



Office of the *e-Envoy*

Leading the drive to get the UK online

delivering



Guidelines for UK government websites:

Framework for local government



Preface

By 2005 we are aiming to achieve high levels of use for key on-line government services. This supports the drive to deliver high quality public services around the needs of citizens. This aim applies equally to central and local government.

For many users of local services their authority's web site will be the point of entry to this new form of service provision. It will be essential that these sites are of a high quality, accessible, easy to use and offer a comprehensive range of services. Today's users expect government websites to be authoritative, comprehensive and designed to consistent standards.

This document provides best practice guidance for local government web managers on how to design and maintain accessible websites. In particular, it outlines 10 key best practice guidelines for UK local government websites. These ten guidelines not only set the website in a broader context of policy, but provide practical guidance on the kinds of tasks that need to be planned and considered in website development and management.

The guidance is designed to be practical. It has been developed in partnership between local authority web and policy staff, government departments and the Office of the e-Envoy. It builds on the National Strategy for local e-Government that the government and the LGA published in November 2002. Although this document is designed for local authorities, the proposed standards are consistent with those applied to central government sites.

The opportunity for local government to improve the delivery of its services to its citizens by encouraging them to get online is important. Improving the quality, coverage and inclusiveness of their websites is one way of achieving this. We hope that the best practice principles contained in this document will help towards this objective.



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Introduction

Background

The government has set a target of all services being available online by 2005, with key services achieving high levels of use. For local authorities, this means providing electronic information and where appropriate transactions for the over 700 different services that are provided by different levels of local government.

Year 2 Implementing e-Government Statements (IEG2s) were submitted by all local authorities in October 2002. These self-assessments showed that 34% of services were available electronically by March 2002. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) expects the percentage of available services to reach:

- 49% by March 2003
- 71% by March 2004
- 89% by March 2005
- 100% by December 2005

£675 million of capital investment is being made available up to 2005/06 to help local authorities and partnerships meet their plans. This includes funding for a successful Pathfinder project on Accessible and Personalised Local Authority Websites (APLAWS – www.aplaws.org) and an ongoing National Project on Personalised Local Service Websites (www.localgov.gov.uk).

As more people access services online, the website will increasingly become many citizens' and businesses' first point of contact with their local authority. However, the Web is by no means the only channel for electronic services. These same customers will also be likely to access information through other channels: for example, through digital television, kiosks and mobile phones. They will also come to expect the offer of more personalised online services and the ability to complete local government transactions through a single website. Web technology will also support the e-enabling of transactions in more established service access channel areas of telephone and face-to-face contact.

About this Framework

This document is aimed at providing a best practice framework for guidance on the development and management of UK local government websites. As such it is primarily aimed at senior managers and web management teams in local government authorities. While the advice given in this paper may be of interest to local government in the devolved administrations, this framework concerns local government in England only.

The framework is part of the national *Guidelines for UK government websites* and builds on existing guidelines and frameworks, in particular linking to another part of the Guidelines – *the Illustrated handbook for web management teams*. The latter contains detailed practical advice, free downloadable code and working tools, including checklists.

This document also supports the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's 'national strategy for local e-government' (<http://www.localgov.gov.uk>) which sets out the vision, priorities and practical steps which will enable comprehensive local government web systems to be put in place by 2005.

In providing website guidance to local authorities it outlines ten key best practice guidelines for UK local government websites. These ten guidelines set the website in a broader context of policy, and clarify the kinds of tasks that need to be planned and considered in website development and management. A separate section is also included which discusses how best to work with the existing government infrastructure.

Appendix A lists the framework's authors and those who participated in its drafting.

Relevant Resources eEurope 2002 action plan:

http://europa.eu.int/information_society/eeurope/action_plan/index_en.htm

e-gov@local: Towards a national strategy for local e-government:

<http://www.local-regions.odpm.gov.uk/consult/egov/index.htm>

www.localgov.gov.uk: The national strategy for local e-government:

<http://www.localgov.gov.uk>

e-Government Interoperability Framework (e-GIF):

<http://www.e-envoy.gov.uk/publications/frameworks/egif4/egif4.htm>

e-Government Metadata Framework:

<http://www.govtalk.gov.uk/searchresult2.asp?docnum=473>

e-Government Metadata Standard:

http://www.govtalk.gov.uk/interoperability/metadata_document.asp?docnum=524

Guidelines for UK government websites:

<http://www.e-envoy.gov.uk/webguidelines.htm>

Guidelines for UK government websites: Illustrated handbook for web management teams:

<http://www.e-envoy.gov.uk/webguidelines.htm>

Quality Framework for UK government website design:

<http://www.e-envoy.gov.uk/webguidelines.htm>

Top 10 guidelines for UK local government websites

This checklist reviews general priorities for a local government website. More detailed guidance on achieving government priorities can be found in the *Guidelines for UK government websites: Illustrated handbook for web management teams*.

1 Website management and resourcing

Why resource the website?

Your website is your electronic front desk. A poorly resourced website presents as bad an image of the local authority as poorly trained front desk staff. For customers to have a satisfactory experience online, local authority websites need to be developed based on citizen's needs and preferences. To support this, the website will need to contain information that is useful to citizens, presented in a way that will help them with their enquiries, and which will enable them to transact business with local authorities. Local authorities will need to measure the success of their website through use of web performance management tools and/or customer surveys and/or user testing.

The strategy for using the website should be an integral part of a communications strategy for the local authority. In particular, the corporate communications strategy of the authority should be updated to reflect the maturity of the web as a mainstream communication channel, including measures of policy, performance and self-assessment in enabling interactions for electronic service delivery.

Resourcing should be part of an organisation-wide strategy. For example, training in web writing should be provided to those staff responsible for producing documents that will go online. As a consequence of their training, authors should be able to provide summary data and take responsibility for keeping information up to date. In this way, the documents they submit will require much less revision by the web team before being posted to the website.

Content management systems allow for the more efficient management and tracking of the flow of electronic content to a website. Such content management systems make it easier for people across the organisation to update their own pages.

Where are resources needed?

For a website to meet user expectations, it must have a budget:

- to ensure there are sufficient numbers of full-time equivalent staff to brief, manage, develop, and maintain the website, and to answer customer queries
- to cover staff training

- to carry out user testing and evaluation
- where internal expertise is missing, to buy in external services, such as programming for transactional services
- to promote and market the site and encourage the take-up of web services

Policy documents

For the website to be effective, anyone in the organisation should be able to access the policy documents. These should contain:

- clear strategy aims
- a description of what the website will deliver
- publishing and business procedures
- policy on achieving online transaction targets
- policy on how the Web, call centres and other communication and service channels will support each other
- corporate design and editorial style guides
- guidelines on website navigation
- advice on how pages, content and links are to be owned and updated
- guidelines on when to use PDF files
- advice on when and how to meet the needs of people who need content in languages other than English
- policy on meeting the terms of the Freedom of Information Act
- policy on data protection and privacy
- policy on disabled access to the site and meeting WAI recommendations
- plans for user testing, and the ongoing results of those tests
- plans to develop the website in line with the results of user tests

Domain name policy

It is important that citizens are able to easily access local authority websites, and not have to wade through a number of different domains to find the information that they want. If the local authority has decided to have more than one website or provide different types of services on a .com, .org.uk or another namespace other than .gov.uk, then, on the front page of each of its websites, the authority should place a clear link to a page that explains its domain name policy. This policy should be enforced consistently across the authority's websites.

It will not help users find the information or services they need if authorities generate a number of sites, all with different names, each one relating to a different initiative or department. The more names an authority invents for its websites, the less its sites will be trusted by citizens and indeed less confident that the information they are obtaining is genuinely from a local government organisation.

The issuing of all .gov.uk domain names is controlled so as to create an orderly, reliable system of addresses. The not-for-profit company Nominet sets overall policy for all .uk domain names. Policy for the .gov.uk domain names is set by a Naming and Approvals Committee chaired by the Office the e-Envoy. This policy, is kept under review, is published as part of the *Guidelines for UK Government websites* and is available online from:

www.e-envoy.gov.uk/domain.htm .

Relevant resources

The vision for local e-government is set by the national strategy for local e-government (www.localgov.gov.uk).

The *Guidelines for UK government websites: Illustrated handbook for web management teams* provides detailed advice on the following subjects at:

<http://www.e-envoy.gov.uk/publications/guidelines/webguidelines/handbook/handbookindex.htm>

- **Section 1.1** Purpose of your website
- **Section 1.2** Management of your website
The mix of skills needed on a web team
- **Section 1.4** Evaluation
The different kinds of access statistics, their limitations, and technical solutions to common evaluation problems. Other ways to evaluate the success of your website
- **Section 1.9** Domain name registration
An explanation of domain name structure, and name space management and the .gov.uk naming policy.
- **Section 1.10** Legal issues
Detailed reviews of data protection, copyright, disability and discrimination issues, the Public Records Act, the Welsh Language Act, etc.
- **Section 2.7** Use of other languages

The Performance and Innovation Unit has published *Privacy and data-sharing: the way forward for public services*:

<http://www.piu.gov.uk/2002/privacy/report/index.htm>

Quality Briefings for UK Government Websites provide resourcing case studies. *Web Quality Briefings 3* examines the resourcing of information publishing for a large government department. *Web Quality Briefings 4* looks at the issues for a small government agency in making a business case for an online transaction:

<http://www.e-envoy.gov.uk/Resources/WebQualityBriefings/fs/en>

2 Help meet targets for providing services electronically

Local government should not only be providing information through websites but using them to do business with customers.

The vast majority of services are delivered at a local level. Unitary, county, district and borough levels of local government, working together, provide over 700 services. If the government's vision for a modernised, e-enabled government is to be realised, then local government websites have a major part to play.

Providing services through websites and other digital channels is already providing the following benefits to citizens and government. Online services can:

- make services more convenient
- make services more responsive
- make services more cost-effective
- join up related services to improve customer service
- improve customer satisfaction
- promote economic vitality through a modern communications infrastructure and increased local employment opportunities
- renew local democracy through increased openness and accountability
- promote social inclusion
- improve staff satisfaction
- reach people where and when they need services, through kiosks, phones, digital TVs and other platforms

Meeting the 2005 target

The 2005 target requires that the services provided by local government are available electronically. Making services available through the Internet means that they are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, and in a cost-effective manner.

BVPI 157

This performance indicator measures progress towards the 100% e-enablement of appropriate public service interactions. It might be helpful to first target those services that are most in demand by local people, or which will bring the greatest benefits in terms of improved efficiency or cost-effectiveness. Don't reinvent the wheel. See if a neighbouring authority already provides the service you want to e-enable. You may find that collaboration with another authority or the Government Gateway can also help solve particular issues. The Improvement and Development Agency's ESD Toolkit can also provide assistance in the corporate measurement of BVPI 157 (www.esd-toolkit.org).

The real aim is not just to meet the BVPI 157 indicator but, by so doing, to provide services that people will want to use.

e-democracy

The Internet will provide opportunities, not only for e-voting, but also for consultation. You may want your website to offer interactive features, such as online questionnaires and discussion groups.

In the service of democracy, a consultation paper on policy for electronic democracy, has been launched at:

<http://www.edemocracy.gov.uk/downloads>

The National Strategy

www.localgov.gov.uk is the national strategy for local e-government. It states key policy objectives for local e-government, and sets out the means by which they may be achieved. This document is available from:

<http://www.localgov.gov.uk>

The strategy envisages that by the end of 2005 all local services will be:

- **joined up** in ways that make sense to the user
- **available** at times and places most convenient to the customer, who may choose to receive public services through a range of different channels: through interactive Digital TV, through personalised websites, by using smart cards, through mobile technology, over the telephone or over the counter
- **delivered or supported electronically**
- **delivered jointly**, where appropriate, through local and regional partnerships and connected to a national infrastructure
- **delivered seamlessly**—customers provide personal information only once
- **open and accountable**—so that information about the objectives, standards and performance of local service providers will be freely and quickly available; complaints can be dealt with quickly and effectively; and citizens will be able to participate in local decision-making in many ways, including online discussion, live polls, webcasts, referenda and consultations
- **used by e-citizens** through effective promotion of available and accessible new technologies. Local services providers will not only give everybody who wants it access to the Internet, but will also help them gain the skills to take advantage of the opportunities it offers

Relevant resources

The **Audit Commission** carries out best value inspections. For more information visit:

<http://www.bestvalueinspections.gov.uk/home/default.shtml>

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is now responsible for **best value in local government**. Part of its website is devoted to best value. Visit:

<http://www.local-regions.odpm.gov.uk/bestvalue/bvindex.htm>

The ODPM Local Government Performance Site provides data on best value indicators for all authorities as well as information on local authority Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) results. The service is available from:

<http://www.bvpi.gov.uk>

Details about the National Strategy for local e-government are available from:

<http://www.localegov.gov.uk>

Improvement & Development Agency (IDeA) has many publications about best value and e-services:

Making Best Value Work:

<http://www.idea.gov.uk/publications/ct0022.htm>

Join the club? benchmarking for best value :

http://www.idea.gov.uk/bestvalue/index.php?id=join_the_club

IDeA has also developed an electronic service delivery toolkit:

<http://www.esd-toolkit.org>

The Local Government Association (LGA) has published the paper **Implementation of electronic voting in the UK**, available at:

<http://www.lga.gov.uk/Publication.asp?lsection=28&id=SXB6BB-A780E953&ccat=28>

The LGA has also published a report called **OK Computer?** illustrating how e-government will impact on the work of local government by 2005. Information about this report is also available from:

<http://www.lga.gov.uk/Publication.asp?lsection=28&id=SXC20F-A7805F16>

In the service of democracy, a consultation paper on policy for electronic democracy:

<http://www.edemocracy.gov.uk/downloads>

3 Be both accessible and usable

In order to achieve its aims, a local government website must offer content and services that are relevant and usable. By law, people with disabilities must be able to use online information and transactions.

Local government websites exist for the benefit of the user

The website should enable citizens to find information they want, either about services they need, or about issues they are interested in. The website should not expect citizens to understand how or why services are distributed amongst the authority's various departments or among different levels of government.

Websites should work together to give users to the information or services they need.

Websites must by law be accessible, and should meet the Web Accessibility Initiative (WAI) standards on accessibility

The **Disability Discrimination Act** requires that services on all websites should be made accessible. Failure to do so could lead to prosecution for a breach of the act. An EC Resolution growing out of the European Commission's E-Europe 2002 initiative urges member states to adopt and implement WAI guidelines at all levels of government in all regions. UK government policy is that conformance with these guidelines is to level A, following Priority 1 recommendations. This is likely to be raised by European legislation to level AA.

To ensure conformance to the WAI accessibility standards we recommend local authorities make this a contractual condition in any contracts with third-party suppliers of web-enabled software or web content.

Content should meet the needs of the user

The style and manner in which services are provided—including text, navigation, and even the choice of file formats for downloading—should be tailored to the needs of local people. The only way of ensuring this is to get users to test your content, and objectively record whether they can find, understand and successfully use all that your website has to offer.

Even before user testing, consider the good advice already available, based on user research. Text should be in plain language. It should be short, scannable, broken up by unambiguous (rather than clever) subheads, and by bullet-point lists. Upper levels of the website should quickly make clear to users what is on offer and whether it is relevant to them. Lower down in the site, text and design should aim to communicate main messages and explain services simply and quickly. Providing downloads of official documents will meet the needs of some users, but you should ensure that all content written for the website has been written for the public and for the medium.

When gathering website content, there is a tendency to publish information originally intended for a brochure. Sometimes the brochure itself is provided in a digital format, called Portable Document Format (PDF). Certainly, this is a quick and inexpensive way to get information online, but remember that PDFs cannot be displayed on digital television or at most kiosks. PDF files generated by recent software can be accessed by people with disabilities, but only if they have recent versions of reader and assistive technology. Older PDF files may not be searchable by some search engines, and so will remain inaccessible to even the most well-equipped user. For all these reasons, alternatives to PDF files should always be provided. HTML and plain text can be accessed by more or less everybody.

Make sure that any documents designed for print work on screen. For example:

- colourful charts may be in just one shade of grey when printed in monochrome
- two-column text forces users to scroll up and down the screen

- very precise pantone reference colours for logos may not be reproduced on screen
- text won't be written for on-screen reading

Another habit worth avoiding is the reproduction of documents aimed at an internal audience on a website meant for the public. Most local authority officers use a particular style, language and format for internal documents that is opaque to the public. Except where documents make up committee reports or other public records, internal documents should not be published as though they were intended for public consumption. The Plain English Campaign (www.plainenglish.co.uk) is one example of where one can get helpful guidance on the use of plain language and terminology. A number of local authorities have already joined the Plain English Campaign's Internet Crystal Mark scheme to show that they are committed to plain English throughout their websites (<http://www.plainenglish.co.uk/internetcrystalmark.html>). Local authorities in Wales have a legal obligation to provide information in Welsh. Where appropriate, information should be made available in community languages.

A summary page that explains the purpose of the document and highlights its contents should precede any statutory plans and strategy documents. This will enable users to see if the document contains the information they are looking for.

Branding: the look and feel of the website

Your website's branding must work with the branding of your organisation, or with the branding of the initiative or campaign it is a part of. This is more than a matter of copying a few logos. The look, feel and what the website does must reflect the brand values of the organisation. Because users will rely on look and feel to know if they still are on your website, your design should be consistent throughout. Radical changes in design from page to page will confuse some users.

Consider carefully how the design and branding of your website will work with the design and branding of partners and other government bodies in the region.

Design features can also make the website look more local, and can emphasise its role as a portal to local non-government activities, businesses and services. Design features should not be allowed to undermine the legally mandated accessibility of the website. Nor should the site be so loaded with graphics that the user begins to experience unreasonable delays. Pages should appear quickly; the website should use e-GIF mandated applications and plug-ins, and be tested for browser compatibility as recommended.

Effective service delivery

User testing provides equally important information about your online services. Users testing your transactions will give invaluable feedback about the forms you provide. Can most users successfully fill in and submit your online forms? Can most users carry out online tasks easily and intuitively?

The best design and content will be let down if your online transactions are difficult to use, or are simply unreliable. Your IT and business staff must be

involved in the development of the website to ensure that it works. Providing services online can mean re-examining your conventional business practices.

Use of Multimedia

The use of multimedia content can assist in making websites more accessible if implemented properly.

When linking to an audio or video file, you should indicate to users its format and size. The latter is particularly important as large file sizes and associated long download times can make the delivery of multimedia an unwelcome feature. We recommend that websites using multimedia files list indicative download times for standard file sizes for different modem connection speeds. However, such guidance should also be posted with an appropriate health warning, namely that it is indicative guidance only and that download times will be impacted by other factors such as contention ratios (defined as the number of people with whom you share your ISP service connection).

The table below provides rough rule of thumb guidance on download times and an example of an appropriate 'health warning'.

Indicative Download Times*

Modem Speed	Avg. Download time for 1 Megabyte file
28.8 Kb	6m 04sec
57.6 Kb	3m 02 sec
ISDN (128 Kb)	1m 21 sec
CABLE/DSL (512 Kb)	20 sec

*This table is to provide indicative download times for different modem speeds based on the download of a 1MB file. It should be noted that this is provided as a rule of thumb guide as download speeds are impacted by other factors.

It should also not be assumed that the user has the requisite media-player software, so clear instructions on how to obtain the software should be provided.

User research and testing

All efforts to develop or improve government websites should focus on the user. Government websites should research user needs, test prototypes with users, and continue to evaluate how users find and use the content and services on the site. The *Quality Framework for UK government website design* gives advice on user testing:

<http://www.e-envoy.gov.uk/webguidelines.htm>

Use of electronic (web) forms

To facilitate consistency and effective collation of information, it is recommended that websites use electronic forms where detailed information is required from users.

Irrespective of the method used to construct online forms, it is important that reasonable efforts are made to make them accessible and usable to all of your target

audience. Where this is not possible clear user guidance on alternative methods of providing the information should be available.

Relevant resources

The **Guidelines for UK government websites: Illustrated handbook for web management teams** provides the following relevant advice at:

<http://www.e-envoy.gov.uk/publications/guidelines/webguidelines/handbook/handbookindex.htm>

- **Section 1.6** Discussion Groups
Detailed guidance on use and setup of discussion groups
- **Section 2.4** Building in universal accessibility
Detailed advice on achieving accessibility and meeting WAI recommendations
- **Section 2.5** Browser compatibility
Advice on how to test your pages to ensure a range of browsers can present them
- **Section 2.6** Information and text
Issues regarding the provision of information
- **Section 2.7** Use of other languages
Guidance on issues around use of other languages
- **Section 4.3** Non-HTML file formats
A guide to other file formats
- **Section 4.4** Portable Document Format PDF
Best practice in the use of PDFs

The **Quality Framework for UK government website design** offers advice on the creative aspects of website construction, and explains how to implement user testing:

<http://www.e-envoy.gov.uk/webguidelines.htm>

Disability Discrimination Act:

<http://www.e-envoy.gov.uk/publications/guidelines/webguidelines/handbook/management/104.htm>

4 Join up with the rest of government

Link up to join up

Local government websites should join up with the websites of central government, local government and other public sector agencies. Regardless of who is actually responsible for providing a service, users should be able to find

the local service they are looking for. Your website may be more helpful if it links to services on the sites of other levels of government.

A link into <http://www.ukonline.gov.uk> will enable users to move from local government information to central government information.

Local government websites should aim to exchange information and share content. A content management system that adheres to the standards in the **e-Government Interoperability Framework** (e-GIF) and the **e-Government Metadata Standard** will make the joining up of information much easier. Content management systems (CMS) can be very helpful in distributing responsibility for authorship and updating amongst local partners.

The Office of the e-Envoy is building a content management system, DotP (Delivering on the Promise), based around efforts to build a central infrastructure (which includes the Government Gateway). In adopting a 'build-once, use-many' architecture, the DotP platform delivers benefits such as decreased time to market, economies of scale and compliance with government standards as well as full content management and hosting of websites. Further details on the DotP offering (and Government Gateway) is outlined in the **Section: Working with other key government services**.

For authorities without a content management system, web pages should, where appropriate, provide relevant links to other agencies. Linking to actual services or documents is better than linking to homepages, which leaves users having to navigate their own way to the resource. However such 'deep linking' requires that you plan and have the resources to check the ongoing integrity of these links.

To maintain the integrity of links we recommend local authorities set a policy as to which links will be "permanent" and publish the policy on the website. These may be top-level links, for example, www.bogcaster.gov.uk/education, www.bogaster.gov.uk/council. Organisations that create links to these "permanent" links should then be confident that these will not be invalid.

Local authorities should also consider a common approach to links with neighbouring authorities, so that citizens living on the borders can always find relevant information.

Navigation issues

Users should be able to go to different local authority sites with the assurance that the same services and kinds of content will be available on each one. Navigation should not vary so greatly from region to region that users have to learn a new site structure and navigation system every time. Refer to **Guideline 6: Provide uniform basic content** in this document for further guidance.

Metadata standards

Metadata describes the information contained in a document. If all government websites use the same metadata standards, then it will be easier for portals to find documents, easier for search engines to find and list your documents, and easier for citizens to find the document they are looking for.

The **e-Government Metadata Standard** contains 21 elements and many more refinements which can be used to classify web content for use by all levels of government.

The **APLAWS Guidelines for Metadata Standards Implementation for Local Government Websites** identifies a subset of the elements and refinements which can be used to classify the majority of information published on local authority websites. The document gives examples of metadata in use, including how it looks in HTML markup. APLAWS is a Pathfinder project. This document can be found at:

http://www.aplaws.org.uk/prod_metadata.htm

Sharing resources

To achieve more cost-effective and sustainable websites, local authorities should consider forming partnerships to share hosting arrangements, technical resources and training. Such arrangements may also involve sharing information with the voluntary sector.

As demonstrated by the APLAWS project (see above), Pathfinder projects and ongoing National Projects run by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister are providing solutions and resources that should be considered by local authorities. Further information on Pathfinder and National Project work can be found at:

<http://www.localgov.gov.uk>

Hosting and secure service delivery is also available through the infrastructure projects and the Gateway provided by the Office of the e-Envoy.

Local authorities should also consider partnership websites with other authorities in their region to support better meeting of user needs, avoiding needlessly duplicating the same content and services, and avoiding unnecessary expense in procurement, development and maintenance. Strategic service delivery partnerships have a key role here. In such partnerships, central and local authorities commit to flexible working relationships with each other and with local businesses and voluntary groups across the country. For more information visit:

<http://www.local-regions.odpm.gov.uk/ssdp/research/index.htm> &
<http://www.localgov.gov.uk>

Relevant resources

APLAWS Guidelines for Metadata Standards Implementation for Local Government Websites:

http://www.aplaws.org.uk/prod_metadata.htm

e-Government Interoperability Framework v4:

<http://www.e-envoy.gov.uk/publications/frameworks/egif4/egif4.htm>

e-Government Metadata Standard:

http://www.govtalk.gov.uk/interoperability/metadata_document.asp?docnum=524

The govtalk website has a section **Gateway Partnerlink** that reviews working with the Government Gateway and other infrastructure projects. See:

http://www.govtalk.gov.uk/gateway_partnerlink/

IDeA resources are available from:

<http://www.idea.gov.uk/>

These include IDeA Marketplace, a procurement system for local authorities available from:

<http://www.idea.gov.uk/marketplace/>

Its paper **Local e-Government Now** is available from:

http://www.idea.gov.uk/news/?id=local_egovt2002

The **localegov** website provides a portal for local government to find out information and work related to the national strategy for local e-government:

<http://www.localegov.gov.uk>

The **info4local** website provides a portal for local government to central government information that is of relevance to them:

<http://www.info4local.gov.uk>

The **Local Government Association** (LGA) provides a range of advice on service delivery across government. Its paper **Local Solutions Better Services Progress Report April 2002** is available from:

<http://www.lga.gov.uk>

The **Planning Portal** is an important project that will join up the planning process across central and local government. Keep track of progress at:

<http://www.planningportalprogramme.gov.uk/>

In order to pull together the experience of pioneering local authorities, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has sponsored **Promoting Electronic Government**. It provides a framework, a self-assessment process and a set of learning materials:

<http://www.peg.org.uk>

SOCITM also provides—on behalf of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister—information and advice on policy and best practice. See the following documents:

- **E-government funding and targets papers** - February 2001
- **Delivering Local Government Online**
- **Local Targets for Electronic Service Delivery**

Information about these is available at:

<http://www.socitm.gov.uk/egov/egovind.htm>

5 Build trust

Local authorities need to gain and keep the trust of users. Some users need to be reassured about how government uses their personal information. The law means that their privacy has to be protected.

To protect citizens, you must also protect your own site and data: security is an important element of a well-managed website.

Citizen trust

It is important that people have confidence in local government websites, both as citizens and as customers—especially when they are conducting business with you via your site. By providing your website with a consistent look and feel, and through the judicious use of sub-domains, you can build up the confidence of the user. But to deserve that confidence, your website should also have a security policy that is regularly reviewed. People must feel comfortable that only legitimate use will be made of their personal details, and that this information will be held securely.

Service level agreements

These can be built into contracts with suppliers to clarify roles, conditions of fulfillment and standards of delivery. They can include:

- connection guarantees: sites should be available to users at least 99% of the time, and a mechanism for compensation in the case of failure may be agreed
- regular penetration testing to help ensure security
- back-up procedures
- provision of logs or web access statistics
- levels of technical support
- disaster recovery

Use of cookies

Users should be advised when cookies are used on a website. Sessions should be set with appropriate expiry times. The website should still function with cookies switched off.

Hosting and security

If the hosting of a website is outsourced, the contract should make provision for an independent security review of the hosted site. If the website is hosted internally, regular independent security checks should be carried out. Support staff should keep up to date with information about potential viruses and security patches. The vulnerability of web servers to virus or hacker attacks is a key issue when buying a server host solution. The host's track record for quickly providing updates to security and installing patches should be a major factor in any web server procurement decision.

Copyright

Many central government websites are covered by Crown copyright. Local government websites are not. Any purchase agreements for web designs, writing, illustrations or photographs should specify the rights that you have purchased. These should include rights for all digital media, so that you do not have to make separate agreements to use material on the Web, digital TV, or other channels. Some programmers will wish to retain copyright of original source code, and this can be done so long as you retain the right to continue using the code, even if another supplier takes over the running or redesign of the

site. You may also wish to protect your rights to the assembly of information in databases.

Moral and intellectual property rights are other issues to bear in mind. Your own brands may require copyright or even trademark protection. Always take legal advice.

Legal issues

Websites must state their policy on the following issues:

- **Disability Discrimination Act**
- **Data Protection Act**
- **Freedom of Information Act**

Where local authorities collect personal information using an online form, the form must contain (or link to a statement) explaining how the data collected via that form will be used. Under the Data Protection Act it is not enough to simply have a 'blanket' statement - you must be specific in each case.

Local authorities' data protection officers will need to be able to demonstrate that the authority is keeping track of all places where it collects personal information. To make this task easier on the website, we suggest adopting a naming convention for all pages containing interactive forms – for example, placing them in a sub-folder called forms.

The Data Protection Act 1998 also affects the use of photography. Hampshire County Council outlines on its website (<http://www.hants.gov.uk/tc/cg/photosintro.html>) several issues under the Data Protection Act that local authorities should be aware of in terms of using images of people via photographs, videos and webcams:

- You must get the permission of all the people who will appear in a photograph, video or webcam image before you record the footage. That means children as well as adults. Hampshire County Council provides examples of consent forms that can be used for adults and children on their website (<http://www.hants.gov.uk/TC/cg/photosamples.html>)
- You must make it clear why you are using that person's image, what you will be using it for, and who might want to look at the pictures.
- If you are taking images at an event attended by large crowds, such as a sports event or the Southampton Balloon Festival, this is regarded as a public area so you do not need to get the permission of everyone in a crowd shot. People in the foreground are also considered to be in a public area. However, we suggest that photographers address those within earshot, stating where the photograph may be published and giving them the opportunity to move away. If you want to use an image of, for example, the winner of a race at a sports event - with the crowd in the background - you must get the race winner's verbal permission and record the fact that you have done so. You can record their consent on a verbal consent form when you take the photograph or when you return to your office.
- If you intend to use images from an agency, it is the agency's responsibility to get permission from all those appearing in the image before it is recorded.

However, it is ultimately your responsibility to ensure that permission was obtained, so you may want to get this in writing from the agency concerned.

Other legal issues to consider include:

- If conducting user tests on children, ensure that police-cleared adults are present.
- You also need to ensure that content—even in discussion groups—obeys the laws on defamation.

Advertising and sponsorship

Online advertising currently generates very little revenue. If the decision is taken to provide advertising on a local authority website, a great deal of attention should be paid to the contract with the advertising provider.

The authority should consider what type of advertising it considers appropriate to its website, and whether it requires the adverts to be submitted for prior approval before publication.

Sponsorship may yield more resources, while consuming less time in negotiations and content checks. However, the sponsor should not be a supplier of services to the authority, or someone with whom you are currently negotiating. This will avoid any appearance of impropriety.

Relevant resources

The **Guidelines for UK government websites: Illustrated handbook for web management teams** provides detailed advice on the following subjects at:

<http://www.e-envoy.gov.uk/publications/guidelines/webguidelines/handbook/handbookindex.htm>

- **Section 1.8** Platform for Internet Content Selection (PICS)
How to set a certification rating for the content of your site. This rating is then read by filters on browsers. The page will be displayed only if it meets the user's own criteria. This allows parents or schools to protect children from particular kinds of content
- **Section 1.3** Advertising and sponsorship
Guidance on advertising on government websites
- **Section 1.10** Legal issues
A full review of legal matters including the Disability Discrimination Act, the Data Protection Act, copyright, terms and conditions etc
- **Section 1.11** Backgrounder on securing websites
A review of security issues
- **Section 1.12** Procurement + checklist on choosing an ISP/hosting service
Issues to take into account when briefing and contracting design or hosting services, including issues for service level agreements (SLAs)

- **Section 4.7 Cookies**
Background information on cookies, and advice on acceptable use of cookies in government websites

The Performance and Innovation Unit has published **Privacy and Data-Sharing: The way forward for public services:**

<http://www.piu.gov.uk/2002/privacy/report/index.htm>

Salford City Council and Hampshire County Council provide legal pointers for websites (but seek your own legal advice in all cases):

- Copyright
<http://www.salford.gov.uk/copyright.shtm>
<http://www.hants.gov.uk/copyrite.html>
- Notice attached to list of planning applications
<http://www.salford.gov.uk/pubnotices/planlist/default.asp>
- Sample disclaimer form
<http://www.salford.gov.uk/disclaimer.shtm>
<http://www.hants.gov.uk/disclaimer.html>
- Privacy
<http://www.salford.gov.uk/privacy.shtm>
<http://www.hants.gov.uk/privacy.html>

The consultation document **Security Framework V2.0** gives guidance on security issues for e-government:

<http://www.e-envoy.gov.uk/publications/consultations/security/index.htm>

The **Trust Charter for Electronic Service Delivery** focuses in more detail on privacy and data protection issues, to help build user trust in government websites:

http://www.govtalk.gov.uk/policydocs/consult_subject.asp?topics=25&order=publishdate&l1.x=15&l1.y=5

Web Quality Briefings 1: Case study of advertising on a government website reviews the issues that faced a central government website when selling advertising space:

<http://www.e-envoy.gov.uk/publications/webqualityindex.htm>

Freedom of Information Act 2000:

<http://www.hmso.gov.uk/acts/acts2000/20000036.htm>

Data Protection Act 1998

<http://www.hmso.gov.uk/acts/acts1998/19980029.htm>

Information Commissioner

<http://www.dataprotection.gov.uk/>

6 Provide uniform basic content

Local authorities need to ensure that their website content conforms to e-GIF and internationally recognised accessibility standards such as WAI to ensure a consistent look and feel across government websites. This negates users having to re-learn with each visit to a government website how it should be navigated and used.

Furthermore, local Government websites should offer a core set of consistent and uniform content to users. Users should expect to find this core set of content across local authority websites to assist in providing a common user experience and consistent look and feel.

The type of core content local government websites should contain includes contact information on the homepage. This could include:

- location of area, with map link
- location of offices, with map link
- main switchboard number
- email contact
- link to emergency numbers via '999 – help' link

Within easy access from the homepage, users should also be offered information about:

- all local authority services, regardless of the level of local government involved
- detailed contact lists, especially where email addresses are available
- all statutory plans and documents
- complaints procedures
- elected representatives
- the forward plan
- opening hours for different offices
- links to local offices of central government, particularly where direct provision of local services is involved
- availability of a search engine on the website and a service A-Z
- copies of recent news releases
- details of public consultations
- diary of public meetings and council committees
- councillor surgery times/dates/location
- information on council expenditure and performance
- council job vacancies
- details of local policy priorities and objectives
- plans for developing e-government

Users should be given the opportunity to:

- make comments and give feedback about the website. In providing email contact details you should consider the use of generic or team email addresses. See section 2.2.4 of *Guidelines for UK Government: Illustrated handbook for web management teams* at:

[http:// www.e-envoy.gov.uk/webguidelines.htm](http://www.e-envoy.gov.uk/webguidelines.htm)

- contact relevant departments online using web forms (avoid proprietary email forms—not every user will have the software to use them)

Except when it is updated in advance of print, information should be consistent with printed information.

Documents should state when they were last updated.

Where online forms and email contacts are made available, users should be told when they are likely to get a response.

Relevant resources

Useful advice about website content is offered in SOCITM's latest **Better Connected 2003** survey of UK local authority websites, available at:
<http://www.socitm.gov.uk/Public/insight/publications/Better+Connected+03.htm>

The Local Government Association has published a paper **Implementation of electronic voting in the UK**, available at:

<http://www.lga.gov.uk/Publication.asp?lsection=28&id=SXB6BB-A780E953&ccat=28>

7 Evaluate success

User testing will show you if your services are useful and usable. However, once the website is up and running, it is vital that meaningful access statistics are logged and turned into meaningful information that can be used to improve your website.

Meaningful access statistics will confirm what services are used and to what level. They can identify the parts of your website that do not attract an audience. They can show you how users find their way to your site, and where they go when they leave your site. They can confirm that your site is in good technical order, and can warn you when users are having difficulty downloading certain pages.

The **Guidelines for UK government websites: Illustrated handbook for web management teams** establishes the minimum requirements for access statistics. These are:

- the number of unique users (visitors)
- the number of visits and
- page impressions

It is not acceptable or useful to refer to hits. By counting hits, one is simply totting up all the individual files—including graphic files—that the visitor requests.

Additional useful metrics can include:

- successful requests for pages

- unsuccessful requests
- most frequently visited pages
- least frequently visited pages
- top entry pages
- top referring pages

For search engines, it is important to know how many searches users have to run before finding the page that they want.

Statistics about uncompleted transactional services—‘dropped baskets’—may also prove informative.

Evaluation should not be confined to computer-generated statistics, but should involve user groups that are representative of the authority’s population. Note that it has been shown repeatedly that what users say they need or prefer is not always borne out by what they actually do. For this reason, it is very helpful to observe actual user behaviour, and to measure objectively a user’s level of comprehension and ability to complete a task successfully.

Conventional market research can be used to reveal the level of local awareness of your website, and people’s attitudes towards it.

Comparing the take-up of web services to other service delivery channels can help establish the relative value of the website to both customers and stakeholders.

The objective measurement of results is another useful way to evaluate your website. If you are recruiting staff online, is your website achieving its recruitment targets? Is advertising online more cost effective than advertising in newspapers? What sort of staff does online advertising attract? does it produce more technically aware staff if that is its goal? Questions like these can be answered through evaluation.

Local authorities should also consider periodic reviews of their website to ensure the website meets the current needs of citizens and business of the authority. This review should cover dimensions such as:

- compliance to e-GIF standards
- compliance to e-government initiatives
- content management
- functionality delivered
- information architecture
- integration to channel strategy
- ongoing accessibility and usability
- performance
- security
- technical architecture
- transactional integration capabilities

Relevant resources

The **Guidelines for UK government websites: Illustrated handbook for web management teams Section 1.4** on Evaluation provides definitions of terms used in access statistics, caveats and common problems, and a checklist for auditing and statistical analysis:

<http://www.e-envoy.gov.uk/publications/guidelines/webguidelines/handbook/management/04.htm>

The **Quality Framework for UK government website design** reviews the steps in standard user testing and suggests some cost-effective ways to test the usability of your web services:

<http://www.e-envoy.gov.uk/webguidelines.htm>

8 Promote your website

To find your website, users need to find your URL. To help them do this, make your website an integral part of your authority's communications strategy. The website URL should appear on:

- all forms, letters and promotional material
- business cards
- campaign, promotional and information leaflets
- press releases
- vehicles and uniforms (especially if phone numbers are also provided)

If the URL is long or complex, it may be worth registering a number of aliases that point to your site. Web managers should be familiar with how to register the site and additions to it with the major search engines and directories.

Staff should be both aware of the authority's website, and able to access it.

It is helpful to differentiate the website from the Intranet. A simple and effective way to do this is to give the Intranet an identifiable name. This is helpful, as Intranet and Internet sound so similar.

The use of metadata—data about data—on your website and on individual documents will help some search engines locate your resources more easily and help users find content. It should also improve your site-specific searches and will mean you meet government policy on metadata.

Relevant resources

APLAWS Guidelines for Metadata Standards Implementation for Local Government Websites:

http://www.aplaws.org.uk/prod_metadata.htm

e-Government Metadata Framework:

<http://www.govtalk.gov.uk/searchresult2.asp?docnum=473>

e-Government Metadata Standard:

http://www.govtalk.gov.uk/interoperability/metadata_document.asp?docnum=524

Government Data Standards Catalogue :

<http://www.govtalk.gov.uk/interoperability/eservices.asp?order=title>

The **Guidelines for UK government websites: Illustrated handbook for web management teams Section 1.7**, Getting users to your site: metadata, search engines and promotion, explains metadata and shows you how to get your site listed on search engines and directory websites:

<http://www.e-envoy.gov.uk/publications/guidelines/webguidelines/handbook/management/07.htm>

To keep up with developments in the search engine community, consider subscribing to the **Search Engine Report** at:

<http://searchenginewatch.com>

9 Consider and use other channels

PC-based web browsers are only one way of accessing online information. Local authorities should be considering ways in which they can use other electronic channels such as interactive digital television (DiTV), kiosks and mobile phones. Detailed guidance on issues around using a mix of channels and developing a channels strategy is found in **Framework for Channel Strategies: delivering government services in the new economy:**

<http://www.govtalk.gov.uk/documents/channels.pdf>

Critical to local authorities developing an effective channel strategy is understanding their customers needs. To achieve the latter requires you to research your audiences. This includes addressing questions such as: What media do your different audiences prefer to use? What information are they seeking? How should your counters, call centres, faxback, kiosks and conventional media be working together to achieve your communication and service delivery aims?

It should also be noted that other electronic channels such as DiTV and mobiles will not be able to carry exactly the same information as your website, and it is likely that you will need to redesign and rewrite material for each of these media and the people who use them. You may need to recruit or train people to produce, judge or re-purpose content for these different media and audiences.

To utilise these technologies, it might also be more cost-effective for local authorities to form partnerships with other local authorities or public sector agencies.

An example of a “joined-up” Government initiative is the Office of the e-Envoy’s UK online DiTV service. Launched in April 2002, it is currently provided over the BSkyB Satellite platform, whilst work is in progress to extend the service across all available platforms. The vision of the UK online DiTV service is for it to be a single point of access for central and local Government content. In July 2002 Suffolk launched its DiTV service, which is accessed through UK online. The OeE is in talks with other local authorities and government departments for them to do the same. There are a number of benefits, including financial benefits, in partnering with the OeE. UK online also holds the Government’s Independent Television Commission (ITC) broadcasting licence, which is essential if you wish to be on the Sky platform. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is also supporting a National Project for local authorities on DiTV including a starter kit and “how to” guide.

Relevant resources

Framework for Channel Strategies: delivering government services in the new economy advises on how to develop a channel strategy that makes best use of the Web alongside DiTV, kiosks, mobile devices, telephone, digital radio, post, and other traditional channels:

<http://www.govtalk.gov.uk/documents/channels.pdf>

The **Guidelines for UK government websites: Illustrated handbook for web management teams** provides the following relevant advice at:

<http://www.e-envoy.gov.uk/publications/guidelines/webguidelines/handbook/handbookindex.htm>

- **Section 5.2** Your website on television
The main principles of TV-friendly websites: screen sizes, colours, text, graphics and plug-ins. There is also a brief review of the WebTV platform
- **Section 5.3** Other digital communication media
A brief introduction to Personal Digital Assistants (PDAs), Wireless the Web

For further information on the UK online **DiTV** service, including information on best practice send an email to:

dtv@e-envoy.gsi.gov.uk

Information on the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's **DiTV National Project** is available from:

<http://www.localegov.gov.uk>

The **SomersetOnLine** portal and Digital TV project is another Pathfinder project. Information is available from:

<http://www.lgolpathfinder.gov.uk/en/1/pathsomerset.html>

The **Suffolk/Ipswich/Babergh Pathfinder Project** is developing digital TV channels for service delivery and on-street interactive kiosks. Information is available from:

<http://www.lgolpathfinder.gov.uk/en/1/pathsib.html>

10 Adopt web best practice

Using frames and tables, working with scripts and plugs-ins, providing Document Type Definitions (DTDs) and encoding to the defined version of HTML, file sizes, web-safe colours ... the **Guidelines for UK government websites: Illustrated handbook for web management teams** covers a range of agreed best practice.

Here are some key points:

- HTML coding should validate to a particular version of HTML as declared in a DTD. We recommend HTML 4.1 for ease of accessibility, but test to make sure that it transforms gracefully for browsers that support earlier versions of HTML. We recommend that pages should still work well in browsers that

support HTML 3.2. Also, test pages for compatibility with a range of different browsers

- Frames and tables are fine, but must follow best practice if they are to be accessible. The **Illustrated handbook for web management teams** contains cut-and-paste code that has been validated
- Make sure that colours (particularly for logos and backgrounds as well as text and hyperlinks) come from the 216 colours in the web-safe palette. This will preserve your branding and also make sure that people with older equipment can use the site
- For speed of download, here are some rule-of-thumb file sizes:
 - Homepage: 40kb
 - Standard information page: 120kb
 - Download page size: 300kb
- Browser plug-ins such as Shockwave, QuickTime or Realplayer can provide more media-rich content. Just make sure that alternative versions are available—the website should be just as easily navigated and understood by people without the plug-ins. Such content should not be forced on people (ie, it should not feature on the homepage) – offer it as an option
- The Platform for Internet Content Selection (PICS) is used to filter web content to protect younger users. The use of the metadata that supports PICS will be mandatory under the e-GIF version 4. The **Illustrated handbook for web management teams** details how it works and how to meet this requirement
- Ensure your contracts cover protective measures, such as the frequency of back-ups, the safeguarding of backup copies, your server host's responsibility in the event of denial of service, etc
- Discussion groups need to have a clear purpose, usually to consult people on particular issues. Make sure your own commitment to act or not on contributions is clear, and place clear limits on the kinds of comments you will publish. You will need to protect the website against publishing racist, libelous, threatening or obscene comment. Spam and advertising should not be posted. You will need to decide if you want to remove such material after it has been posted or invest in a system that edits comments before publication. The terms and conditions under which users are allowed to take part should be posted on the site
- Cascading Style Sheets enable you to separate the content of the website from its styling element. They make uniform formatting easier to achieve and preserve the accessibility of the site

Relevant resources

The **Guidelines for UK government websites: Illustrated handbook for web management teams** provides advice on the following topics at:

<http://www.e-envoy.gov.uk/webguidelines.htm>

- **Section 1.6** Discussion groups
Open and closed discussions. Clear terms of use policies (with sample)
- **Section 1.8** Platform for Internet Content Selection (PICS)
How to set a certification rating for the content of your site. This rating is then read by filters on browsers. The page will be displayed only if it meets the user's own criteria. This allows parents or schools to protect children from particular kinds of content
- **Section 2.5** Browser compatibility
Ensuring that your HTML markup will display on different browsers
- Sections in **Chapter 4?** HTML markup, other formats and scripting?
resolve a number of technical issues
- **Chapter 6**, Technical detail and tutorials, reviews best practice in the following areas:
 - Hypertext Markup Language (HTML 4.01)
 - Cascading Style Sheets
 - HTML tables
 - HTML frames
 - HTML forms
 - Web page navigation
- The **Annexes** list applications and other resources (note: appearance in these lists is NOT an endorsement). **Annexes** include:
 - Web browser applications
 - Disability-specific web browsers
 - HTML editor applications
 - Graphic applications
 - Plug-ins
 - General applications
 - Changing browser fonts and colours
 - Access standards and common file extensions
 - Common HTTP server status codes
 - Error 404
 - Redirect page
- There is also a **Checklist: specifying your website** and a **Glossary**

Working with other key government services

Local authorities need to consider working with other key government services in order to avoid re-inventing the wheel and to ensure that services are delivered around the needs of customers and not organisational structures. Examples of some key government services local authorities should consider working with are listed below.

Central infrastructure provided by the Office of the e-Envoy

Departments and local authorities are currently investing millions of pounds in building the infrastructure to support the electronic delivery of their information and services. Without a central architecture to manage this spending, much more will be spent on duplicating research, design, systems integration and hosting.

Departments and local authorities have been wrestling with the same problems: managing customers, content, new channels and emerging technologies. Entire infrastructures, technical as well as people and process-based, have consequently evolved—but the customer experience has not always been considered.

As we move towards 2005, the need to reduce this duplication of Internet technology spend and resources across government becomes ever more acute.

The Office of the e-Envoy is building a central infrastructure designed to host multiple government websites. This is underpinned by a modular 'build once, use-many' architecture approach which enables organisations to 'plug-in' and use ready-built, supported components, when designing online services to meet the needs of a local citizen and business population.

Key elements of this central infrastructure include the Government Gateway, DotP and UKonline. Each of these is outlined in greater detail below.

Government Gateway

The Government Gateway is part of the central infrastructure which allows for central and local government to offer secure authenticated transactions and joined-up government services to take place electronically via the web.

The Gateway provides:

- *authentication and authorisation services* – technology components and business driven processes that local authorities can use to ensure users only have the faculty of accessing a specific service or set of services;
- *citizens with a single credential* – allows citizens to have one user ID and password, or a digital certificate to access all government services that are integrated with the Gateway;
- *portal integration services* – enables integration of authentication, transaction submission processes and retrieval and viewing of secure messages using technology interfaces with a local authority's own portal or website;
- *secure transaction routing services* – guarantee reliable delivery of documents or forms between local government, citizens and businesses if technically appropriate;

- *secure messaging services* – allow secure two-way communication between local authorities, citizens and businesses, for example, enquiries or secure delivery of items such as statements or e-bills; and
- *back-office integration services* – enable secure connectivity and reliable delivery of standards-based information into a local authority, including options for customised transformation into existing systems.

These Gateway services can be integrated seamlessly. For example, customers need never know that the online services they are using are in fact built upon Gateway components. This enables local authorities to manage the way e-services are presented and to provide a tailored customer experience.

For more information about Government Gateway offered by the OeE visit:
http://www.govtalk.gov.uk/gateway_partnerlink

An engagement pack is available to guide government organisations through the planning, design and implementation of an e-service using the Gateway. This can be obtained by emailing:

gatewaypartnerlink@e-envoy.gsi.gov.uk
 typing 'TECHNICAL ENGAGEMENT PACK REQUEST' in the subject line.

DotP (Deliver on the Promise)

DotP is a managed service platform delivering user-centred online capabilities for government departments. The core DotP services and technologies are based on an effective content management system. The development of the DotP platform (with the Government Gateway) underpins efforts to build a central technology infrastructure designed to host multiple government websites.

The key elements of the DotP offering include:

- A user-centred web site
- The technical architecture to support the site
- Connection to central and local government applications
- Content management system providing control of content to business owners
- Secure servicing and management of the platform
- Editorial processes and advice

In adopting a modular 'build-once, use-many' architecture, the DotP platform will deliver benefits such as decreased time to market, economies of scale and compliance with government standards as well as higher quality content and information to users including co-ordination of content between central and local government organisations.

For further information about the DotP offering please email:

DotP@e-envoy.gsi.gov.uk

www.ukonline.gov.uk

The www.ukonline.gov.uk portal provides a point of entry to all government online information and services.

If ukonline wishes to direct users to your content, it will contact you to make an agreement about establishing a link.

The benefits to you will be extra traffic to your pages, especially from new users who may not know about your site. To make sure that the portal can direct users to your online offerings:

- Ensure that major services, topics and messages are targeted at the public. It's fine to publish detailed documents for professionals or policy makers, but is the same subject covered from the citizen's point of view?
- Make sure that the URLs of content or services aimed at citizens are stable, even if your website is database-driven
- Notify www.ukonline.gov.uk if you restructure your website, change the URL of, or remove files to which www.ukonline.gov.uk links
- Use metadata following the e-Government Metadata Standard and the Government Category List to assist www.ukonline.gov.uk to find your content
- Link back to www.ukonline.gov.uk from your homepage

Personalised Local Service Websites National Project

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is funding a National Project building on the work of the Accessible and Personalised Local Authority Websites (APLAWS) Pathfinder project (see below) and including workstreams on web content management, information architecture and standards, community engagement and organisational development. More information is available at: <http://www.localgov.gov.uk>

Pathfinder projects

Over 100 local authorities took part in the Local Government Online (LGOL) Pathfinder Programme. Pathfinder projects solve various process and application problems faced by online government, and share their solutions. Pathfinder projects are listed in Appendix B. One example of the fruits of the Pathfinder Project for local government website developers is the metadata category list from the APLAWS project.

http://www.aplaws.org.uk/prod_metadata.htm

For more information about Pathfinder Projects, including a downloadable copy of the Pathfinder Product Catalogue visit:

<http://www.localgov.gov.uk>

Housing and Employment Mobility Service

Through a project named the Housing and Employment Mobility Service (HEMS), the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, Jobcentre Plus and the devolved

administrations are working together to make it easier for people to find social housing in other parts of the UK. The aim is to make it easier for people to find jobs and to move to other areas.

In addition to listing vacancies in social housing online, the project will carry information about neighbourhoods and job vacancies. Where local authorities and housing associations make this information available on the Web, they will be asked to make it available through HEMS. For more information about HEMS contact:

nickq.allan@odpm.gsi.gov.uk

Transport Direct

Transport Direct is an ambitious programme aimed at providing comprehensive travel information and retailing services over the Internet. It will provide information on all forms of transport, including the car. It is being developed in partnership with local government and transport operators. For local authorities this means working with both those involved in **traveline** (an existing telephone service giving public transport information) and the highway authorities. More information can be found on:

<http://www.dft.gov.uk/itwp/transdirect/>

www.info4local.gov.uk

info4local is a portal website which gives local authorities easy access to local government-related information published on the websites of central government departments and agencies. It has a searchable archive with summaries of publications and related links. You can register for its twice-daily e-mail alert service. This will automatically inform you of new central-government publications of interest to local authorities in particular topic areas.

We recommend that you link to info4local on both your Internet and Intranet sites:

<http://www.info4local.gov.uk>

Further help and guidance

Make sure you are aware of what is already available and working before commissioning new websites or other online solutions. For help and guidance, contact IDeA or SOCITM:

<http://www.idea.gov.uk>

<http://www.socitm.gov.uk>

The Foundation for IT in Local Government is an independent body that promotes innovation in local democracy and service delivery:

http://www.fitlog.com/index_js.htm

Appendices

Appendix A: Who produced this framework?

This document was prepared for a steering committee of local authority web and policy staff, and was written by Alasdair Mangham, APLAWS, and Camden Council.

The steering committee discussed the issues and reviewed drafts of the document. It reported to the Local Government Reference Group organised by the Office of the e-Envoy.

The steering committee membership was as follows:

Barry Adams	East Riding
Maura Brooks	Salford
Richard Derham	IDeA
Glyn Evans	SOCITM and London Borough of Camden
Zihni Fahri	Office of the e-Envoy
Martin Ferguson	IDeA
John Fox	Salford
Liz Hardwick-Smith	West Sussex County Council
Alasdair Mangham	APLAWS and London Borough of Camden
Roland Mezulis	West Sussex
Steve Palmer	Hillingdon Borough Council
Carol Perelli	West Sussex County Council
Cath Rolinson	East Riding
Geoff Ryman	Office of the e-Envoy
Janice Whyte	Sunderland
Kevin Woodcock	East Riding

Appendix B: Pathfinder Projects

For information about and links to the 25 Pathfinder Projects, visit:

<http://www.local.gov.uk>

BASE.GOV

focusing e-government around the citizen by providing a toolkit for managing and developing national and local e-government services

Brent

a one-stop e-Shop providing a fully electronic citizen contact environment

Bromley

linking front- and back-office processes across multiple agencies to enable higher performance and improve the quality of customer service

Camden

accessible and personalised local authority websites (APLAWS) to provide personalised access via the Internet

Cornwall

improving accessibility through smartcard technology and remote access centres

Huntingdonshire

a fully replicable e-procurement model for local authorities

Kingston upon Hull

building an integrated system to enable all agencies working with children and families to share a single database

Leeds

developing and implementing electronic procurement

Newham

e-payment and e-procurement including an interface into back office accounting systems

Norfolk

use of Government Gateway to develop secure information exchange and transactions

Salford

business process re-engineering and customer relationship management

Sedgemoor

implementing the fundamental back-office revolution necessary to underpin e-government

Shepway

methodology and tools for a single-point-of-notification for address changes

Somerset

delivering unified services to the people of Somerset, via the SomersetOnLine Portal website and Digital TV

Southampton/ North East Smartcard Consortium

extending the reach and range of Smartcard use for public services

Suffolk/Ipswich/Babergh

developing digital TV channels for service delivery and on-street interactive kiosks

Sunderland

personalised public access web gateways

Surrey

developing a sustainable central electronic hub for the collection and dissemination of emergency and major incident information from all responsible partners

Tameside, Kirklees and Waltham Forest

web-based services for local authority functions

Three Rivers

designing web-enabling services, and integrating its website with a Customer Relationship Management system and back-office systems

Wandsworth

improving access to planning and building control information, and enabling the submission of applications online

Welland Partnership

building community online portals around market towns

West Sussex

integrating electronic service delivery (ESD) access

Wiltshire and Swindon

developing Community Strategies and e-Government to meet citizens' needs in a rural county and modern urban area

Wolverhampton

Bereavement Centre service and back office process improvement

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