Socitm

Digital trends in local public services 2021

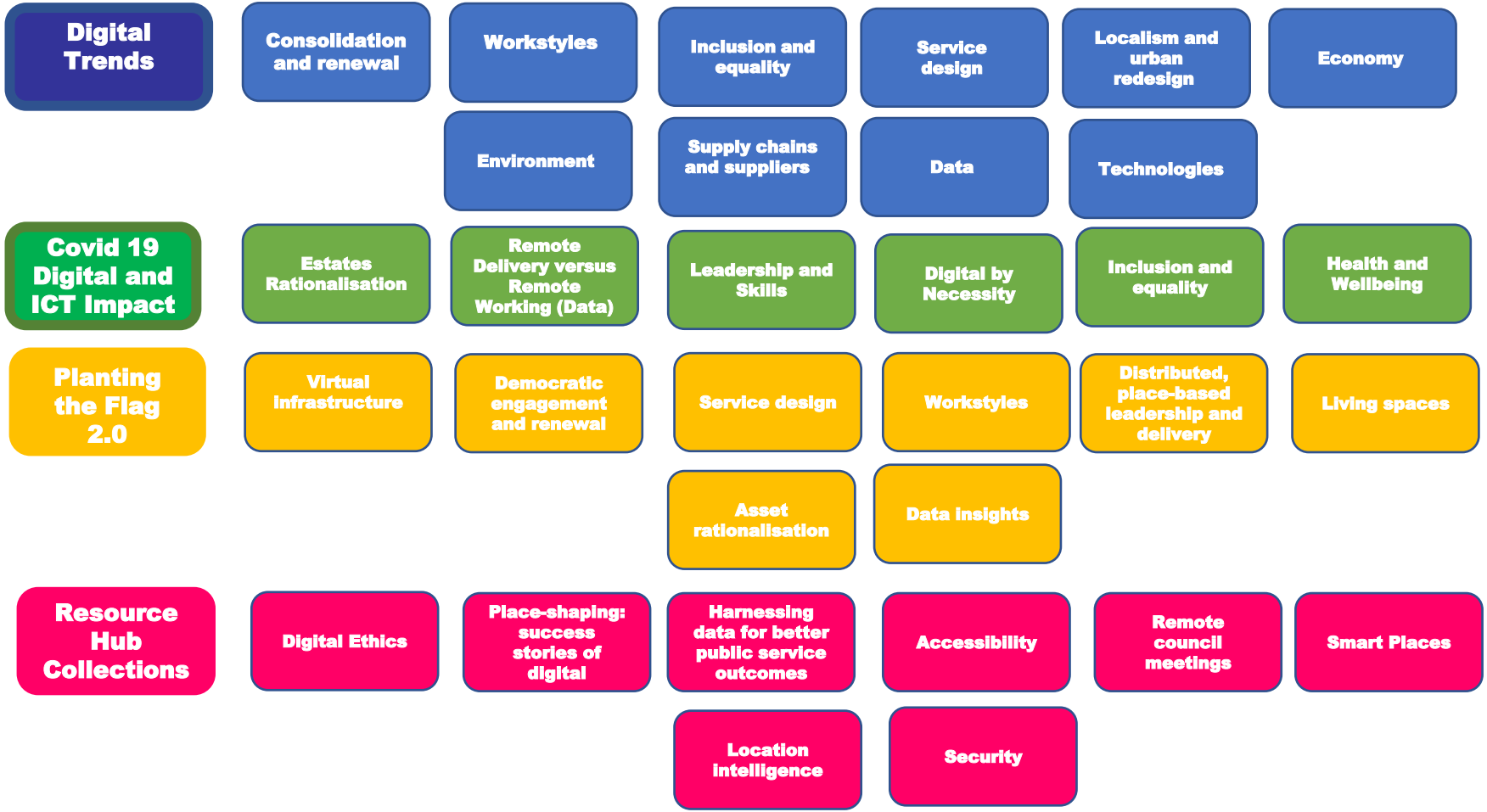
Martin Ferguson, Director of Policy & Research, Socitm

12 March 2021

Recent publication

Our previous predictions

During the pandemic – Socitm's Research and Resources



Consolidation and renewal

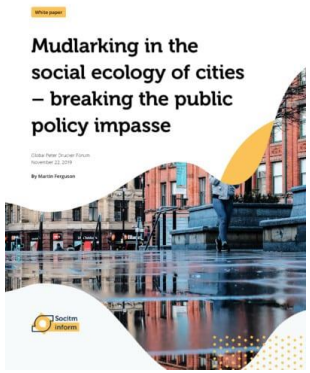
"New challenges for local and central government …repurposed public services … support a growing number of vulnerable citizens … complex needs …mental health issues … alongside reducing budgets."
Kevin Taylor, IT Service Manager, West Suffolk Council

- **Unfinished business from accelerated digital ways of working**
- **Shift to localism and urban redesign**
- **Demand for data and technologies to address socio-economic and environmental challenges magnified by the pandemic**
- **Rethinking supply chains creating ecosystems of trust and innovation**
- **Adopting new workstyles – collaboration, home, flexible …**
- **Asset rationalisation**

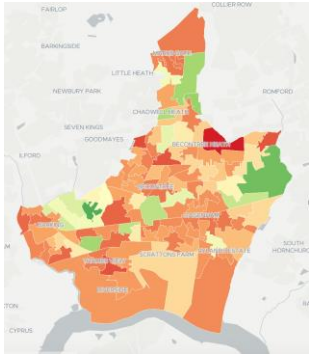
Inclusion and equality

"Pandemic shows how 'digital by default' government services exclude those who need them most."
Vishanth Weerakkody, University of Bradford in The Conversation

- **Before Covid-19 arrived, poverty aligned with lower life expectancy, poor physical and mental health, greater propensity to suicide (BMJ, The Lancet …)**
- **Care-home workers and nurses among those most likely to die from coronavirus, alongside machine operatives, home carers, chefs, restaurant managers, nurses and bus drivers (Office for National Statistics)**
- **Covid-19 diagnosis rates up to 3x higher and death rates up to 4x higher for people in BAME communities – link to co-morbidities and deprivation (Public Health England)**
- **Disability "… we are all, at the very least not-yet-disabled." (Citizens Online accessibility report)**
- **Digital by choice vs digital by default vs digital economy**



Data



Data exploitation and information value

1 Integration

How and when to integrate systems together and link data for new intelligence and insight. This depends on organisations having data standards and competency in data curation, with a corporate, not a 'silo', approach required.

2 Sharing

Data sharing has proved itself in the Covid pandemic, as organisations find that collaboration is key, whether across teams in the organisation, within supply chains or with other public service organisations. This depends on standards and controls to protect data.

3 Artificial intelligence

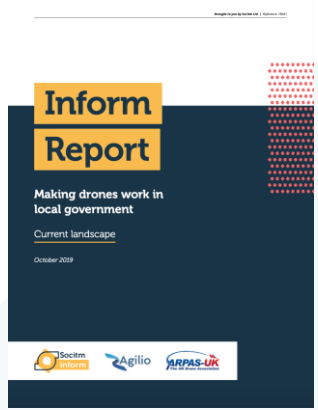
AI, machine learning and tools such as robotic process automation and IoT, can create new sources of data for business intelligence and also new ways of exploiting data potential for insight and service.

4 Analysis

Business analysis tools and data science skills will lead to increased information value for decision making. It is more than 'IT' skills, and in particular, understanding issues such as data bias and data ethics, reassuring the public about the use of algorithms and other analytic methods deployed.

Emerging technologies

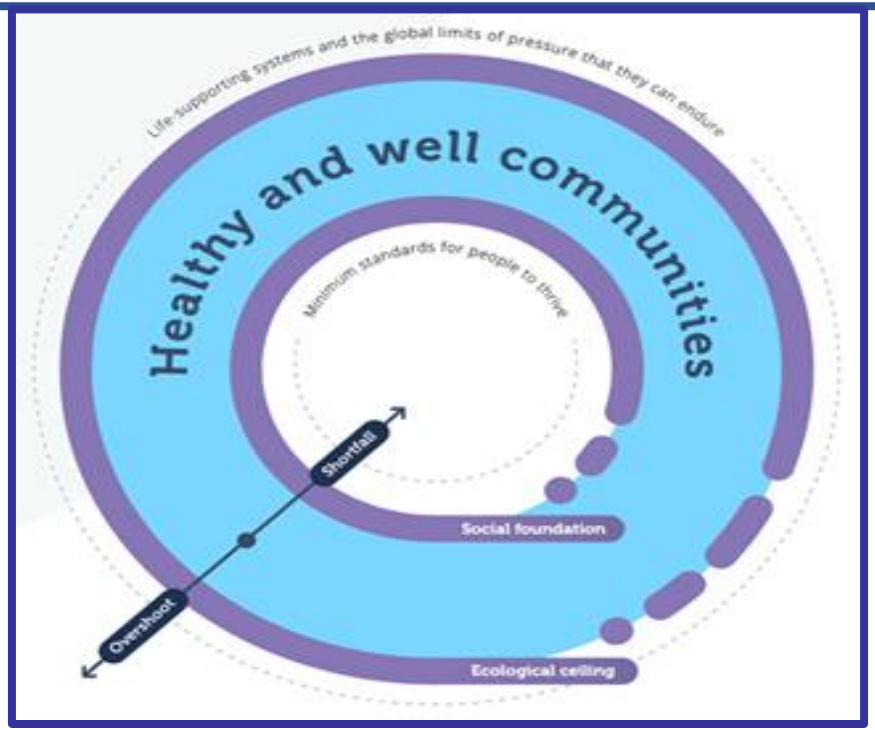
- Cloud
- IoT
- Cyber security
- Low-code development (Worcs on UKA)
- AI
- Video-conferencing (LGA Remote council meetings)
- 5G vs universality
- Drones
- Mobility as a service
- Gamification and digital twins



Post Covid 19 Recovery - Ethical Digital Placemaking : Policy into Practice

Policy

- Ethical and secure use of emerging technologies and data
- Modernising ICT service delivery
- Health and wellbeing
- Service redesign and transformation
- Leadership, diversity and skills



Practice

- Do good (Beneficence)
- Avoid harm (Non-maleficence)
- Preserve human agency (Autonomy)
- Just and fair (Justice)
- Understandable (Explicability)

Research and Resources

- Digital Trends 2021
- Covid 19 Digital and ICT Impact
- Planting the Flag – the new norma
- Resource Hub Collections

Socitm's four pillars of Post-Covid Recovery

RESET the collective mindset to ensure adherence to ethical principles, supporting economic regeneration, whilst respecting social foundations, and ecological constraints locally and globally

RENEW communities by collaborating across place and encouraging self-sufficiency

REFORM public services by embracing innovation and modernisation

RESILIENT reset, reform and renew communities and places to be resilient to disruptive changes, to thrive and to achieve better, sustainable and inclusive outcomes for everyone

Thank you

martin.ferguson@socitm.net