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Published by
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Local Internet Futures

Welcome to the first Local Internet Futures (LIF) newsletter from Local Futures Group. Our aim is to produce this newsletter at least four times a year and to develop it into a forum for exchanging news and views about local e-governance in the UK. This first edition provides an overview of all Local Futures' work on e-governance. Future issues will keep you up to date with that, as well as providing a more in-depth look at thematic issues in e-governance.

Some of our readers will be familiar with LIF and will have been the subject of previous case studies. Others will be new to the programme, but will be interested in e-governance and will be looking for a different, more holistic approach to the subject. We hope to offer material of interest to both categories and future issues will be shaped by your comments and interest.

Why do we need a newsletter?

We believe the time is now ripe for a broader discussion of the issues surrounding local e-governance in the UK. All local authorities are busy completing their Implementing Electronic Government (IEG) statements, UK Online has been launched and private sector suppliers are gearing up their offerings for the sector. But much of the discussion remains at the level of targets and process and lacks a broader social and economic context.

This is where we think LIF is different. LIF has up to now been confined to members and case studies, but the experience of the programme, and the issues raised by it, deserve a wider audience. The first LIF report, 'Local E-governance in Britain', has just been published (see back page) and we have plans to disseminate the LIF findings more widely in the next few

months, via a series of seminars and conferences. This newsletter is part of this broader dissemination.

What is different about LIF?

Since its inception, LIF has concentrated on the broader issue of how we can use ICT technology to transform the production and delivery of public services and the relationship between citizens and government.

We understand and believe that government is not just another business and that e-governance is about transformation of public services, not just automation.

Future issues of the newsletter will look at subjects such as e-democracy, ICT and community safety, health, transport, entrepreneurship and lifelong learning. It will also feature discussion of the emerging regional and local pattern of e-governance as it develops across the UK and Europe.

We hope you enjoy the newsletter. Please email any comments to:

kate.oakley@localfutures.com

What is LIF?

Now in its third year, the LIF Programme explores 'e-governance' in Britain and Europe via a series of 'themed' reports and case studies, covering areas such as e-transport, e-democracy, entrepreneurship and the environment. In this way, we attempt to get behind the 'targets' and provide a more in-depth look at how our institutions and public services are being re-shaped by ICTs.



LIF National Conference

June 22nd

To book a place at the conference email us or visit one of our websites

Email

info@localfutures.com

Websites

www.localfutures.com
www.localknowledge.co.uk

Spreading the word—LIF on the road

National Conference and Regional Seminars

Next month sees the first LIF National Conference, which will take place at the Local Government Association Offices in London on June 22nd. The event is being sponsored by Cable & Wireless and all delegates will receive a copy of the Local Internet Futures report (see Page 1).

Key themes covered by the conference include:

How does policy for electronic government join up to strategies for regeneration and reconnecting citizens to local government?

How can e-commerce be harnessed to improve public service delivery and measures to combat social exclusion, and to make services more responsive and citizen-led?

What are the pitfalls to be avoided in local e-governance, and what are the best examples of leading practice from which local authorities and their partners can learn?

As well as Mark Hepworth, Ian Christie and Kate Oakley from the Local Futures

Group, speakers include Julian Bowery from the Modernisation Unit at DETR and Glynn Evans from the London Borough of Camden.

The inaugural national LIF conference will present results from Phase 1 of the programme and launch the next wave of studies, which will involve a new set of local authority partners.

For further information/To Book

Contact Mark Hepworth 020 7520 8120 or email mark.hepworth@localfutures.com. Alternatively, visit one of our websites to obtain programme information and booking forms at: www.localfutures.com or www.localknowledge.co.uk You can also contact Benedict Business who are organising this event on behalf of the LGA 01483 203536, or email benedictbr@btinternet.com

Coming Soon

A series of regional seminars on the LIF work is planned for September and will include dates in Manchester, Edinburgh, Bristol and Cambridge. Full details of dates and venues will be available at the LIF Conference.

The Missing Link

A unique look at regional e-governance

June 18th sees the launch of the UK's first study of regional e-governance in the UK, with the publication of 'The Missing Link', a study of regional e-governance in the West Midlands. The study, sponsored by BT, is particularly timely, given the changing role of RDAs and the increasing attention being paid to regional issues by central government. It involved a detailed survey of all 38 local authorities in the region and interviews with leading regional players.

Local Futures' argue that e-government rhetoric in the UK has so far been too centralised. The report focuses on the needs and priorities of the West Midlands

and at how these affect the kind of e-governance structures we may see emerging there.

The report makes several recommendations, including a regional skills audit to assess the capacity of local authorities to deliver their e-government commitments and the appointment of a regional 'e-envoy' for the West Midlands to represent the interest of the region in Whitehall and Brussels.

For further details about the report, which is available in electronic or bound format contact Kate Oakley or Jasmine Burnley at Local Futures.

Kate.Oakley@localfutures.com

Jasmine.Burnley@localfutures.com



LIF's 3rd Year: E-governance & beyond

"The Local Government Association has been proud to support this programme which has made an important contribution to helping local authorities scope and develop their work on e-governance".

Matthew Warburton, Head of Strategy, Local Government Association

Since the start of the LIF Programme in July 1999, e-governance has become a hot political topic. We have argued since the start, that, in order to work, e-governance must become integral to all delivery of government policy—not just an add-on or afterthought.

This is now starting to happen and 'e-governance' is finding its way into many areas of public service delivery and development. Given this, the LIF programme is changing to reflect the Government's policy concerns with the local quality of life and sustainable development. Instead of looking at e-government more generally, the research will focus on specific areas, such as:

- *Transport & environment*
- *Community safety*
- *E-democracy*
- *Entrepreneurship*

- *Lifelong learning*
- *Health*

Case studies of each theme will receive a state of the art review of policy and practice in that area in the UK and internationally. We will maintain the local focus however, with a "You are Here" analysis to identify local challenges in each theme and assess current initiatives.

Participation in the LIF programme is open to private, public and third sector organisations, both in the UK and the rest of Europe. There are various ways to participate, including as a national or local sponsor or as a subscriber to LIF publications, which include the state of the art review papers, the LIF National report and the newsletter.

If you are interested in knowing more about the LIF Programme's third year, please contact Mark Hepworth at Local Futures.

LIF Learning Network

The LIF Learning Network is open to existing and new sponsors of LIF Research. It brings together practitioners from local government and the private sector to discuss shared problems and issues and to form new partnerships and alliances.

Local Authority network members also receive a *LIF Policy Monitoring* ('one year on') study, enabling them to track the development of e-government in their area.

We will shortly be announcing details of the LIF Best Practice databank which is open to Network members and others.

Meet the LIF Team

Mark Hepworth, Director of the Local Futures Group and Visiting Professor in Economic Geography at Birkbeck College, University of London. He directs the LIF Programme.

Kate Oakley, Associate Director of the Local Futures Group. She is the author of the annual *Egovernment* report, sponsored by Cable & Wireless. Kate has acted as a policy adviser to the e-Envoy and is a frequent speaker in e-Europe conferences.

Ian Christie, Associate Director of the Local Futures Group. He has worked as a UK and European policy adviser on the environment, sustainable development, urban regeneration, and business-community partnerships.

Jeremy Millard, Associate Director of the Local Futures Group and also a Senior Consultant to the Danish Technological Institute. He has been closely involved in EU Information Society programmes over the last decade.

Jasmine Burnley is a Consultant at the Local Futures Group, specialising in e-government and sustainable development.



LIF National Report

Local E-governance in Britain

"I found the LIF national report very interesting. You are right to point to the real possibilities of local government becoming increasing irrelevant if they do not get ahead of this agenda".

**- Barry Quirk, Chief Executive,
London Borough of Lewisham &
Information Age Partnership**

The first LIF report will be published this month, bringing together all the work of the first year of the LIF programme and providing an overview of how e-government is developing in the UK.

Its findings are as follows:

- Costs savings in the medium to long term may result from government to government or government to business services, but citizen services should focus on improved quality.
- A genuinely joined-up approach, connecting e-government to other economic, social and environmental objectives and policies —such as Best Value and Local Strategic Partnerships—is badly needed.
- E-government could be a catalyst for broader institutional change but only if those in government are ready for a more reciprocal, fluid relationship with citizens.
- Building e-communities is vital to address the skills needs and life chances of deprived areas throughout the UK.

The LIF case studies reveal the need for new institutional forms or governance structures — such as Information Age Partnerships — independent but involving government, the business and community sectors.

To give real force to these partnerships, the report also recommends devolution of funding and fund-raising powers to local authorities and the radical devolution of budgets and powers for regeneration to neighbourhoods.

"The first report of the LIF programme is a very good contribution to the discussion of the issues with some good specific and real background evidence drawn from the local studies".

**Paul Evans,
Director of Urban
Policy,
Department of
Environment,
Transport and the
Regions (DETR)**

**To get a copy, visit
www.localfutures.com
and
download an order
form. The report is
available in elec-
tronic or bound
versions for £30**

Local Futures leads cutting edge research across Europe

Local Futures is currently involved with two major projects funded by the Information Society Technologies Programme (IST) within the European Union's 5th RTD Framework Programme.

PRISMA – Providing Innovative Services Models and Assessment - will provide for the first time a comprehensive and systematic analysis of the impact of IST on all aspects of the provision of citizen services. PRISMA will focus on key sectors including transport, tourism, environment, and administrations with regional development, financing, social inclusion, and governance as cross-cutting themes. www.prisma-eu.net

BISER – Benchmarking the Information Society across Europe - will define and test a new set of statistical indicators for benchmarking regional Information Society development in Europe. The project examines the progress of regions in key domains, and identifies regional similarities to guide policy coordination, in building the most current model of regional development in Europe.

For further information email Lee Pickavance at:
lee.pickavance@localfutures.com

Who Are We?

The **Local Futures Group** is a research and strategy consultancy, working closely with government and business in the UK and Europe. We specialise in the fields of economic development and regeneration, e-governance, the New Economy, and sustainable development. Our innovative approach to strategy development and our unique blend of people and skills enables policy makers and business strategists to evaluate the future of towns, cities and regions.