

# Digital Planning Directory

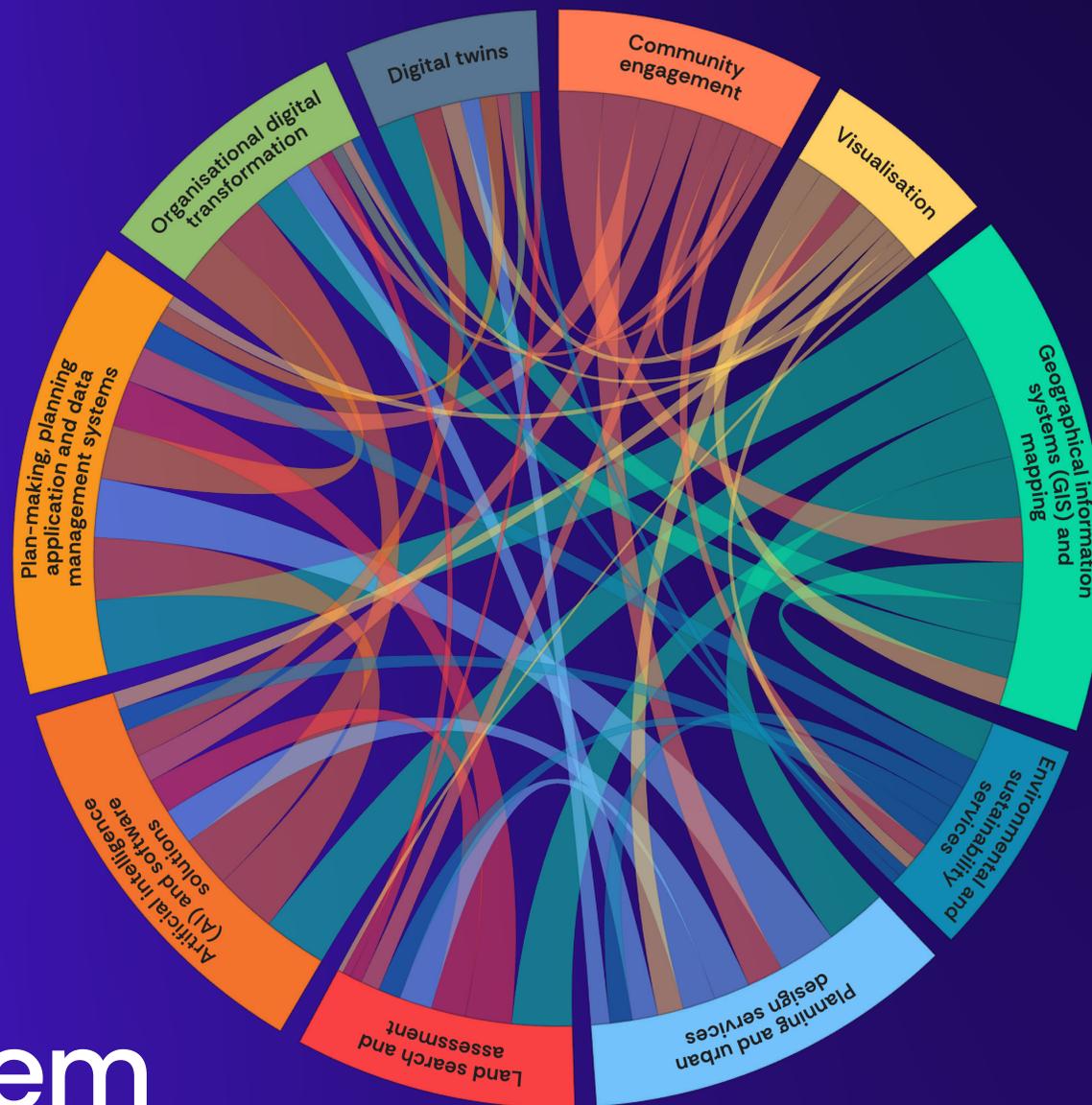
Seed funded by  Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government

Delivered by **Digital Task Force for Planning**

Year 1 Impact Review (2025–26)  
& Future Vision

March 2026

# Building the foundation for a scalable digital planning ecosystem



## Contents

A Year of Growth and Sector Engagement	03
Growing Reach and Trusted Engagement	04
Structured Visibility Across the Digital Planning Market	05
Convening the Sector and Strengthening Knowledge Exchange	06
Enabling Informed Procurement and Adoption	07
Strengthening Professional Capability and Cultivating Future Talent	08
Addressing Structural Barriers in Digital Planning Adoption	09
Theory of Change	10
What Good Looks Like by 2030	11
Our Priorities in 2026	11
Sector Catalyst: Collective Effort, Shared Benefit	12

## The Mission

**The Digital Planning Directory is the one-stop shop for state-of-the-art digital planning solutions in the UK. It exists to build the foundation for a scalable digital planning ecosystem that transforms mainstream planning practice.**

By providing a trusted and comprehensive platform for digital service providers, as well as education and training organisations, it improves the sector's visibility, strengthens connectivity, and reduces barriers to adoption.

Through structured information, extensive cross-sector engagement, and practical resources, the Directory promotes best practice in digital planning innovation and empowers the sector to accelerate its growth for the public good.

# A year of growth and sector engagement

Seed-funded by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) and delivered by the Digital Task Force for Planning, the Digital Planning Directory was launched in January 2025. It was created to coordinate a fragmented digital planning marketplace during a period of significant planning reform and increasing capacity pressures on local authorities. It plays a key role in reducing barriers to discovery, improving visibility, and supporting the effective adoption of innovative digital solutions.

The Digital Service Provider Listing features some of the most innovative providers across ten digital planning categories, supported by more than 100 real-world case studies. During 2025, the Directory expanded to include a Procurement Resource Hub, Business Case Template, PropTech Benefits Calculator, the Digital Planning Digest, and flagship online Show & Tell sessions. A new major milestone is the launch of the Education & Training Listing in March 2026 – the first interdisciplinary listing bringing together courses and programmes across spatial planning and related disciplines with embedded digital innovation.

Through sustained online engagement and high-profile events, the Directory has strengthened connections between local authorities, industry, academia, and policymakers, helping to reduce market fragmentation and support more informed, confident adoption of digital tools. The successes of our first year demonstrate the value

of neutral, well-governed infrastructure in translating digital innovation into practical public benefit – supporting a more efficient and resilient planning system capable of meeting the UK’s housing and growth targets, while contributing to a more sustainable future for all.

45,000+



In its first year, the Directory has established itself as the go-to, authoritative, not-for-profit resource for digital planning collaboration and innovation in the UK, reaching over 45,000 users and generating strong cross-sector engagement.



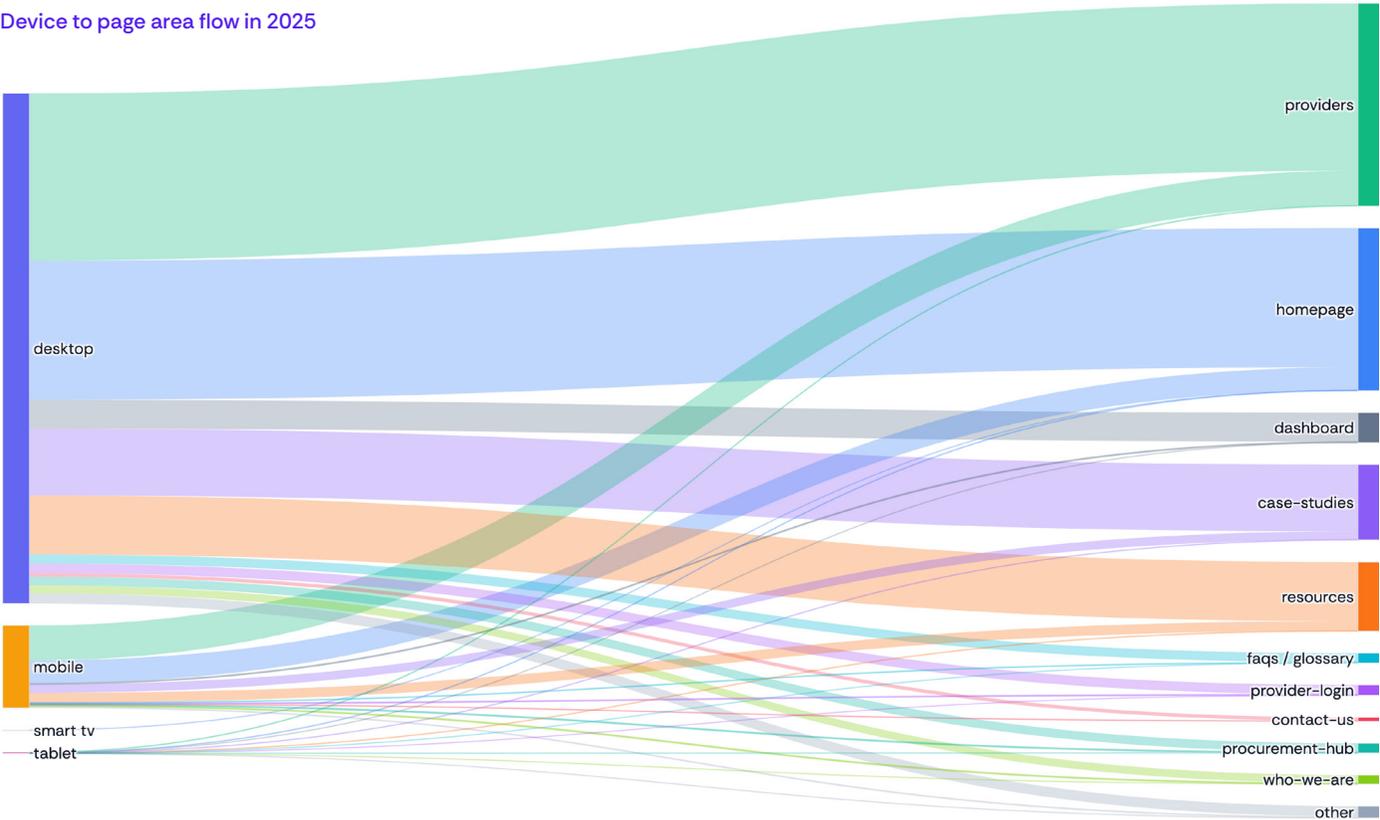
# Growing reach and trusted engagement

The Directory's expanding reach reflects strong sector demand for structured, reliable information on digital planning solutions. A high proportion of returning users indicates sustained trust and ongoing relevance, while consistent monthly engagement demonstrates that the platform has moved beyond initial launch interest into regular use.

User behaviour further reinforces this pattern. The majority of access occurs via desktop devices, with traffic concentrated during working days, indicating that the Directory is being used consistently as a professional resource within day-to-day planning practice.

The continued growth of new audiences, alongside a strong core user base, signals increasing recognition of the Directory as shared infrastructure — supporting discovery, informed decision-making, and collaboration across the digital planning ecosystem.

Device to page area flow in 2025



200k+

Webpage interactions



49%

Returning users — demonstrating sustained trust and repeat engagement



60%+

New audiences joining each month, alongside a strong core user base



4-5k

Active users per month — maintaining consistent scale

# Structured visibility across the digital planning market

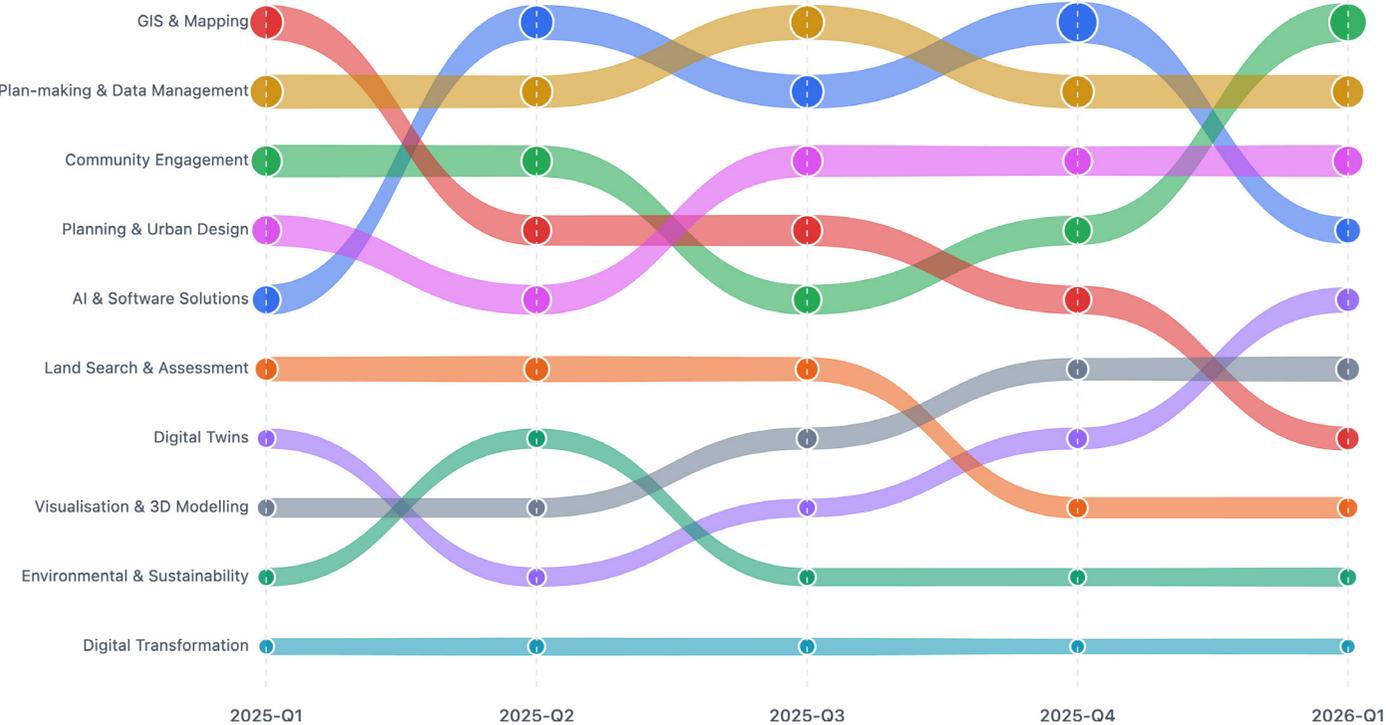
By curating and standardising information across ten service categories, the Directory provides a coherent and accessible overview of the UK's digital planning landscape.

Comprehensive and structured listings improve discoverability, support fair competition, and enable more informed decision-making across the sector. Consistent categorisation reduces information asymmetry and allows planning authorities and practitioners to compare solutions more efficiently.

Patterns in category-level engagement further demonstrate the platform's relevance. Visiting frequency across specific service areas shows strong alignment with recent UK Government planning policy and digital innovation announcements, indicating that users are actively searching for state-of-the-art solutions in response to emerging reforms.

This responsiveness suggests that the Directory is being used not only as a reference tool, but as a practical resource to navigate ongoing policy change and digital transformation.

Service category popularity over time



10

Structured service categories covering the full scope of spatial planning



100+

Digital service providers engaged and listed



100+

Proven real-world case studies



Nationwide

Public, private, academic, and specialist providers

# Convening the sector and strengthening knowledge exchange

The Directory acts as a neutral convening platform, bringing together government, industry, academia, and practitioners to share knowledge and practical innovation. Through events and regular communications, it strengthens collaboration and fosters a more connected digital planning community.

The lunchtime online Show & Tell sessions have proven particularly valuable for local planning authorities, offering accessible opportunities to learn about emerging digital solutions without additional time or budget pressures – two of the most significant constraints identified across the sector.

## Engagement & Events



12

In-person and online events delivered

65%+

Average public sector participation rate at online Show & Tell sessions

200+

Average attendance at a single Directory Show & Tell session

2,000+

Participants engaged in person or online across the sector in one year

## Broad representation

Local planning authorities, statutory consultees, county councils, strategic authorities, digital providers, consultancies, students, and academia.

## Communications & Sector Dialogue



## Digital Planning Digest

Monthly newsletter with subscribers across government, industry, and academia.

35%

Average open rate. Strong engagement compared to typical benchmarks

## Featuring...

Industry news, product launches, research reports, and thought-leadership blogs

### Participant category

Representative mix across all four Directory Show & Tell events in 2025.

- Public sector
- Private sector
- Other

### Participant category by type



### Participant Mix

Directory Online Show & Tell Sessions in 2025

#### 18 Sep 2025

Utilising Data for Better Planning Outcomes



#### 7 Oct 2025

The Digital Planning Journey of Greater Cambridge Shared Planning Service



#### 13 Nov 2025

The Digital Planning Journey of Milton Keynes City Council



#### 4 Dec 2025

Smarter Planning – Data, Processes, and Insights



# Enabling informed procurement and adoption

The Directory supports the effective adoption of digital planning solutions by strengthening procurement capability within planning authorities and across the supplier ecosystem. Through structured and practical tools, it reduces implementation friction and enables more confident, evidence-based investment decisions.

The Procurement Resource Hub brings together selected guidance across four Procurement Pathway phases:

## Plan

Guidance to help you identify what you need and why.



## Define

Resources to support you in setting out your requirements and preparing procurement documents.



## Procure

Information on how to run the procurement process and select suppliers.



## Manage

Materials to help you oversee the contract and manage supplier performance.

## Procurement Resource Hub

The Hub brings together government procurement guidance relevant to digital planning, helping planning authorities and service providers identify effective approaches and streamline the procurement of innovative digital planning tools and services.



## Business Case Templates

The templates help to write business cases using the Treasury's Five Case Model. The templates include ideas, examples, and approaches drawn from Local Planning Authorities that have successfully secured funding for planning technology.



## PropTech Benefits Calculator

The calculator helps demonstrate potential value for money from adopting digital tools and will output figures that can help support an economic case for investment.



## Smarter Procurement Show & Tell

Experts from the Cabinet Office, Crown Commercial Service, Innovate UK, and PUBLIC discussed how government initiatives can support the adoption of digital planning solutions.



# Strengthening professional capability and cultivating future talent

Sustainable digital transformation in planning depends not only on technology, but on a digitally confident and skilled workforce.

The Education & Training Listing showcases digital planning education programmes and training opportunities relevant to spatial planning. This free, publicly accessible resource supports both professional upskilling and the development of future talent entering the profession. It also provides institutions with an industry-recognised platform to highlight their digital education and training offerings.

The Directory adopts an inclusive approach, incorporating cross-disciplinary courses — such as computer science and environmental sciences — where digital content is directly applicable to spatial planning.

## What the Listing offers:

- ✓ Map current education and training offers in digital planning
- ✓ Enhance the visibility and discoverability of programmes and courses
- ✓ Attract students and learners
- ✓ Support collaboration
- ✓ Encourage more universities and training providers to embed digital content

## 22 established courses from:



UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS



The University of Manchester



## 1 upcoming course from:



## 5 training programmes from:



# Addressing structural barriers in digital planning adoption

Research by key sector studies has identified persistent structural barriers to the adoption of digital innovation in planning. These include fragmented visibility of suppliers, limited trust signals, procurement complexity, and uneven digital capability across planning authorities.

While innovative digital tools increasingly exist, discovery challenges, risk aversion, and capacity constraints continue to limit adoption at scale. These barriers are systemic rather than technological.

The Digital Planning Directory was established as practical, neutral infrastructure to address these constraints in a coordinated way. By improving discoverability, building trust and confidence, supporting procurement readiness, and connecting digital service and solution providers with sector demand, the Directory helps create the conditions necessary for scalable digital transformation.

Together, these interventions move the sector from isolated innovation towards systemic transformation.

“

The Digital Planning Directory was very easy to search. The summaries and supplier descriptions allowed us to quickly identify solutions that met our early requirements. This would previously have taken significantly longer and risked missing potential suppliers.”

— Feedback shared with MHCLG Open Digital Planning by local planning authorities

“

Being listed on the Directory has generated inbound interest we would not otherwise have received. Following a Show & Tell session, new conversations with local authorities led directly to a pilot project. For a new startup, the Directory solves a real problem — connecting us with councils who may not otherwise have known we exist.”

— CEO & Founder, Listed Company

“

Following our presentation this week (through the Directory), we have received more inbound interest from councils, consultancies as well as companies who may wish to partner with us. These type of opportunities genuinely help start-ups.”

— CEO & Founder, Listed Company

“

The Directory has been invaluable in keeping us close to end users and the challenges the public sector faces in technology adoption.”

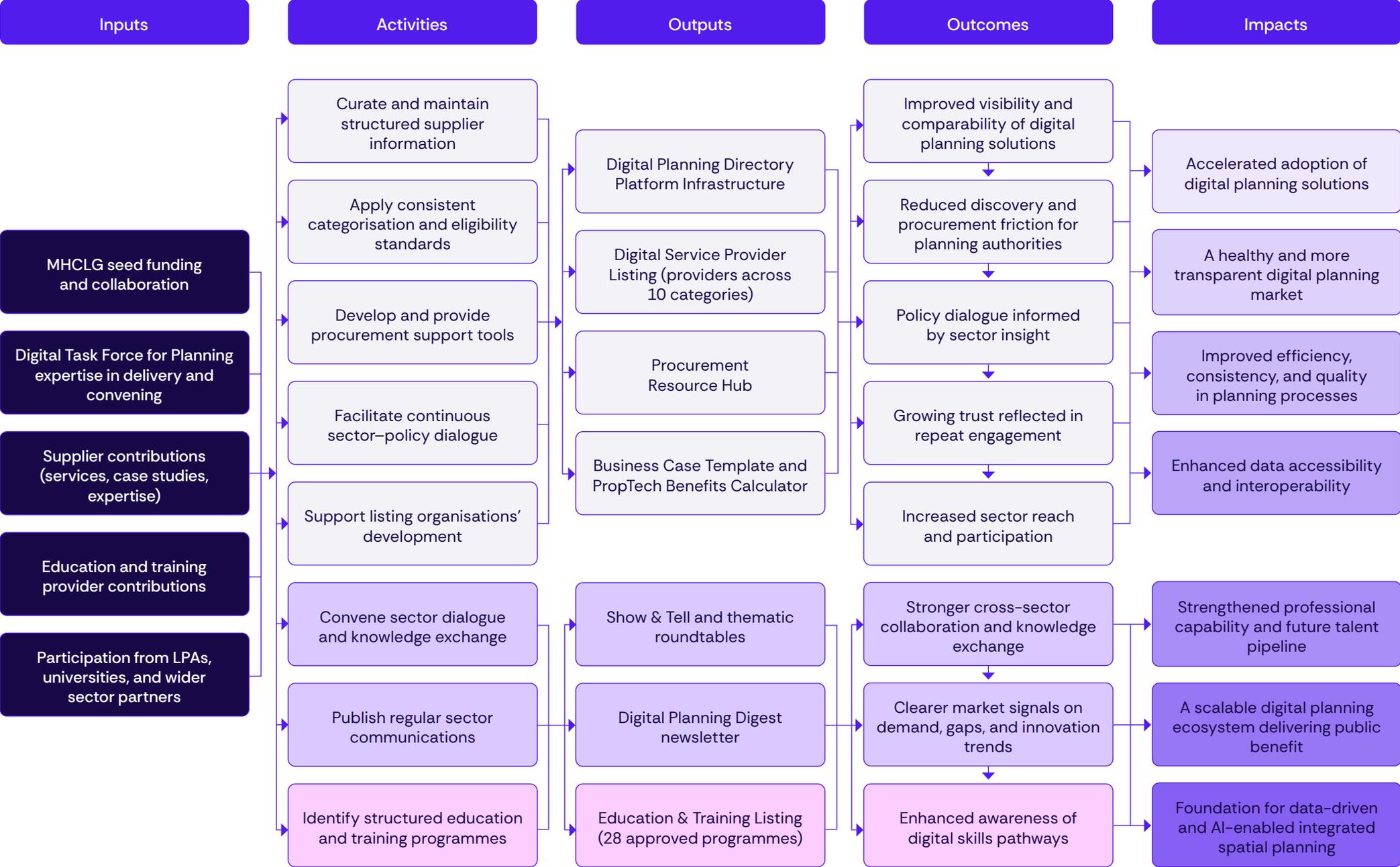
— Head of Product, Listed Company

“

As an LPA with an ambitious commitment to digital innovation, discovering and reviewing the latest available solutions is challenging. The Directory has proven to be a valuable resource, particularly through case studies that allow us to understand practical benefits and connect with other LPAs.”

— Greater Cambridge Shared Planning Service

# Theory of change



# What good looks like by 2030



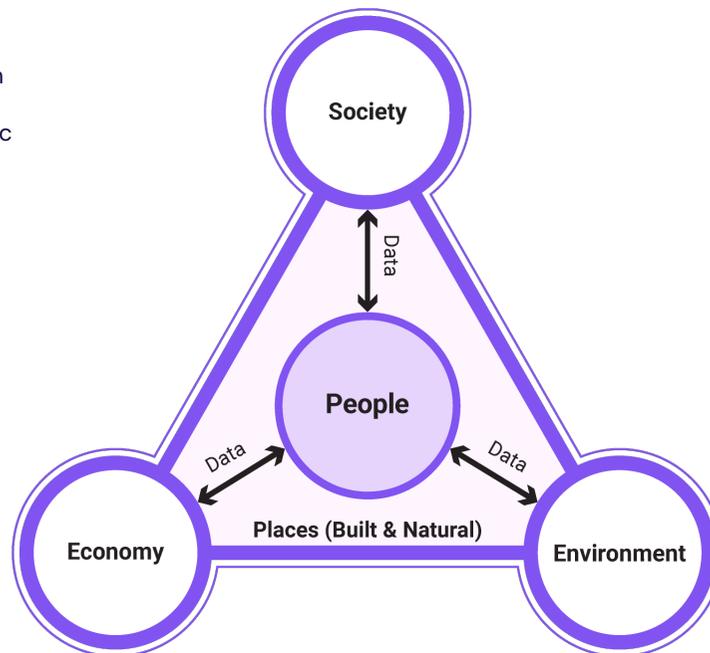
Good planning in the digital era places public benefit at the centre of decision-making. It integrates evidence and empathy, technology and professional judgement, enabling transparent processes and meaningful engagement with communities.

We now have the opportunity to make digital innovation an integral part of planning practice by 2030 – embedded in how the whole system operates”.

Dr Wei Yang OBE, CEO, Digital Task Force for Planning

By 2030, this is what good could look like:

- ✓ Planning as a **Positive Enabler** of Growth
- ✓ Planning for Long-Term Social, Economic and Environmental Resilience
- ✓ A **Digitally Confident** Workforce
- ✓ Integrated and Interoperable Systems with **Real-Time Insight** and Feedback
- ✓ A Scalable Digital Planning Ecosystem



A Digitally Enabled, Integrated Approach to Spatial Planning to Provide Long-Term Social, Economic and Environmental Resilience



## Our priorities in 2026

Building on a strong first year, the Digital Planning Directory will continue to grow as a trusted platform for digital planning collaboration and innovation. In 2026, we will accelerate the integration of digital solutions into mainstream planning practice for the public good.

Through the ecosystem established by the Directory – connecting local authorities, digital service providers, policymakers, and universities – we will deepen collaboration and strengthen the collective voice of digital planning. The Directory will continue to operate as a two-way platform, aligning policy priorities with sector insight to support reform and implementation.

Our focus includes advancing data standards, accessibility, and interoperability; supporting digital innovation in local plans, strategic planning, new towns, and Local Government Reorganisation; and strengthening digital planning capability across the sector.

Together, we are building a scalable digital planning ecosystem that delivers lasting public value.

# Digital Planning Directory

Vision 2030

## Sector catalyst: Collective effort, shared benefit

Established as the UK's authoritative, not-for-profit platform for digital planning innovation and collaboration, the Digital Planning Directory will continue to evolve as essential infrastructure for a scalable digital planning ecosystem — embedding innovation into everyday planning practice.

As a sector catalyst, the Directory aligns government priorities, market capability, and professional expertise within a coherent and interoperable system.

### What this means:

- **For digital innovators:** enhanced visibility, strengthened credibility, and meaningful engagement within a transparent marketplace shaped by shared standards and fair access.
- **For planning authorities and practitioners:** reduced procurement friction, greater confidence in adoption, and access to practical tools, peer learning, and skills development that close the digital confidence gap.
- **For education and training providers:** stronger alignment with sector needs and greater visibility to employers and learners.
- **For students and early-career professionals:** clear pathways into advanced digital planning education and future-ready careers.

Vision 2030 is about accelerating the adoption of state-of-the-art digital solutions, strengthening the talent pipeline, and enabling evidence-based spatial planning that delivers measurable public benefit — supporting growth, health and well-being, and long-term social, economic, and environmental resilience.



Join us!

We invite you to be a part of our journey as we pioneer a way forward.

[digitalplanningdirectory.org](https://digitalplanningdirectory.org)

