DIGITAL, DATA & PLANTECH

The planning system has historically been slow to adopt new technologies, but the digital transformation of public planning is now accelerating fast. The Planning White Paper aims to take a "radical, digital-first approach to modernise the planning process" including new data standards and digital civic engagement. Authorities are embarking on projects to explore the potential of digital innovation, urban data and user-centred design to improve the efficiency and experience of public planning, often in collaboration with the Connected Places Catapult and each other. As a result, there is an urgent need to expand digital literacy, skills and capabilities within Authorities.

WHO

Practitioners taking on digital, data and plantech placements typically have an understanding of digital technology or data science, and experience of working with digital products or services, for example GIS, BIM or architectural design software. They bring an awareness of digital ways of working, including agile and lean tools and techniques, and an understanding of the potential for using data and digital technology to improve places. Candidates may also have knowledge of planning and built environment processes, regulation and practice gathered in a planning, engineering, design or architecture consultancy. They are able to confidently translate between an IT department, GIS technicians or coders and the wider industry including service designers, planners and decision-makers to make digital planning more transparent and accessible.

WHAT

— Identifying the current uses of technology within planning and related departments - both software and hardware.
— Understanding and mapping how different internal stakeholders and external users use and experience public planning services.

— Working with colleagues and external experts to identify opportunities for digital transformation within planning and related departments, and developing these opportunities into a coherent roadmap for change.
— Negotiating with suppliers and internal IT colleagues to ensure that digital products and services purchased by Authorities deliver maximum value in the short and long-term.
— Ensuring all decisions around the use of technology follow good practice and will not stifle innovation or further digital transformation in the future
— Developing or advising on the design and development of new software and tools.
— Establishing agile and lean ways of working, tools and techniques within Authorities.
— Developing in house capacity for Geographical Information Systems, Building Information Models, architectural design software such as parametric modelling or visualisation software.
— Gathering, understanding and analysing geospatial data to inform policies, plans and projects.
— Developing interactive local plans based on new data standards, and making key datasets digitally accessible.
— Supporting transparent and accountable digital civic engagement and decision making.
— Using existing digital technologies and platforms to improve processes such as site capacity assessment, the use of 3d modelling and digital twins, evidence base production or the validation of planning applications.
— Engaging with the PlanTech and PropTech sectors to make the most of innovations to meet public policy objectives.
— Preparing Digital Strategy and Implementation Plans for new settlements.
— Advising on digital requirements across developments at masterplanning, design and delivery stages.

EXAMPLES
— Thomas Smethurst, Programme Manager, Greater Cambridge Joint Planning Service
— Joshua Doyle, Urban Design - Growth Officer, LB Redbridge
— Helen Markides,Infrastructure Data and Innovation Lead, Greater London Authority
— Louisa Facchino-Stack, Urban Design Officer, LB Hounslow