI for a period of two years (April 2021 – March 2023). We simplify the 'business as usual' scenario by assuming that each borough and other agencies would have created and agreed bilateral DSAs for each project requiring the sharing of data (i.e. 33 separate agreements which would be the equivalent of one pan-London DSA). Also for simplicity we provide an undiscounted analysis, in part because it is not clear when costs occur within the two-year timeframe.

Using the new working group approach, we assume that 20 pan-London DSAs have been created and signed since April 2021 (with a further three in progress). The business-as-usual scenario would not have achieved the equivalent of 660 DSAs (33 boroughs x 20 pan-London DSAs). The reality is that many of the 20 projects underpinning the DSAs would not have come to fruition, in part because information governance experts are such a scarce resource in local government. We therefore assume that 13 of the pan-London agreements would have been prioritised for DSA development under a 'business as usual' scenario. At least seven of the projects would not have happened without the working group approach to DSAs, so can be considered truly additional.

In this assessment, we primarily consider the efficiency savings of the IgfL working group approach. It is important to recognise that the social and economic benefits of expediting these projects' delivery could outweigh efficiency savings, although quantifying these long-term costs and benefits is not within the scope of this evaluation. If independent evaluations of these projects are carried out, those results will be pertinent to the value for money LOTI has offered.

Data inputs and assumptions

Resource inputs were not formally monitored, so a series of assumptions have been made around the number and type of staff involved in creating DSAs and the time required. The pan-London Information governance lead provided expert opinion on these estimates, which were sense-checked by an experienced borough information governance officer. We assumed that the working group would involve five information governance leads and two subject leads from London boroughs as well as one information governance lead

[44] London Office of Technology and Innovation (LOTI). Data Ethics Recommendations and Principles.
[45] London Office of Technology and Innovation (LOTI). Data Ethics Case Study Library.
[46] London Office of Technology and Innovation (LOTI). Brent's Approach to Data Ethics Governance.
47 London Office of Technology and Innovation (LOTI). Dapian Digital DPIA Tool.
48 London Office of Technology and Innovation (LOTI). IG Framework.

and one subject lead from another agency (such as the Metropolitan Police). All boroughs that did not have a member of staff on the working group would also need to dedicate staff (one information governance lead, and one subject lead) to agree the draft DSA and arrange for it to be signed.

Table 4 sets out the assumptions made around the average time required by officers to create and sign-off a typical data sharing agreement. An active role on the working group requires input from an information governance lead (7.25 days) and a subject lead (5.25 days). Those boroughs who are not part of the working group will still need to dedicate time, estimated as half a day's work, for both their IG lead and subject lead to review the draft agreement and arrange for official sign off.

Table 4: Assumed staff time required for DSAs (based on expert opinion)

Working group approach, per DSA	Business as usual, per pan-London DSA equivalent
5 x IG leads x 7.25 days	33 x Borough IG lead x 9.5 days
2 x Subject leads x 5.25 days	33 x Borough Subject practitioners x 7.5 days
28 x IG lead sign-off x 0.5 days	1 x Other agency IG lead x 9.5 days
28 x Subject lead x 0.5 days	1 x Other agency subject lead x 7.5 days
Combined officer time = 61.25 days	**Combined officer time = 578 days**

In the business-as-usual scenario, we assume each borough would need an information governance officer and subject lead to develop a DSA, alongside a similar team at the other London agency (e.g. Metropolitan Police). In this scenario, the Metropolitan Police would need to develop 33 separate DSAs with each borough, each designed for the same purpose. From the Met Police perspective, officers are working with many different parties but on the same topic. Their work is likely to exceed this estimate, but we conservatively assume it to be the same as the borough staff involved.

The information governance officers on the working group involve two grade 5 officers and three grade 4 officers, which based on the mid-points of the Local Government Association salary scales[49] including London weighting equates to an average daily cost of £259[50] per IG lead. The cost of employing staff that may sit on the working group is likely to vary even within a single organisation. However, we assume borough subject officers (such as housing or social care leads) and staff from other agencies would be associated with the same salary costs. For simplicity, we assume the officers involved in developing DSAs in the "business as usual" scenario would be employed at the same average salary cost to the public sector.

Value for money results

In total, the cost of combined officer time involved in creating DSAs using the working group approach is just over £15,900 per DSA. The combined officer time in creating the DSAs in the business-as-usual approach is just over £149,700.

Importantly, the working group approach is also associated with the cost of a full time Information Governance lead for London created and co-funded by LOTI and the Metropolitan police (£94,700 pa which

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[49] Local Government Association.(2022). Local Government salary scales.
[50] This cost is based on a Borough officer employed at LGA salary grade 4, as well as the costs to the Borough for employing a member of staff in addition to salary, such as pension and taxes, known as "on-costs". These are assumed to be 25% salary plus a fixed cost of £9,000 – which is based on figures used by the Greater London Authority to represent their on-costs in 2023. This estimate differs from the £1,229 saving per DPIA suggested by the consultants who developed the Dapian software, Coalescent. This estimate relates purely to the salary of a borough officer, and does not include on-costs.

includes salary and on-costs), as well as access to the Information Sharing Gateway (£7,410 pa license fees for all participating agencies).

The total cost (including staff time, the IG gateway license fee and the Pan-London IG lead) of developing 20 DSAs using the working group approach is £521,400, compared to £1.9m to develop 13 DSAs in the business-as-usual scenario. Therefore, the cost per DSA with a working group approach is £26,100 compared to £149,700 per DSA in the business-as-usual scenario.

Table 5: Costs associated with the working group approach versus the Business as usual scenario

	Working group approach	Business as usual
Number of pan-London DSAs	20	13
Combined staff time per pan-London DSA, days	61.25	578
Total staff cost per pan-London DSA, £	15,859	149,655
Total staff time, days	1,225	7,514
Total staff cost, £	317,175	1,945,512
Cost of Pan-London IG lead for two years (salary + on-costs), £	189,432	0
Licence fee for IG gateway for two years, £	14,820	0
Total cost, £	521,427	1,945,512
Cost per pan-London DSA (or equivalent), £	26,071	149,655

The combined staff time to create a pan-London DSA is reduced considerably by the working group approach (vs equivalent bilateral DSAs)– by almost 90%. When accounting for additional costs associated with the approach – the pan-London IG lead and licences, the total costs of the business-as-usual scenario is just under four times that of the working group approach.

Despite the acknowledged limitations of this approach, our analysis seems to suggest very good value for money compared to the business-as-usual scenario. In addition, it should be noted that this approach also takes into account the additional benefit of reducing costs for other boroughs (who are not included in the LOTI membership).

E. Attack Surface Mapping (ASM) Pilot

Local authorities are increasingly subject to an array of cyber-attacks that can cripple their IT systems. A 2022 study, for example, found that UK councils were hit by around 10,000 cyber-attacks a day in 2022[51]. While most attacks are intercepted by cyber security, some can exploit vulnerabilities and lead to serious disruptions to council services or data breaches. A serious cyber-attack can lead to major financial costs for boroughs needing to repair systems and recover data, and also social costs in terms of disruptions to services for residents.

A cyber-attack on Hackney Council in October 2020 is estimated to have cost the council over £10m in recovery costs with services including housing benefit payments taken offline. Similarly, attacks on Redcar

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[51] AJG. (2022). UK Councils Hit by 10,000 Cyber Attacks.

and Cleveland in 2020[52] and Gloucester in 2022[53] are estimated to have cost the councils £10.4m and £1m respectively.

Between September 2022 to January 2023, LOTI worked with nine London boroughs[54] on an Attack Surface Mapping (ASM) Pilot, appointing a specialist company, Jumpsec, to find and exploit external-facing vulnerabilities in their security. This project was designed to enhance visibility and management of security risks across London boroughs' combined attack surface and network footprint, driving mitigation and improvements in prevention and controls. LOTI was also able to achieve economies of scale, on behalf of boroughs, where they secured a group discount versus procuring the service individually.

The process aimed to bring boroughs together to understand the vulnerabilities across all access points of their collective attack surface. This differs from standard approaches such as penetration testing, which involves seeing how far a particular vulnerability can be breached. The approach used in this pilot also pinpointed the most exploitable issues across boroughs, allowing remediation efforts to be focused on areas which would have the greatest impact.

Rationale for intervention
While all boroughs have varying levels of cyber security systems in place and could in theory procure additional specialist support individually, they are unlikely to have had the resources or the awareness to do so and would have missed out on the benefits of a joint approach. LOTI's intervention meant that boroughs were encouraged to collaborate and share knowledge, developing a more informed view of their collective security threat and the collective attack surface across boroughs. Therefore, in our view, this would seem to suggest a clear rationale/ justification for the intervention from a public perspective.

Logic chain
Our interpretation of the logic chain, including the intended outcomes and impacts of the programme, is set out below:

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[52] BBC News. (2020, August 6). Redcar cyber-attack 'cost council £10.4m'.
[53] Gloucester City Council. Data Breach Notification.
[54] Note that one borough, Ealing, were already planning to procure this service without LOTI.

Figure 22: Logic chain for Attack Surface Mapping Pilot

Inputs	Activities	Outputs	Outcomes	Impacts
LOTI central resources (funding (£75k + staff time)	Jumpsec pilot project to identify and highlight trends, strengths and weaknesses in cyber security across boroughs shared attack surface	Number of vulnerabilities identified and prioritised by Jumpsec	Boroughs prioritise critical vulnerabilities, reducing risk of a cyber attack (and associated costs for boroughs)	More resilient services for Londoners
	Facilitation of network of peers	Report highlighting cyber risk exposure, trends, strengths and weaknesses across shared attack surface, and recommendations for remediations	Boroughs have better visibility and understanding of the security posture of the collective attack surface for London boroughs	Increased trust in the security of borough data
	Information & best practice sharing among boroughs		Improved sharing of information and best practise among boroughs	
	Facilitation of access to guidance at earlier stages in security and digital transformation journeys		Reduced risk of sensitive data becoming public	

Outputs and outcomes

Working with LOTI, Jumpsec delivered the project and the following outputs were achieved:

- Identification of over 1400 vulnerabilities across the shared attack surface of boroughs. Vulnerabilities were then refined and prioritised, generating a list of approximately five remediations per participating organisation. This approach compares to an average of approximately 130 vulnerabilities classified as medium and above by generic scoring mechanisms such as Common Vulnerability Scoring Systems (CVSS), which are frequently used by local authorities. Once critical vulnerabilities were identified, Jumpsec recommended they were immediately addressed by boroughs – either due to their exploitability, or the nature of the information being leaked.

- A report highlighting cyber risk, exposure, trends, strengths, and weaknesses across the shared attack surface across boroughs, as well as recommendations for remediation. Some of the key findings from the report[55] were:

  o "Information disclosure vulnerabilities that could be chained with other information were found to be the most impactful despite objectively low severity".
  o "Cloud environments presented a generally robust attack surface from an internal perspective but were exposed to misconfigurations that could be abused from an external perspective".
  o "Traditional on-premise Microsoft environments were successfully compromised using similar techniques consistent with those used by attackers observed in the wild, with a high degree of success".
  o "Third parties present a significant cyber and information security risk, which requires further targeted information".

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[55] Programme Evaluation – Attack Surface Mapping pilot project, 2023

In terms of outcomes, an independent programme evaluation[56] with interviews from participating boroughs found that:

- London boroughs' overall cyber threat profile was reduced, with all interviewees agreeing that their threat profile was reduced because of the vulnerabilities highlighted by the ASM project.
- Information sharing improved awareness of security risks in third-party software and the ability to request swift fixes, although issues with third-party suppliers still require ongoing attention. In addition, it was noted by an interviewee that boroughs were generally reluctant to share detailed information, potentially limiting the benefits of close collaboration.
- It was not generally agreed that the joint project saved the participants money by working together, but most agreed that it did add extra skills and capabilities to their approach to cyber-security which was valuable in itself.

Since the pilot has concluded, the service is being routinely procured to enable all boroughs to access the service. The target is currently 15 boroughs procuring the service.

The intended impact of the Attack Surface Mapping was ultimately about helping councils to provide more resilient local services and avoid data breaches. It is impossible to say for certain that these impacts were achieved since we cannot say for sure that a hacker would have exploited the vulnerabilities. However, the evidence suggests that the outcomes set out in the logic chain were achieved.

Value for money

We provide some indicative estimates of the costs of a data breach to contextualise what would represent value for money. These high-level calculations aim to take a proportionate approach, whilst following the key principles of [HM Treasury Green Book](#) methodology. The calculations therefore look at the additionality of the project (they compare the total costs of the ASM pilot to the counterfactual where boroughs do not take part in the ASM pilot).

The total additional cost of the ASM pilot project was £262,400. This is broken down as follows:

- £245,800 in Jumpsec consultancy fees. This includes £170,800 contributed by participating boroughs, and a £75,000 subsidy by LOTI.
- £10,000 to deliver a Cyber Security discovery report, which allowed LOTI to explore different approaches such as the attack surface mapping methodology.
- £6,600 in LOTI staff resourcing[57].

From a financial perspective, this single LOTI commission on behalf of the nine boroughs saved boroughs c. £10k versus the scenario where boroughs procured this service individually.

In addition to this, the pilot is likely to have reduced the risk of a cyber security attack across participating boroughs. These economic benefits can be estimated based on the potential cost savings from an avoided cyber-attack (or data breach). As noted above, the counterfactual here is unknown, i.e. it is not possible to say for certain that a cyber-attack (or data breach) was avoided because of the ASM pilot. However, taking the average cost of a cyber-attack (data breach) worldwide[58], estimated by IBM to be £3.4m, we can conclude that by avoiding a single minor incident costing just 8% of this would mean the intervention

[56] Programme Evaluation – Attack Surface Mapping pilot project, 2023
[57] Based on LOTI day rate of £550.
[58] IBM. (2023). [Cost of a Data Breach Report](#). Based on survey of 553 private and public sector organisations between March 2022 and 2023. Costs to organisations include detection and escalation, notification, post-breach response and lost business. Report excluded extreme breach costs. Ransom costs are excluded.

represented good value for money with benefits more than costs. Put another way, if only one minor cyber-attack worth £262,400 or more were avoided, then the project would generate a net benefit to the public.

Whilst our analysis is based on a credible estimate of an average cost of a data breach, this estimate is wide ranging, and in some cases (for example the Hackney Council ransomware attack), may be much higher (estimates suggest the attack could have cost over £12m[59]). For this reason, the estimated benefits (the potential cost saving) could be seen as conservative.

The indicative figures provided above are based on the following assumptions:

- Assumed that borough resourcing requirements do not increase during the pilot. Assumed time/resource requirements to remediate vulnerabilities with, and without LOTI/ Jumpsec support are the same. However, it is assumed that resource is targeted more efficiently, to more 'critical' vulnerabilities.
- As detailed in HM Treasury Green Book guidance, all costs and benefits (avoided costs) should be discounted to compare values at different points in time. However, for these high-level indicative estimates, we assume that benefits (avoided data breach costs) occur in the current year (2023), and therefore no discount rate has been applied.
- We assume that boroughs are likely to be paying for some form of cyber security with, and without, LOTI support, and this is assumed to continue throughout the pilot, in addition to the ASM pilot costs.

F. Dapian

A key objective for LOTI was to identify, create and help boroughs procure better technologies to support their services and back-office functions. One of the first technology products LOTI helped create was Dapian, a software designed to support non-experts to carry out Data Protection Impact Assessments (DPIAs). A DPIA is a process to identify risks arising from the processing of personal data and to minimise these risks as much and as early as possible. A DPIA will identify whether a formal data sharing agreement is advisable before data sharing can commence.

LOTI co-funded consultants to develop Dapian with eight other organisations: Greater Manchester Combined Authority, Norfolk County Council, Cheshire and Merseyside Health and Care Partnership, Leeds City Council, University of Nottingham, NHSX, Information and Records Management Society (IRMS), and Act Now Training. A collaborative approach was required to agree a process for developing DPIAs by non-experts specifically for local government and the organisations which might need to share data – and use this to develop a shared software solution. Information Governance leads from across LOTI member boroughs fed into its design.

Dapian is a paid-for tool that guides users through the process of developing a DPIA with plain English instructions and support. It automatically identifies potential risks associated with processing personal data and encourages security vulnerabilities to be proactively addressed. The process of developing DPIAs using this software can therefore be achieved without relying on Information Governance professionals. The software also helps with version control, auditing, reporting and workflow, for example review triggers can be set to prevent DPIAs from becoming outdated.

Rationale for intervention

In our view there was a clear rationale for LOTI's intervention to develop a software solution to help non-experts assess the implications involved in using sensitive personal data. Processing sensitive data is required to create effective public services, but is associated with statutory and ethical obligations. Boroughs have

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[59] Infosecurity Magazine. (2022). Hackney Council Ransomware Attack.

information governance specialists who are experts in navigating compliance and risk but these professionals are a scarce resource in local government. Dapian aims to address imperfect information by offering guidance, support and training to non-expert users to conduct data protection impact assessments.

There are also elements of coordination failure between parties which face different constraints in the sharing of personal information, such as local government, academia, the National Health Service and the regulatory authority. Formalising the process of conducting a DPIA and agreeing standards that underpin software development would be difficult for a single Borough to achieve on its own.

Logic chain
Our interpretation of the logic chain, including the intended outcomes and impacts of the project, is set out below:

Figure 23: Logic chain for Dapian

Inputs	Activities	Outputs	Outcomes	Impacts
LOTI central resources (funding + staff time)	Agree DPIA process and guidance for local government	Dapian online tool	Reduced time of Borough officers to complete a DPIA	Improved public service provision for Londoners
Cofunding from other organisations	Design and creation of Dapian tool	No of London boroughs subscribing to Dapian	Improved knowledge of DPIA process and data protection issues	
	Purchase Dapian licences for 8 boroughs 1 year	No of DPIAs created using Dapian	Reduced risk of not meeting statutory obligations	

Outputs and outcomes
The following outputs of the project were reported:

- Dapian online tool produced by Coalescent
- Eight boroughs subscribed in Year 1 (funded through LOTI)

The number of DPIAs created using Dapian was not recorded. We also couldn't determine how many boroughs kept paying for a license after the first year or if any more boroughs acquired a license in subsequent years.

In terms of the outcomes of the project, they cannot all be quantified, but it is estimated that Dapian saves borough officers approximately six days per DPIA (see details below).

Value for money

The most tangible benefit from Dapian is increased efficiency, which we can estimate as time saved by borough staff conducting DPIAs. One of the boroughs involved in the development of Dapian estimated that completing a typical DPIA would take one officer (employed on the Local Government Association salary scale, Grade 4) nine days to complete[60]. Using the software, it would take the same officer around three days. The benefits of using the software are therefore around six days of officer time saved per DPIA completed, equivalent to £1,475[61].

The total cost of developing and using Dapian for one year in eight boroughs is over £86,000. LOTI contributed £20,000 to the creation of the platform by consultants and funded the software licences in year 1 (£66,000). This does not include in-kind resources from boroughs, such as information governance time to advise the project team. There are also ongoing costs of £8,000 per borough, per year for the Dapian software licence.

The value for money that Dapian represents therefore depends on the number of DPIAs conducted. This number is likely to vary between boroughs and will depend on the complexity of individual information governance issues, the capacity of specialist information governance officers as well as whether all parties involved in a DPIA have access to Dapian. Given the total project costs in year 1 (£86,000), each of the eight boroughs would have needed to use Dapian to create at least eight DPIAs in order for the efficiency gains of doing so (£94,432) to cover the costs of the project.

The true economic benefit of the Dapian software is likely to be more than these efficiency gains, if the additional projects made possible by additional DPIA capacity in boroughs are effective (and cost-effective). If more DPIAs can be carried out, this may bring forward important service improvements that require data processing or sharing that would not otherwise have been possible.

G. Guides and resources

One of LOTI's objectives is to facilitate better peer-to-peer sharing of ideas, evidence and tools to build collective knowledge. It also aims to provide 'thought leadership' on particular topics or technologies, explaining them in accessible terms and setting out their implications for London government. LOTI publishes an array of guidance documents and tools to support its members on topics such as assistive technologies, digital devices, digital inclusion, information governance, smart cities, among others. All guides and resources, bar proprietary software, are freely available to the public. LOTI has in-house design and communications experts to produce first-class resources that can be used and reused by member boroughs and non-member boroughs alike.

Rationale for intervention

There is a clear rationale for LOTI providing these guides and resources. Before its existence, information on such topics would be fragmented and difficult for members to access and process, requiring them to either research the topics themselves, or commission studies from external organisations potentially at significant cost. There were few organisations looking at these topics from a London-wide local government perspective that have the expertise that LOTI has – the LGA and GLA being perhaps the only ones doing so on a piecemeal basis. Therefore, LOTI is filling a gap in the research and evidence base within London which

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[60]Dapian. Business Case. (accessed: 26.09.23)

[61] This cost is based on a Borough officer employed at LGA salary grade 4, as well as the costs to the Borough for employing a member of staff in addition to salary, such as pension and taxes, known as "on-costs". These are assumed to be 25% salary plus a fixed cost of £9,000 – which is based on figures used by the Greater London Authority to represent their on-costs in 2023. This estimate differs from the £1,229 saving per DPIA suggested by the consultants who developed the Dapian software, Coalescent. This estimate relates purely to the salary of a borough officer, and does not include on-costs.

might otherwise be a barrier to the adoption and implementation of technologies and innovation, and better local services.

Outputs and outcomes

LOTI has published circa 70 guides, tools and templates. Examining the website analytics; the top 15 documents with the most views[62] were as follows:

Table 6: Website analytics for guides and resources

	Title	Topic	Type	Views	Users
1	Social tariffs and mobile packages	Digital inclusion	Guidance	2560	1866
2	Generative AI	AI	Guidance	3151	950
3	Digital, Tech and Data Job Description Library	Recruitment	Library	1790	941
4	London Digital Exclusion Map	Digital inclusion	Map	1384	855
5	London Digital Exclusion Personas	Digital inclusion	Guidance	1375	779
6	Data Ethics Case Study Library	Information Governance	Guidance	1100	731
7	LOTI outcomes-based methodology	Information Governance	Guidance	1204	640
8	Guide to Sourcing Digital Devices	Digital devices	Guidance	613	520
9	Innovative service models in social care	Social care	Guidance	883	474
10	Supporting Dementia Care Toolkit	Social care	Toolkit	704	392
11	London Data Ethics Service	Information Governance	Guidance	548	354
12	Digital Exclusion Story Maps	Digital inclusion	Guidance	613	349
13	Social care technology innovators	Social care	Guidance	577	318
14	Research into Digital Inclusion in London	Digital inclusion	Guidance	529	316
15	Innovation in procurement toolkit	Procurement	Guidance	428	269

The 15 least-viewed documents have a range of between 5-54 page views, but this may be determined to some extent by how long they have been live on the website. It is difficult to benchmark the number of pages views and users, but it would appear the guides and resources are generally well read and used. Our qualitative research supports this with many members stating they find the guides and tools a highly useful resource and one that has saved them considerable time and effort.

Value for money

In order to assess the value for money of the guides and resources, we would ideally examine how they have been used and what value they added for members in terms of being able to apply them to their work and the benefits they derived. They might have improved the way they worked and led to productivity improvements for example. Ultimately this would be expected to feed through to service improvements and social and economic benefits for Londoners. In a cost-benefit analysis, these benefits would then be set against the cost of producing the reports. However, such an approach is neither feasible nor proportionate here.

Based purely on the cost of commissioning and producing the guides and resources, it is logical to conclude that by LOTI producing them on behalf of members, there would be some cost savings compared to

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[62] Page views are for the period 01/07/2019 to 01/07/2023 and will be determined to some extent by how long the document has been live on the website.

boroughs either researching the topics themselves or commissioning them individually, if indeed they would have done so at all (by virtue of the expertise and economies of scale that LOTI enjoys).

Given that many of the guides and resources can be accessed by non-members, looking at the number of page views would suggest there is also a wider audience benefiting from them, such as local authorities outside of London.

6 Summary and concluding remarks

This evaluation set out to review LOTI's success in fulfilling its objectives, meeting the needs of its members and delivering good value for money. We summarise our findings and present some conclusions. In *Appendix 1* we offer some recommendations on monitoring and evaluation of LOTI in future.

1: Progress against LOTI's original mission and objectives

LOTI set out an ambitious mission "to address the digital collaboration deficit to improve public services and outcomes for Londoners". Both our survey and interviews with LOTI's community suggest LOTI has gone a long way to improve digital collaboration across London with overwhelmingly positive feedback. The qualitative research highlighted many valued aspects of LOTI's offer. Members feel supported by LOTI staff, they value the team's facilitation skills and say they help to "get things done". Collaboration is challenging and members feel that the cross-borough work coordinated by LOTI would not happen otherwise. However, challenges to collaboration remain - there is a lack of alignment around goals, different organisational mindsets and silo-working in local government is hard to overcome.

We used the findings from our survey and interviews, and outputs and outcomes data where available, to gauge LOTI's progress against the six objectives set out in the Membership Charter. Our evaluation suggests the following:

a) *Digital leadership: Helping senior managers and political leaders develop their understanding and skills to make the most of digital; building the digital skills pipeline.*

Senior digital leaders could clearly identify how LOTI facilitated a space for collaboration to resolve shared problems between members to share knowledge, best practice, learn skills and adopt different ways of working. Simple methods to connect digital leaders (e.g. a WhatsApp group) have been effective. LOTI has provided thought leadership on issues such as Digital Inclusion and Generative Artificial Intelligence which has supported members to develop their internal policies. Specialised recruitment support has helped member boroughs recruit to hard-to-fill posts and build senior management capacity, which had previously been a significant challenge.

b) *Sharing & reusing: Facilitating better peer-to-peer sharing of needs, ideas, evidence, tools, patterns and code to build boroughs' collective knowledge.*

Members gave examples of how exchanging knowledge and resources benefits them. Knowledge exchange removes the need to reinvent the wheel and has led to cost savings (e.g. renewing software). For example, members from Hackney discussed the major cyber-attack they suffered during the pandemic so others could learn from their experience. Sharing knowledge, both the successes and the failures, is powerful.

Sharing fairly simple information such as job descriptions for hard-to-fill vacancies has been very effective. LOTI has produced over 70 freely available guides, tools and templates. Guides on digital personas, social tariffs and data ethics were particularly successful. Some members realise LOTI offers much more than they are currently taking advantage of and noted that the accessibility of guides and resources is crucial to optimise their impact. Some members found the number of LOTI outputs overwhelming and they sometimes lack the time to delve into extensive reports.

c) *Better partnerships. Encouraging more effective collaboration, relationships and networks with suppliers, universities and non-profits.*

Our evaluation scope did not include the perspective of broader stakeholders like the tech industry, central government, or national organisations, which limits insights into LOTI's partnership working and wider

influence. However, members identified strong collaboration within LOTI member boroughs and noted some external collaboration within specific projects. They suggested that LOTI facilitates communication with external stakeholders that were previously seen as hard-to-reach within central government, such as the Centre of Data Ethics and Innovation and the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities.

However, challenges remain in establishing strategic partnerships, particularly on a national and international scale. Other challenges identified include representing members as one voice when engaging with potential partners. Developing strong partnerships, shared networks and continued collaboration will be a long-term endeavour.

    d) *Embedding standards:* Supporting the adoption of useful technical standards and common approaches and practices.

Initiatives such as the Pan London Data Sharing Agreements project have played a pivotal role in standardising practices and establishing a common working group approach to information governance among members. This led to a significant reduction in the resources needed to share data between London agencies and the approach has generated interest outside of London. Other examples include expert support and resources provided to members to improve their ability to recruit roles.

Implementing common software (e.g. Dapian) across members has proved difficult – not all boroughs have the same requirements and have differing levels of capacity to invest both time and money in a shared digital solution. Divergent internal processes, organisational politics, and departmental silos have also made it challenging to establish and maintain shared standards.

    e) *Data collaboration:* Removing barriers to responsible data sharing. Vetting and managing collaborative data projects across London's public sector.

Sharing data can bring about significant benefits, which may not directly align with the interests of the agencies involved. Yet data sharing introduces risks for both organisations and individuals. LOTI has mitigated these barriers, improving the efficiency of the information governance process through the Pan-London Data Sharing Agreements project, an achievement that might not have occurred without their intervention. Consequently, survey respondents voted the outputs from this project as most used.

Members have faced difficulties in sharing data and advancing shared procurements due to capacity limitations. These challenges were particularly pronounced when it proved difficult for members to create a 'contract register' with details of ongoing procured services. This highlighted the ongoing obstacles posed by limited capacity and complex internal processes when sharing information within and between boroughs.

    f) *Shared experiments*: Helping boroughs spread the risk, reduce the cost and accelerate their learning about new innovations.

LOTI has successfully completed various projects and initiatives in alignment with this objective. Notably, the Attack Surface Mapping Pilot was commissioned on behalf of boroughs to assess vulnerabilities across their collective attack surface. Without LOTI, this work is unlikely to have taken place. The Get Online London digital inclusion service has been widely used by members.

However, there remains room for adopting more experimental approaches; to test and evaluate new innovations, which is a central theme in LOTI's future plans. Evaluation plays a vital role in establishing the success of shared experiments and we are aware of some qualitative evaluations that were commissioned by

LOTI[63]. However, quantitative evaluations of some of the larger and more innovative projects in particular, can help to demonstrate impact more robustly and ensure resources are allocated on the basis of sound evidence.

2: The value that LOTI has brought to its members and their satisfaction with the membership model.

This evaluation aimed to understand LOTI's value to its members and their satisfaction with the membership model. The findings highlight that LOTI's activities and staff support are highly valued. LOTI has established a distinct and credible brand, fostering a positive culture that promotes collaboration within its community. Members value being part of this supportive community, where they can share and enhance their learning experiences.

LOTI's distinct culture serves as a model for members, encouraging them to seek assistance within the community, avoiding nugatory activities, and promoting efficient knowledge-sharing. Members interviewed acknowledged LOTI's beneficial and transformative influence on their work. Several stakeholders felt LOTI could do more to communicate its value to members and beyond. This could include doing 'show and tell' events where LOTI demonstrates its tangible impact as well as quantifying the monetary value of its activities.

3: The value for money of LOTI's core activities

We examined the value for money of seven activities, which demonstrated how LOTI has helped boroughs save time and money. Recruitment support is associated with cost savings for borough members of at least £300,000 compared to market rates for the same type of support. The Data Sharing Agreements project has potentially delivered £1.4m in savings to the public sector compared to staff time required for individual agreements between all parties.

Piloting the 'Preventing vulnerable residents from reaching crisis' service in two boroughs cost £82,500 and would offer value for money from the perspective of local authorities if it avoids two crisis events (such as £26,260 per year for one adult needing residential social care or £67,900 per year for one child taken into care).

The value for money offered by the Attack Surface Mapping Pilot depends on the probability of a borough suffering a cyber-attack before and after adopting the ASM approach- which is difficult to estimate. Given the average cost of a cyber-attack with a data breach is estimated at £3.4m by IBM, preventing even one minor cyber-attack is likely to exceed the project cost of £262,400. We were unable to estimate value for money of LOTI-provided training courses, Dapian, and LOTI guides and resources. These activities have the potential to offer good value for money but there was limited data available to assess them and primary data collection would not have been proportionate for this evaluation.

Importantly, our analysis is limited to the efficiency savings accruing to borough members. A more comprehensive social cost benefit analysis would consider the resulting outcomes of these activities for Londoners to determine their value for money. The social and economic benefits to Londoners could be far higher than the financial savings to boroughs.

Boroughs that are members will be concerned about the bottom line: their return on investment for LOTI membership. Members we interviewed consider LOTI good value for money. While it is difficult to estimate the benefits for an individual borough, we identify potential cost savings from several activities and suggest

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[63] For example, Albala, D., & Paintal, A. (2022). A Case Study of Strengthening the Social Care System based on Hackney and Newham's Preventing Residents from Reaching Crisis Programme.

that the other activities have the potential to offer good value for money. LOTI's activities have also resulted in benefits for boroughs who are not members, such as the data sharing agreements project. LOTI guides and resources are freely available and have been used widely, including outside London.

Appendix 1: Monitoring and evaluation recommendations

As part of this evaluation, we initially planned to carry out an impact evaluation of specific LOTI activities ('interventions'). In doing so, we faced several challenges, particularly the limited availability of data on outcomes and the difficulty of establishing a counterfactual against which to assess impact. Towards the end of the next three years, LOTI may wish to demonstrate impact more robustly using impact evaluation. With this in mind, we have provided some recommendations below which could be used to inform a more comprehensive **Monitoring and Evaluation Plan for LOTI**.

Prioritising projects for evaluation
Resources for evaluation are typically very limited; meaning it is important to prioritise carefully which interventions to evaluate. Proportionality is a key concept to bear in mind. Not all of LOTI's activities will require the same level of evaluation; for some a lighter touch 'before and after' monitoring of outputs may suffice; for others, a more comprehensive (and costly) impact evaluation could be needed. LOTI may wish to focus its resources on evaluating those interventions that are higher cost, novel or high risk, or where the evidence base of 'what works' is more limited. Pilot projects in particular should be earmarked for high quality evaluation in order to decide whether to roll them out more widely.

Rationale for intervention
While there appears to be a well-founded rationale for all LOTI's interventions that we assessed, many of the challenges faced by boroughs were not formally articulated and evidenced. For example, in the recruitment support LOTI provided to help boroughs recruit digital leaders, the specific challenges faced by boroughs were not clear. As such, it was less clear which elements of the proposed solution (specialist recruiter, re-writing job descriptions, salary benchmarking) were able to help the most.

Clarity of the activity and its intended impacts
Logic chains are used to make clear the connection between an activity, its inputs and its intended outputs, outcomes and longer-term impact. A logic chain can help identify the most important research questions for an evaluation to address by focusing on the links in the chain. A logic chain for the 'preventing vulnerable residents from crisis' pilot service was developed but we are not aware of any other logic chains. Typically developed with relevant stakeholders, logic chains can help develop a shared understanding of a problem, ensure the proposed solution is well-rounded and will sense-check its intended outputs and outcomes.

A plan to monitor outputs and outcomes
LOTI collected quantitative output data for many activities, but these were not sufficient to undertake social cost benefit analysis. A monitoring and evaluation framework should be developed before projects are initiated, setting out what data should be collected, when and by whom. It will be important to capture changes in practice within the boroughs that result from LOTI activities. Tangible outcomes for Londoners were not articulated or monitored in the activities we assessed. These are likely to be long-term and difficult to quantify but nevertheless would be required for projects needing robust impact evaluation.

Evaluation is central to an experimental approach
Impact evaluation should go hand-in-hand with experimental policy approaches as it is needed to determine 'what works'. The biggest single challenge for any impact evaluation is constructing a credible counterfactual through the use of a control group or other means. Where LOTI determines that a new experimental project meets the criteria for needing impact evaluation, it should seek advice on the monitoring and evaluation framework and specifically how to construct a credible counterfactual before the project begins.

Robust impact evaluation will help understand where LOTI can bring maximum value to borough members and society. The results of evaluation should help to inform future decision-making and in particular how to prioritise LOTI's funding for future activities.

For evaluation best practice see HM Treasury Magenta book (2020) and also the What Works Centre for Local Economic Growth.

MAYOR OF LONDON