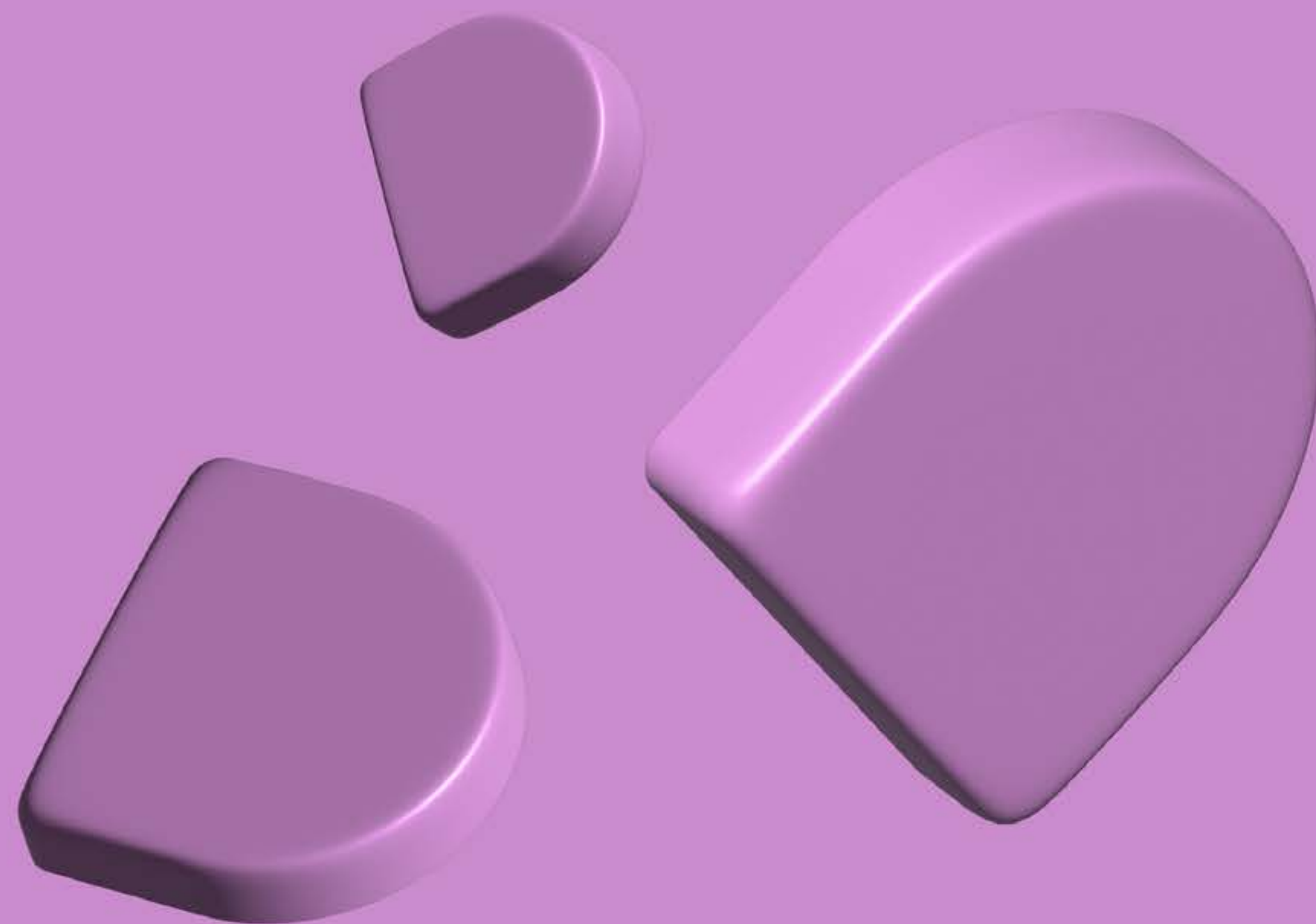


Action Plan 2026 – 2028

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01



Introduction

Introduction

The Digital Office for Local Government is pleased to publish our Action Plan for 2026–2028. This plan sets out how we will continue to support Scottish local authorities to embrace digital to deliver safe, modern and efficient services for their communities.

2026 marks the 10th anniversary of the Digital Office. Ten years of inspiring, connecting and supporting councils to accelerate digital transformation and deliver better outcomes for the people of Scotland.

This Action Plan reflects the evolving role of the Digital Office. This includes the practical steps we will take, working nationally, across the sector, and with individual councils, to strengthen digital foundations and enable delivery of the ambitions outlined in the Digital Strategy for Scotland and its supporting action plans.

What the Action Plan covers

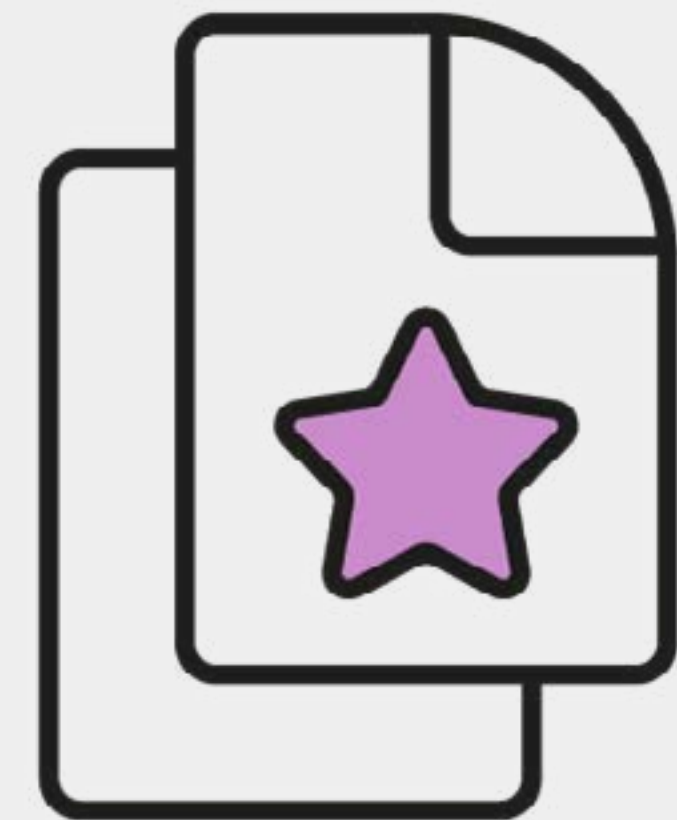
Over the next three years, we will focus on the enablers that support councils to move faster, reduce duplication and build confidence in adopting new digital approaches.

This includes strengthening data foundations, embedding responsible and ethical AI, maturing Microsoft 365, improving common design architecture, enhancing cyber readiness and building digital skills and confidence across the workforce.

How we will deliver

The Digital Office will deliver on this purpose by operating at national level, sector level and council level, fulfilling four key roles:

- Contributing to national policy and strategy development where there are digital or data dependencies.
- Design assurance of national digital programmes.
- Programme management of local government-wide digital programmes.
- Supporting local authorities to develop their own capabilities for digitisation.





“As we move into 2026–2028 and mark the tenth anniversary of the Digital Office, our focus remains on delivering clear benefits to local authorities and the sector. Our priorities include supporting national policy and strategy development where there are digital dependancies, strengthening data foundations, embedding responsible and ethical AI, maturing Microsoft 365, improving common design architecture, enhancing cyber readiness, and building digital skills and confidence across the workforce.

We will continue to work closely with local authorities and Digital Leaders to remove barriers, strengthen capacity and enable delivery, so every council can provide high-quality digital services, achieve better outcomes for communities, and ensure every digital investment delivers best value for the sector.”

Message from Martyn Wallace
Chief Digital Officer



“Digital transformation in local government is fundamentally about public service reform – changing how services are designed, delivered and sustained in the face of long-term pressures. Councils are already leading this change locally. The Digital Strategy for Scotland Vision Statement and Digital Public Services Delivery Plan strengthen the conditions for that reform, providing a shared point of alignment with the Scottish Government and the wider public sector.

This Action Plan sets out how the Digital Office will support that ambition in practice. Focusing on leadership, capability building, shared approaches and targeted national activity that helps councils collaborate more effectively and deliver reform at scale where collective action adds clear value.”

Message from Colin Birchenall
Chief Technology Officer

If you have any questions around the Action Plan, please get in touch at info@digitaloffice.scot.

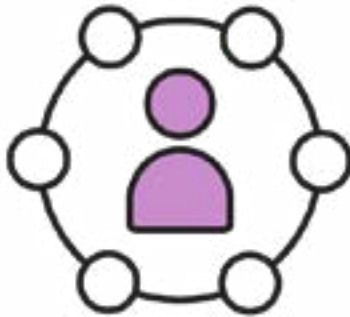
Our Role

The Role at National Level		The Benefits to Local Authorities and Local Government	
Policy and Strategy Development for Digital		In collaboration with COSLA, this function ensures that Local Government can influence digital policy and strategy early to meet local authorities' local and shared needs.	
The Role at Sector Level		The Benefits to Local Authorities and Local Government	
Programme Management of Local Government-Wide Digital Programmes		This function offers local authorities the opportunity to collaborate on joint programmes or procurements that: • Adopt common digital solutions and standards • Reduce duplication of effort • Accelerate implementation • Lower investment This aims to deliver efficiencies, savings, better customer experiences, and improved outcomes. It includes facilitating opportunities, creating business cases, and seeking funding.	
Design Assurance of National Digital Programmes		Co-led with Local Authority Digital and ICT Leaders, and representatives from COSLA, SEEMiS, Scotland Excel and Improvement Service. This function provides early, continuous, and collaborative guidance to ensure that new digital solutions impacting local government are sound, aligned, and risk aware. It aims to avoid extra burden on employees, prevent duplication, meet design standards, and ensure security.	
The Role at Local Level		The Benefits to Local Authorities and Local Government	
Supporting local authorities to develop their own capabilities for digitisation		This function helps local authorities enhance their ability to deliver business and digital change by: • Supporting new skills, processes, and approaches e.g. artificial intelligence, service design, data and cyber security. • Raising awareness of new technologies like Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Internet of Things (IoT), offering practical advice for accelerated adoption based on government experience.	

02

Proposed Action Plan for National Policy & Strategy Development

National-level Actions: Action Plan for Policy and Strategy Development

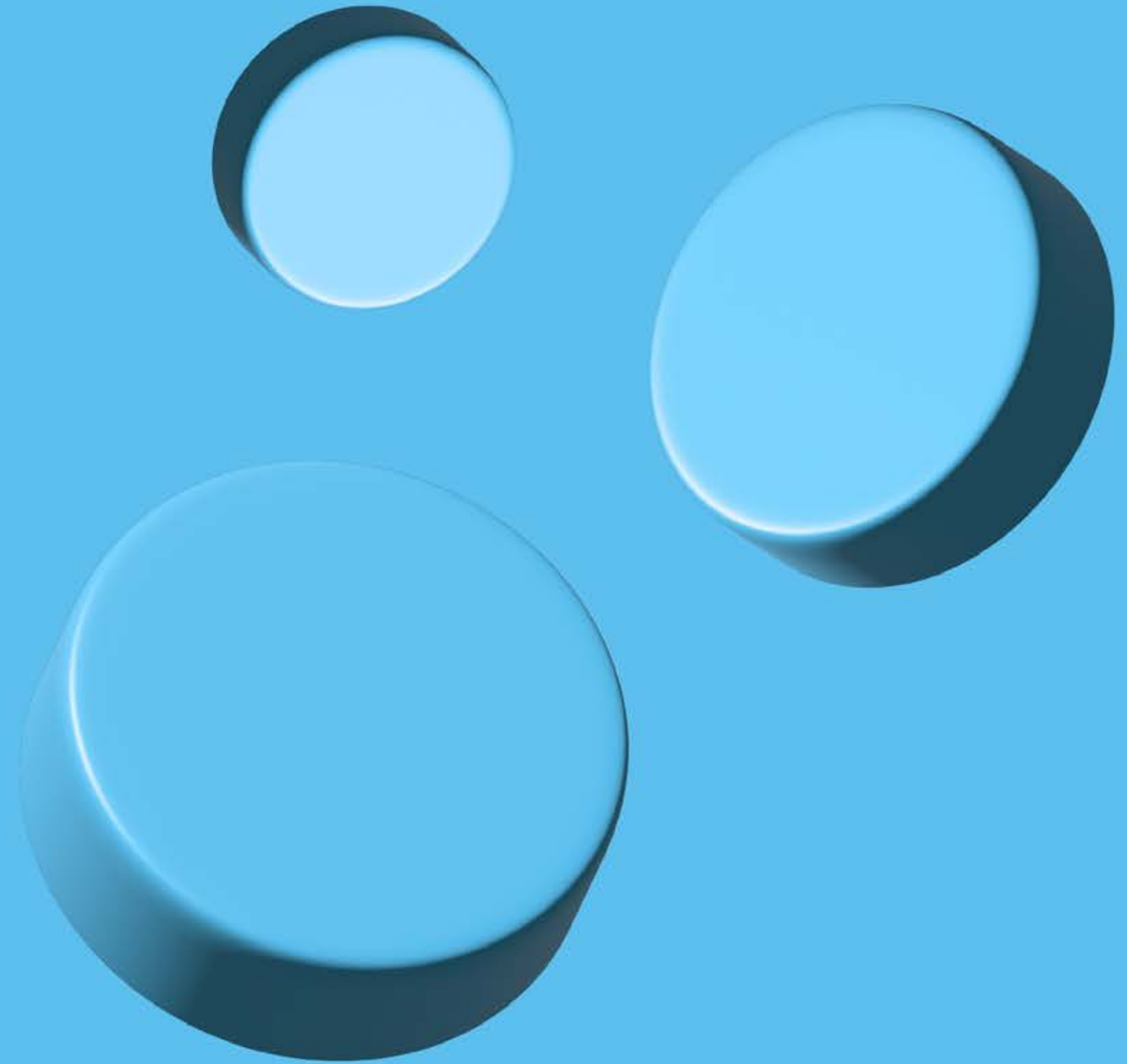
Priority	Activity	Deliverables	Benefits
Identify opportunities to save money and drive efficiencies through digital services and solutions over the next two years. 	Use collected data, intelligence and outputs from the SOLACE Transformation Programme to identify gaps and opportunities for collaborative procurements and wider common solutions. Collaborate with Digital Leaders to use approved governance and processes of Digital Partnership Board and Digital Assurance Board.	Collaborative procurements with Scotland Excel. Reuse of best value assets that do not add to sector technical debt. Best value assessed through reuse, buy before building.	Efficiencies and cost savings. Better outcomes and service delivery. Increase productivity.
Ensuring that local government succeeds in delivering its contributions to the Digital Strategy for Scotland and supporting action plans. 	Work in partnership with Scottish Government and COSLA to provide inputs into reports of the progress in delivering the Digital Strategy for Scotland and supporting action plans. Updating progress and challenges to SOLACE, COSLA Digital Special Interest Group and COSLA Leaders.	Progress reports of delivering the Digital Strategy for Scotland and supporting action plans.	Review of achievements to date in delivering the Digital Strategy for Scotland. Review of priorities for delivering the remainder of the Digital Strategy for Scotland. Identification of gaps and areas for improvement to realise the Digital Strategy for Scotland.

National-level Actions: Action Plan for Policy and Strategy Development

Priority	Activity	Deliverables	Benefits
Continuing to influence and contribute to other national digital and data strategies and programmes. 	Work in collaboration with COSLA to influence national strategies on behalf of and with local government where required.	Contribution to national strategies for digital and data considerations.	Early input in national policies and strategies to ensure that local government requirements are considered at the policy development stage.
Seeking opportunities to align national, sector, and local policies and to help to accelerate benefits to local authorities where opportunities exist. 	Work with local government partners and professional bodies to identify opportunities to align national, sector and local strategies.	Co-developed strategies, aligned delivery plans, capability-building initiatives, and improvement programmes.	Opportunities to bring in funding into the sector. Improved resource management across national initiatives. Better alignment between national and local objectives.

03

Proposed Action Plan for Digital Programme Management



Sector-level Actions: Action Plan for Programme Management of Local Government-Wide Programmes

Priority	Activity	Deliverables	Benefits
Working in partnership with SOLACE to support and roll out the Digital “To-Be State” Blueprints for Digital Local Government’. 	Publish Blueprints by winter 2026. Digital Maturity Assessment tools realigned to support local authorities in progress. Collaborate with Digital Leaders on data standards and common architecture to support Blueprints. Provide collaborative design assurance for national digital services with Digital Leaders.	Common Architecture Framework. Common Data Standards Catalogue. Digital Maturity Assessment Portfolio to support Blueprints. Follow and support the delivery of approved governance through the Digital Partnership Board and the Digital Assurance Board for digital services across the sector.	A shared vision for local government. A framework for the development and prioritisation of collaborative transformation programmes. Delivering efficiency, savings and greater value for local authorities through common components and collaboration on new digital solutions that reduce technical debt.
Working in partnership with SOLACE, COSLA, Scottish Government and other key stakeholders to seek further digital transformation opportunities. 	Using the “To-Be” State as a framework, we will work with SOLACE and other professional bodies including Digital Leaders and partners, to identify practical opportunities to drive collaborative digital transformation.	Proposals. Business Cases.	Identification of opportunities to collaborate on digital programmes that can support the Verity House Agreement, SOLACE/Improvement Service Transformation Programme and the Digital Strategy for Scotland.

Sector-level Actions: Action Plan for Programme Management of Local Government-Wide Programmes, continued

Priority	Activity	Deliverables	Benefits
Continue to deliver existing transformation programmes. 	Deliver the final stages of Scotland's Digital Telecare Programme (funded by Scottish Government).	Playbook. Advice and Guidance. Standards. Implementation Awards. Cyber Sector Supplier Accreditation Scheme.	National approach to digitising telecare in readiness for the switch-off of the analogue phone network. Providing local authorities with an ability to reduce programme timescales and reduce risks.

Sector-level Actions: Action Plan for Programme Management of Local Government-Wide Programmes, continued

Priority	Activity	Deliverables	Benefits
Continue to deliver existing transformation programmes. 	Deliver the final stages of the implementation of a Shared Telecare Alarm Receiving Centre solution (funded by Scottish Government).	A shared modern, cloud-based, Alarm Receiving Centre solution that is reused by local authorities, health and social care partnerships and housing associations. Research suitable partners and transition ongoing management of the platform including re-procurement due in 2027.	Reduced implementation timescales and costs for upgrading Alarm Receiving Centre solutions. Reduced operational costs through a shared solution, providing greater economy of scale. Reduced delivery risks for implementing new ARC solutions. A modern ARC solution that can be used to drive innovation in telecare at a national level. Delivers a common solution which supports the Digital Strategy.
Continue to deliver existing transformation programmes 	Expanding the capability of Community Health Index (CHI) for use in Local Government.	A common solution for seeding CHI at patient point of contact for local government health and social care providers. Collaborate with COSLA, the Scottish Government and Public Services Delivery Scotland, to update the strategic business case for an integrated health and social care record, building on CHI.	Improved efficiency for bottleneck services, such as patient discharge. Improve data sharing and flow of information between health and social care, supporting better health and well-being outcomes for people.

Sector-level Actions: Action Plan for Programme Management of Local Government-Wide Programmes, continued

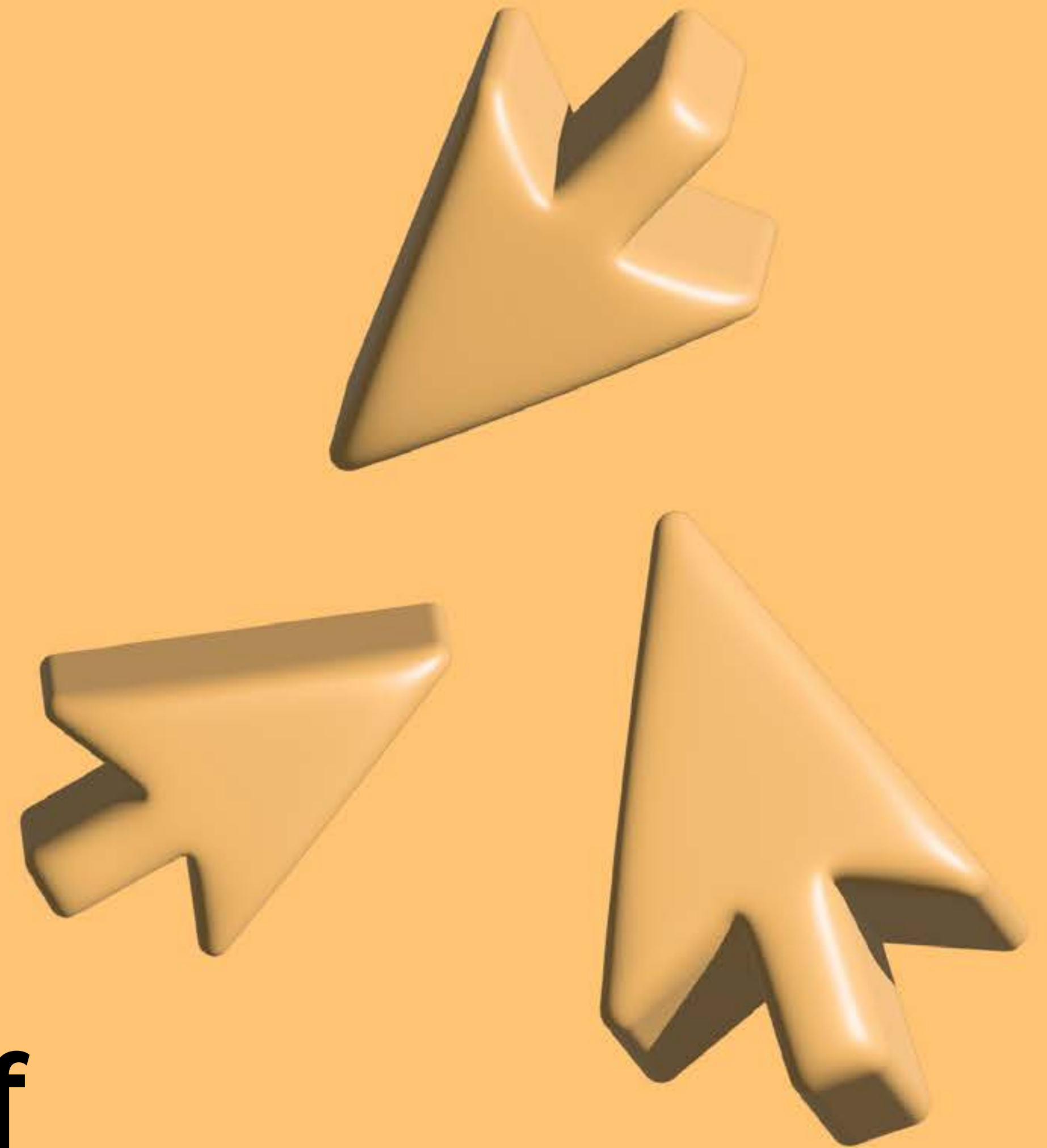
Priority	Activity	Deliverables	Benefits
Continue to deliver existing transformation programmes. 	Support the Digital Front Door Programme to enable, integrate and deliver care pathways by using expertise and resources from the Digital Telecare Team and CHI in Local Government Programme.	Collaborate with Digital Leaders to develop a map of care solutions being used in local authorities and health and social care partnerships. Collaborate with Public Services Delivery Scotland to build roadmap of when services can become available through the Digital Front Door Programme. Develop common technical architecture, components and data catalogue, created with support of Digital Assurance Board. Support best value for the sector and improved experience for people, through governance provided by the Digital Partnership Board.	Improved clarity of care pathways within the Digital Front Door Programme. Simplified integration and support for delivering the Digital Front Door strategic business case outcomes for health and social care.

Sector-level Actions: Action Plan for Programme Management of Local Government-Wide Programmes, continued

Priority	Activity	Deliverables	Benefits
Continue to deliver existing transformation programmes. 	Microsoft 365 Collaboration with health and social care, education and emergency services to support multi-functional team working with vulnerable people, families and communities.	National approach to securely linking Microsoft environments, enabling enhanced collaboration across multi-functional teams and shared services. Advice and guidance. Data and information guidance. Standards. Implementation guidance. Cyber guidance.	Reduce operational timescales and risks by deploying national best practice. Reduced implementation timescales. Potential to reduce costs by collaborating to purchase necessary licences and removing existing software that does what Microsoft 365 does already. Supporting national sharing of training materials to reduce costs and speed up adoption for all local authorities. Delivers a common solution which supports the Digital Strategy.

04

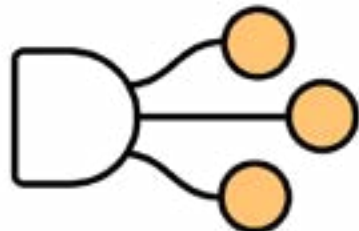
Proposed Action Plan for Design Assurance of National Digital Programmes



Sector-level Actions: Design Assurance of National Digital Programmes

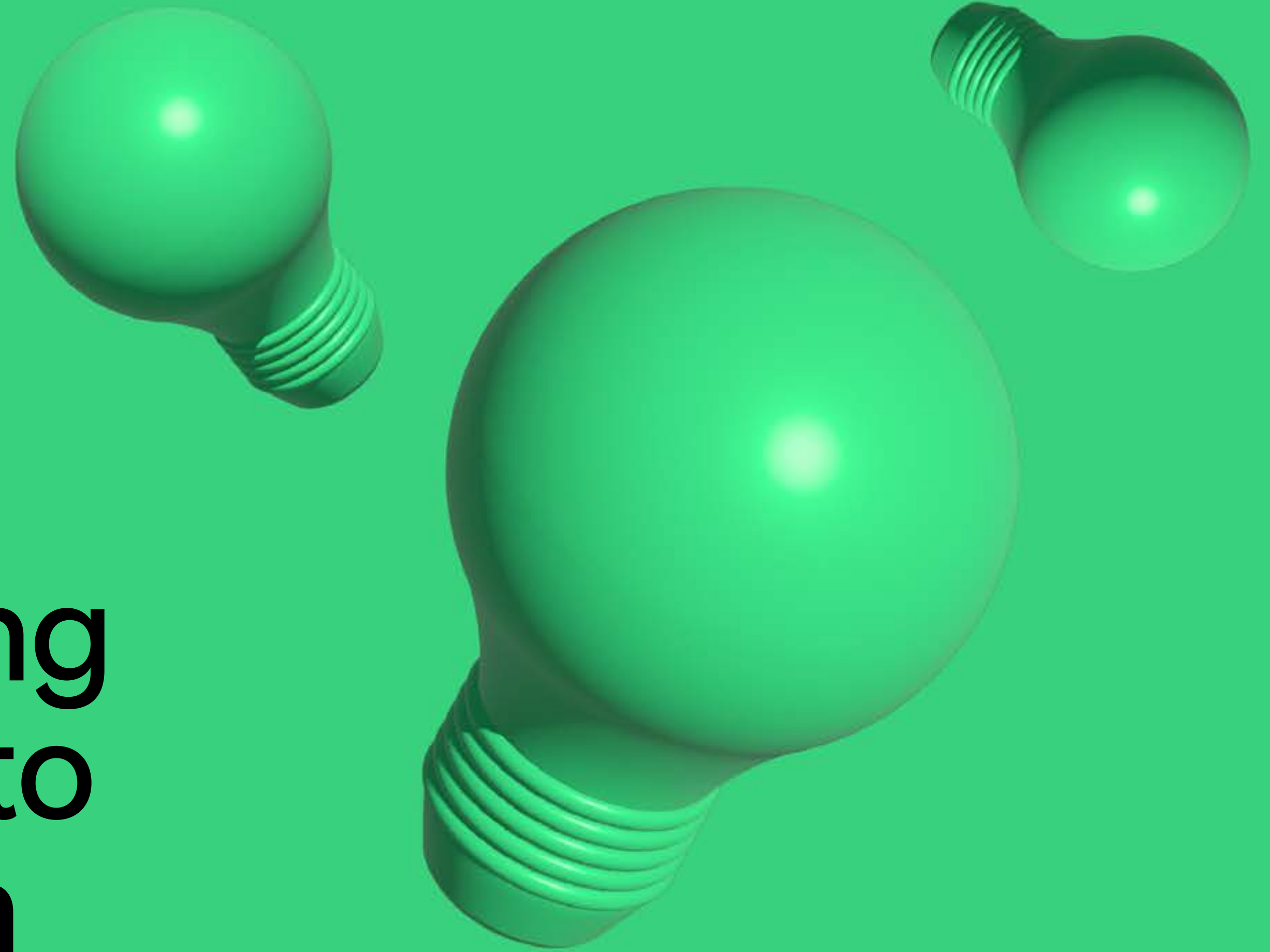
Priority	Activity	Deliverables	Benefits
Continuing to provide design assurance for National Digital Programmes that impact Local Government. 	Continuing to work with digital programmes that impact local government to review technical and security designs, ensuring that local government stakeholders, such as Digital Leaders, Security Officers, and Data Protection Officers, have timely opportunities to contribute to technical and security designs on behalf of the sector. Develop a tiered approach to integrate assurance into established programme management pathways	Continuous improvement of programme assurance.	Clear engagement pathways with Local Authority Digital Leaders, Security Officers, and Data Protection Officers to agree technical and security designs on behalf of local government.

Sector-level Actions: Design Assurance of National Digital Programmes, continued

Priority	Activity	Deliverables	Benefits
Lead the development of standards for service design, data (in collaboration with Improvement Service) and technology. 	Increase the number of technical, service design and data standards available. Expand the use of standards across local government, particularly for sector-wide programmes.	Develop a service-focussed knowledge base, pulling together standards and architectural elements into a common discovery platform. Initiate a targeted modernisation of architectural assets focussed of projects in flight. For example, CHI matching requires a technical pathway from national NHS data standards to local authority data structures, spanning data standards, information standards, data transfer standards and local authority data model standards. Modernise the scope of the architecture library to signpost up-to-date service design assets such as common personas and blueprint user journeys.	A 'one-stop' shop for standards information, bringing together content which is currently held in a variety of fragmented sources. Supports a blueprint approach for service design and delivery teams and managers. Provide time-saving recommendations where multiple viable choices are available. Aligns with the SOLACE Transformation Programme service profile. Provides foundational standards for digital assurance templates.

05

Proposed Action Plan for Supporting Local Authorities to Develop their own Capabilities for Digitisation



Local Level Actions: Action Plan for Supporting Local Authorities to develop their own Capabilities for Digitisation

Priority	Activity	Deliverables	Benefits
Continuing to deliver and evolve the Digital Maturity Assessment portfolio to include artificial intelligence readiness, data, cyber and service design. Aligning it to the Digital To-Be State blueprints to support local authorities in assessing their level of maturity for digital transformation and developing improvement plans where required. Provide updates to local authorities and the sector on the impact and key themes coming out from the assessments. 	Online tools that all local authorities can use to understand their progress in implementing their digital strategy, whilst also checking alignment to the Digital Strategy for Scotland Vision Statement and supporting action plans, the Digital To-Be State Blueprints and innovative emerging technologies.	Half of Scottish local authorities have completed their second services assessment. Half of Scottish local authorities have completed a new AI Readiness assessment tool. All 32 Scottish local authorities have completed their Service Design Maturity Assessment. Secure dedicated resource in the Digital Office to deliver this portfolio.	Supports AI readiness, opportunities and benefits for the sector. Identifies gaps that Digital Office propositions or other work from local authorities can help fill. Reduce costs from using expensive external consultants. Barometer check for local authorities on how implementation is going on digital strategies. Identify opportunities for potential shared services, common solutions or collaborative procurements to save costs and drive efficiencies. Provides wider intelligence that can assist the Digital Office and the Digital Partnership with their propositions (e.g. SOLACE Transformation Programme and the National Digital Strategy).

Local Level Actions: Action Plan for Supporting Local Authorities to develop their own Capabilities for Digitisation, continued

Priority	Activity	Deliverables	Benefits
Continuing to lead the development of the Shared Resource Library. This allows local authorities to learn from, and reuse resources made available by other local authorities to accelerate adoption of digital and data solutions. 	Artificial Intelligence (AI). Cyber. Data. Digital Leadership and Skills Design Architecture. Service Design. Internet of Things (IoT).	Independent leadership and consultancy on how new and evolving technology can assist business and service operations. Case studies. Reusable toolkits. Guidance. Standards. Opportunities for collaborative procurements. Identify opportunities to bring funding and advice into the sector from other sources.	Shared resources that can cut down cost and time for local authorities to produce themselves. Identifies gaps for collaboration, procurement, or innovation which local authorities can work on together and all benefit from final solution.

Local Level Actions: Action Plan for Supporting Local Authorities to develop their own Capabilities for Digitisation, continued

Priority	Activity	Deliverables	Benefits
Continue to work in partnership with the Society of Personnel and Development Scotland (SPDS) and Scottish Government's Digital Academy to develop and roll-out a Competency Framework for digital, data and technology roles, ensuring that skills development content and relevant materials are made available to local authorities. 	Digital Leadership and Skills.	Competency Framework for Digital Data and Transformation Roles. Sharing of training material for all local authorities. Collaborative procurement opportunities for a national learning management system and skills providers.	Ensures that our workforce all have the necessary digital skills. Ensures workforce are trained to the same standards and levels. As recruiting externally is getting harder, this helps build options to build our own skills and capability in-house. Potential opportunities for pooling specialised resources between local authorities to save costs.

Local Level Actions: Action Plan for Supporting Local Authorities to develop their own Capabilities for Digitisation, continued

Priority	Activity	Deliverables	Benefits
Delivering a programme of awareness campaigns to raise awareness of opportunities and/or risks associated with digital transformation. 	Provide leadership and consultancy to inspire and connect, delivering independent insight and support on how new and evolving technology can enable business and service transformation. Focusing on business benefits over technology to support better outcomes.	Linking with Civtech and Scottish Innovation centres to bring new opportunities and solutions to the collective attention of local authorities. Linking with other “Digital Office’s” and partners across the UK e.g. London Office of Technology and Innovation (LOTI) and the Welsh Digital Office, Northern Ireland Digital Office to bring new opportunities, case studies and solutions to the collective attention of local authorities. Working with key strategic solution partners e.g. Microsoft, Vodafone and BT to bring insights and innovative technologies to the collective attention of local authorities. Webinars that link to follow up products and tools that local authorities can use. Spotting opportunities to bring funding and advice into sector from other sources.	Work as a collective to reduce costs and time to realise benefits from innovative technologies, tools, and methods.

06

Resources

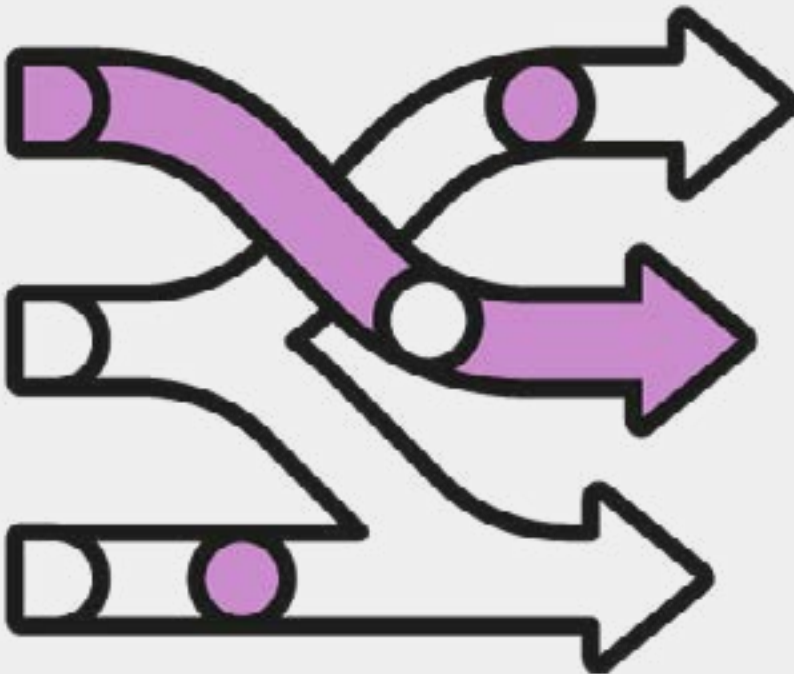
Resource Delivery Plan 2026-2028

The 2024–2026 Action Plan highlighted the need for dedicated roles to support our work on data, internet of things, artificial intelligence, and programme management. These roles were intended to mirror the successful model used in our Digital Telecare programme.

Following the completion of the SOLACE Review, the role and purpose of the Digital Office have been reaffirmed. At the same time, local authorities are showing a growing demand for digital maturity assessments, interest in artificial intelligence is accelerating, and data has become even more important in supporting safe and effective use of new technologies. With the current funding levels, the team is now operating at full capacity.

To meet our agreed priorities, we have identified a number of essential roles that need to be added to the Digital Office. Without these additional posts, we will have to reprioritise our programme of work, including pausing or stopping some areas of delivery.

We are actively exploring external funding for areas such as Digital Telecare, Community Health Index (CHI) in Local Government and Integrated Health and Care Record. We intend to seek support for core roles through the SOLACE Transformation Programme. Over the next 12 months, we will develop and present a business case to SOLACE and COSLA Leaders, setting out the level of additional investment required and the implications for the sector if this funding is not approved.



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