

Nottinghamshire's Joint Implementing Electronic Government Statement

Memorandum of Understanding

This statement will enable the partners to deliver a joined up coherent electronic government strategy across Nottinghamshire.

The Nottinghamshire E-Government Group was established in June 2000. The group reports directly to the Nottinghamshire Chief Executives Group. Current members are all 9 local authorities in Nottinghamshire. Membership discussions are also in progress with Health, Probation, Fire and Police.

Key terms of reference:-

- Identify projects for joint working which meet the objectives of the partner organisations and the expressed preferences of Nottinghamshire citizens
- Prioritise these projects and carry out feasibility work to assess their impact upon the joint aspiration of improving delivery of seamless services
- Maximise the efficient use of resources through collaborative working
- Allow innovation in areas, which, with each authority working separately, would not be viable, or have an insufficient business case to do so
- Determine mechanisms to monitor the outcomes and evaluate success of joint working
- Draw on the experience and outcomes of Best Value reviews and Beacon Council work.

A key objective is to provide a partnership forum to support individual authorities in their achievement of the national Public Service Agreement target No. 22: "Ensure continuous improvement in the economy, efficiency and effectiveness of local services through:-

- Overall annual improvements in cost effectiveness of 2% or more;
- Ensuring that local government achieves 100% capability in electronic service delivery by 2005."

Joint Projects

There are a range of areas of joint working. One of the key projects that has started since the original memo of understanding is the Nottinghamshire On-Line Portal, which has received £650,000 of LGOL funding. The Nottinghamshire On-Line Portal Vision is;

Nottinghamshire has both unitary and two tier authority structures. This makes it difficult for an individual to know which organisation to contact. The Best Value review - access to services has identified that not only is it difficult to get access to services but some don't get access at all. The Nottinghamshire portal is a key element in improving access to services.

The Nottinghamshire portal will be a web site that brings together all Nottinghamshire local government information and services. It is intended to be the primary place where citizens go to get information about services in this area and to transact with local government online. It will support the coherent integration of local authority infrastructure, systems, processes and services.

The Nottinghamshire portal is a key driver in transforming the way in which Nottinghamshire's Local Government services are organised and delivered, and in leading the drive to better integration of services and putting all relevant information and services online.

In achieving this vision the Nottinghamshire portal aims to be:

- a principal entry point for citizens to access local government information and services online
- dedicated to serving the citizen by providing easy and multi-channel access to interact with local government
- the main vehicle for coherent and relevant information and services that will enrich the citizen experience and interaction with local government
- a partner to private and public sector service providers. The Nottinghamshire portal will not be the only portal delivering local government information and services
- a trusted environment where citizens can conduct secure transactions in confidence.

The Nottinghamshire portal will ensure that the respective roles of the Authorities involved, in providing joined up services, are transparent to the end user. The portal will provide the appropriate routing and connection services to the authorities and also the necessary security and authentication to enable local government to conduct electronic transactions with citizens. The portal will also be instrumental in opening up local government's information assets and services to the public, private and voluntary sectors.

A key element in the success of this project will be the marketing of the Nottinghamshire portal to bring an improved access to services across Nottinghamshire.

The Nottinghamshire dimension

Nottinghamshire is not a single community with homogeneous needs. Our work needs to respond to the differences between coalfield, rural and conurbation areas and to recognise the diversity and energy of the County's local communities. New regional structures are being proposed for the East Midlands and Local Strategic Partnerships are developing. Building relationships at local, regional, national and European levels will be important in winning resources and exploiting our innovative track record.

Our services and partnerships must encourage active involvement from Nottinghamshire's citizens. We will strive to enable individuals, families and communities to access our services and to empower them to take charge of their own future. Use of personal computers and the Internet is spreading and this provides an exciting opportunity for public services. There is scope to improve what we do and how we inform people. There are new opportunities to increase public participation and the openness of local government.

Whatever the County's special characteristics there can be no doubt that all citizens will benefit from increased accessibility of services. As a group we are committed to pursue this in a way which enhances social inclusion, by continuing to provide personal access where this is appropriate and required. The Group will also be developing telephone and internet access and enhancing people's ability and capacity to use these alternative channels. A joint approach to

these issues and requirements will facilitate delivery of services that are efficient, effective, appropriate, joined-up and responsive.

Addressing Social Exclusion

The key findings of the Government's Social Exclusion Unit's PAT 18 Report on Better Information indicated that successful policies for neighbourhood renewal need good local area information and that this is currently unavailable. Our agencies collect vast amounts of information but the best use is not made of this because of certain barriers. It is difficult to join-up data because of different area boundaries or definitions. Some data is not collected or collected infrequently and data is not monitored. It is intended that our current and future joint work will address these issues.

Customer Focus

The group is committed to developing consultation mechanisms to ensure that their activity is well informed by the opinions of service users, citizens and other local service providers. This can be achieved in the short-term by sharing research carried out at District level with local Citizens Panels, and in future by designing joint research exercises to establish local preferences. By grouping existing research and jointly commissioning new strands of consultation, it is hoped that a joint approach will maximise the relevance of the findings and lead to a more holistic understanding of 'customer' preferences.

Currently there are proposals under consideration to establish a Nottinghamshire Consultation Consortia to include all strategic partners. The consortia would develop joint mechanisms for the on-going monitoring of customer opinion, measure performance against key performance indicators and act as an apparatus for public consultation regarding proposed electronic service delivery initiatives.

IEG and Health

Partnership working at the local level involving the Health Authorities, Primary Care Trusts, County, City and District Councils is already making a strong contribution to the delivery of the Health and Modernisation Plan (HiMP).

There is a commitment by all partners to work closely together to identify electronic solutions which will support and enhance the progress already made. Development of joint IEG initiatives will include innovative thought and lead to new developments to improve the delivery of this important agenda. Investigations will include electronic sign-posting, consultation, improved information sharing and performance monitoring.

This Statement describes the joint IEG activity of the Nottinghamshire District, City and County local authorities. It is born of a recognition that a joint approach to services will be of benefit to service users and that the concerted efforts of our authorities will achieve more than we can achieve separately. We are committed to reviewing and strengthening our joint activity for common benefit.

Partners

- Ashfield District Council
- Bassetlaw District Council
- Broxtowe Borough Council
- Gedling Borough Council
- Mansfield District Council
- Newark and Sherwood District Council
- Nottingham City Council
- Nottinghamshire County Council
- Rushcliffe Borough Council.