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Different journeys towards embedding design in local government in England

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Abstract

Changing contexts of society, and increasing expectations and demand for better services by citizens and communities are continually pressing public sector organisations to provide better services with lower costs in the face of economic crises. In order to cope with the challenges facing public sector organisations, innovation and transformation have become fundamental for local government because of its structural and cultural limits. Design is now widely considered as an alternative approach to drive change in the public sector because of its democratic and creative way of working based on human-centred design process. A large number of local governments around the world have been trying to apply and embed design in their organisations in order to modernise service delivery, innovate services and policy-making, and eventually change how they work. The aim of this paper is to present the different journeys towards embedding design within local governments and identify the challenges faced along the journeys using case studies of three local councils in England. In doing so, this paper contributes practical knowledge for designers and non-designers alike who are concerned with embedding design in local government.

KEYWORDS: service design, design thinking, embedding design, local government, design intervention model, organisational change

Introduction

This paper is the part of researcher's ongoing PhD study, 'Design-led collaborative public service innovation', investigating the role that designers and non-designers play in enabling and supporting collaboration within local government context in England. The research was based on a survey and case study approach including in-depth interviews and ethnographic observations. However, the main focus of this article lies in describing why and how local councils in England try to embed design within their organisations and identifying what challenges they face.

There are increasing expectations and demands for better services by citizens as service users and taxpayers, which has been pressing public sector organisations to provide better services with lower costs (Albury, 2011; Baek et al., 2010; Design Commission, 2014). In order to

cope with these challenges and meet citizens' needs in a complex and constantly changing society, innovative approaches are essential for public sector organisations because of their structural and cultural limits: a bureaucratic and hierarchical structure, silos among departments, and risk aversion (Carstensen & Bason, 2012; Mulgan & Albury, 2003; Sørensen & Torfing, 2016). Over the past decade, design approaches have been applied as a tool to support innovation and change in public sector organisations in a number of countries (Bason, 2012), while the public management paradigm shifts from a classic bureaucratic model (New Public Management) to a more cooperative model (New Public Governance, also called Network Governance) (Bason, 2012; Junginger & Sangiorgi, 2011; Kelly, Mulgan, & Muers, 2002; Sangiorgi, 2015). This is because design-led approaches help facilitate public sector transformation and value co-creation through collaboration with various stakeholders, such as public servants, partners, and citizens (Kimbell, 2011; Meroni & Sangiorgi, 2011). They enable better communication among the stakeholders through diverse design tools and methods based on a human-centred design perspective. This, in turn, supports effective decision making processes considering stakeholders including front-line staff and citizens as partners not subjects (Sanders & Stappers, 2008).

Design-led collaborative approaches, such as Service Design and Design Thinking have been widely explored with regards to their applicability to public sector innovation (Bason, 2010, 2013; Cook, 2013; Mulgan, 2014; Sanders & Stappers, 2008; Sangiorgi & Clark, 2004) and public governance transformation (Bason, 2017; Dunleavy & Margetts, 2015; Hartley, 2005). Additionally, there is a range of research investigating the process of building design capability and embedding design in public sector organisations (Bailey, 2012; Bason, 2017; Design council, 2018; Snook & DMA, 2014; Thomas, 2008), as well as exploring the development of design tools and methods for collaboration (Sanders & Stappers, 2008; Stickdorn et al., 2011). Moreover, there are few practical guidebooks that support the distribution of design-led approaches to public sector innovation (IDEO et al., 2016; Nesta, 2011). However, the focus of research has been predominantly on the engagement of service users, and the application of various tools and methods. Furthermore, there is a lack of empirical research investigating contextual factors that affect the way of applying and embedding design, particularly in local government contexts.

This paper as the part of an ongoing PhD study aims to investigate research questions: 1) Why do local councils try to embed design in their organisations? 2) What contextual factors have influenced the selection of their different journeys towards embedding design? 3) What challenges have emerged during the process of applying and embedding design within the councils? The data collected through the in-depth interview with service designers and public servants was mainly analysed for this paper through thematic analysis method.

Background and context

The use of the term 'Design' in this paper

In local governments, people often use Design Thinking and Service Design interchangeably as a designerly way of working or a new way of working based on human-centred design process. Although there are differences between the two in their history of origination and in the use of specific tools and methods, they are both considered and applied as an approach to innovation and organisation change within the local government context. Therefore, the term 'design' will be used in this paper as an umbrella term representing a design-led collaborative approach to service development based on human-centred design process, not only including Design Thinking and Service Design, but also including a blended approach between the Service Design and Agile approach. The following sections give the background to the study.

Local government in the UK

Despite public reform carried out in 1974 by The Local Government Act 1972, in some areas of England, local government is divided into a county council (the upper tier) and a district council (the lower tier), which are responsible for different services; unlike Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland where there is a single unitary authority. Apart from parish and town councils, there are 418 local authorities in the UK which includes unitary, upper and lower tier councils. District, county and unitary authorities are sometimes referred to as ‘principal councils’ to distinguish them from parish and town councils. Out of 418 local authorities, 353 are in England, of which 27 are county councils, 201 are district councils, and 125 are unitary authorities. Of the latter, 32 are London boroughs and 36 are metropolitan boroughs. Local governments in the UK are the minimum unit having an autonomy to create services and make policies to support the services by themselves (Chandler, 2009).

Why innovation and transformation in local government matter

According to the Local Government Association (LGA), by 2020, local governments in England will have lost 75 percent of central government funding compared to 2015 (Burns, 2017). This means that almost half of all councils in England will no longer gain any core financial support from central government by 2020. In the face of this financial challenge, as well as rapidly evolving technologies and political changes, it is important for local governments to build organisational capability to enhance their capacity for innovation enabling constant and systematic innovation in the entire organisation because the traditional ways of working cannot address all these complex challenges (Sørensen & Torfing, 2016). Moreover, innovation in local government is closely related to maintaining an accessible public sector organisation that is beneficial to the everyday life and wellbeing of citizens.

The Public Sector Design Ladder

In 2013, four member countries of the Sharing Experience Europe Platform (SEE platform) published a paper presenting a series of case studies regarding how design is being used for public sector innovation in order to give a better understanding of design driven innovation and share integrated methods for it. The public sector design ladder (See Figure 1) exhibited in the paper proposes three levels of design use as a diagnostic tool and a roadmap for progress so that individual public sector organisations can check where they are in applying design for innovation (Design council, 2013).

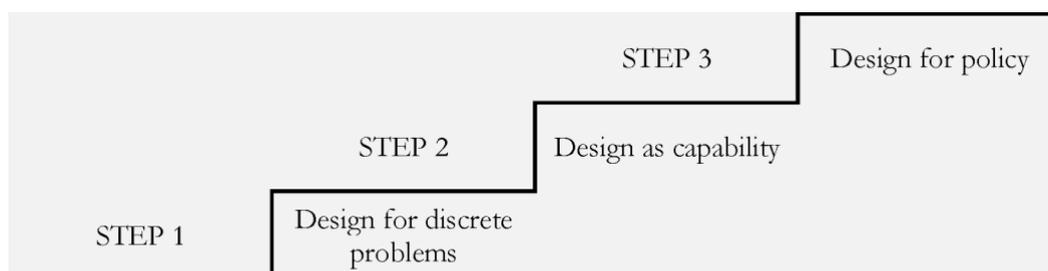


Figure 1. The public sector design ladder (McNabola et al., 2013, p6)

- **STEP 1: Design for discrete problems**
At this step, design is used for one-off project basis to deal with discrete problems such as malnutrition among the elderly and digitisation of the services in the public sector. Building design capability to embed design in the organisation is not an issue at this STEP.
- **STEP 2: Design as capability**

Many public sector employees at this step have an understanding of what Design Thinking is and how to apply it into their everyday work. Moreover, they play a key role in disseminating the knowledge and techniques of Design Thinking across their organisations.

- **STEP 3: Design for policy**

At this step, policymakers use Design Thinking through co-design workshops, often facilitated by designers for policymaking and implementation as a way of getting an overview of a system, engaging various stakeholders, and then breaking down departmental silos.

This Public Sector Design Ladder was used to check where local governments in England are in using design for innovation.

Different types of Design Intervention Model

The way of describing how design work intervenes in organisations was adopted from the paper, ‘Restarting Britain 2: Design and Public Services’, published by the Design Commission in 2014 and the Models of Invention defined by two service design agencies in their reflective report (Snook & DMA, 2014) which was based on their collaborative projects for public sector organisations. They were adjusted based on the recurring features emerged from a preliminary survey conducted by researcher with regard to how design was employed and situated within the local government settings. The different types of intervention were then classified into four distinct models according to the type of designer involvement in service development projects. There are four types of Design Intervention Model that are recently adopted by local councils in England (See Table 1).

			
Non-designer Model	External Designer Model	Internal/External Designer Model	Embedded Designer Model
A way of applying design by the team made up of internal public servants deploys design approach without the help of professional designers	A way of applying design by a traditional design project team made up of external designers on a project-by-project basis	A way of applying design by the temporary design unit organised with external designers and selected public servants, which is strategically established within the organisation	A way of applying design by a service design team includes full-time service designers hired by the organisation to develop design capacity and redesign services
 : Local government organisation		 : Designer(s)	

Table 1. Different types of Design Intervention Model

The Non-designer Model describes a way of applying design in a local government context by the team only consisting of internal public servants, which deploys the design approach without the help of professional designers. In terms of the External Designer Model, it describes a traditional consultancy from a design company on a project-by-project basis

without a dedicated team within an organisation. This is the most general way of employing design in a public sector organisation. Most local governments experience design approaches such as Service Design and Design Thinking for the first time through this model before they actually find the benefits of the design approach to service innovation, and then move to the other models. The Internal/External Designer model describes a way of applying design through a temporary design unit organised with external designers from a design agency and certain internal public servants, which is strategically established within an organisation for an effective knowledge transfer between designers and public servants. Many local governments in England are now adopting the Non-designer Model either with or without going through the External Designer or Internal/External Designer Model. Lastly, the Embedded Designer Model illustrates the way of working through the internal service design team which includes full-time designers hired by the organisation to develop design capacity and redesign services.

Methodology

As mentioned earlier, this paper intends to share some of the findings of researcher's ongoing PhD study, 'Design-led collaborative public service innovation', being investigated through a survey and a case study approach including in-depth interviews and ethnographic observations. In this paper, the data collected through the in-depth interview with service designers and public servants was mainly analysed through thematic analysis method by formulating themes from interview transcripts in relation to the research questions. Additionally, secondary data that obtained from internal reports, programme documents, and annual reports of each council was also analysed (See Figure 2).

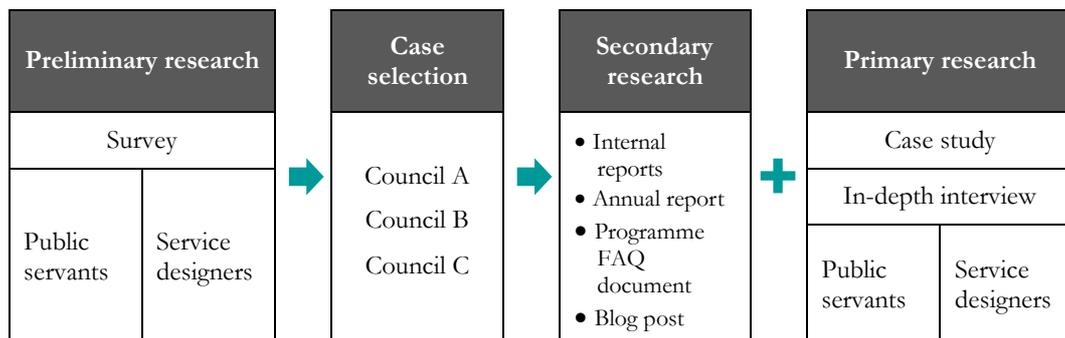


Figure 2. Method of data collection

Case selection

Three councils in England are selected as the samples for the case study on the basis of the responses to the preliminary survey which aims to build a better understanding of design-led approaches to collaborative service innovation and organisational change in local government contexts. They all have been trying to embed design within their organisations using the different types of design intervention model respectively. Moreover, the author could gain permission to interview public servants and service designers, and to attend the design workshops for ethnographic observations from the three councils. They are anonymously displayed as Council A, B, and C because of confidentiality issues. Council A is using the Internal/External Designer Model, having a dedicated team to disseminate Agile and service design approaches as a new way of working at the time of the interview with service designers and public servants. Council B is adopting the Non-designer Model and trying to spread Design Thinking across the organisation through service design training workshops and co-design events inviting various stakeholders, including citizens. Council C belongs to the Embedded Designer Model as it has a service design team made up of three service designers specifically hired by the council.

In-depth interview

All interviews with service designers and public servants from the three councils were conducted between December 15 in 2016 and October 16 in 2017. They were face-to-face in-depth interviews based on an open-ended questionnaire and they lasted around one hour on average. They were voice-recorded with the interviewees' consent and transcribed to analyse in order to understand why, what and how local governments try to embed design within their organisations, and what kind of challenges they encounter in the course of embedding design. There are five interviews in total performed with Council A. Three of the five interviewees are public servants and the others are service designers. Three public servants in Council B and two service designers in Council C are interviewed (See Table 2).

Organisation (Design Intervention Model)	Name (anonym)	Team	Position	Work experience (years)
Council A  Internal/External Designer	CAS01	Service Transformation	Service designer (Head of product)	24
	CAS02	Service Transformation	Service designer (Lead of the project)	13
	CAP01	Service Transformation	Digital Services Delivery Lead	38
	CAP02	Service Transformation	Digital Services Delivery Lead	8
	CAP03	Service Transformation	Digital Services Delivery Lead	15
Council B  Non-designer	CBP01	Transformation and Change department	Head of Transformation and Change department	22
	CBP02	Transformation and Change department	Service Design and Engagement officer	3
	CBP03	Transformation and Change department	Project manager	25
Council C  Embedded Designer	CCS01	Service design team, Corporate Development	Service design Lead	33
	CCS02	Service design team, Corporate Development	Service designer	5

Table 2. Interviewee profile

Case studies

In this section of the paper, three cases of local councils in England are introduced, representing their different journeys towards embedding design within their organisations and illustrating the changes in Design Intervention Models that the three councils went through respectively over the course of the journey. Furthermore, the contextual factors and purposes of embedding design associated with a choice of Design Intervention Model are described (See Table 3).

Local government	Change in Design Intervention Model	Purpose of embedding Design
Council A		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To modernise their existing services for efficiency. • To innovate its operating model in developing and delivering services to meet user needs. • To upskill employees to build a design capability in its organisation.
	External Designer → Non-designer → Internal/External Designer	
Council B		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To redesign services to provide financially sustainable and user-friendly services. • To become a self-sufficient organisation. • To help employees develop entrepreneurial and explorative ideas.
	External Designer → Non-designer	
Council C		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To innovate services fulfilling user needs together with residents. • To redesign commissioning process to ensure the delivery of high quality and cost effective services.
	External Designer → Embedded Designer	

Table 3. Different journeys towards embedding design and its purpose

Case 1. Council A

Like any other local government in England, Council A faces a dramatic reduction in the level of funding from Central Government as a result of the ongoing austerity programme. In the face of this huge budget cut by 2020, Council A set up a team, called ‘Council A 2020 transformation team’, which is made up of a blend of dedicated officers from across the organisation alongside some temporary external consultants with specialist skills. The team decided to initiate an organisation-wide programme in 2015 in order to prepare for potential major challenges over the following years. The programme has been planned to make the organisation a more agile and flexible council. The council is attempting to innovate their operating model in regard to how they will work and deliver services in the future and the organisational structure required to support this. With the successful pursuit of the programme, the council aims not only to reduce cost by changing the way they govern the local area and deliver services to the residents, but also to raise revenue by creating new business models by 2020. It is a strategic attempt to change themselves to become a more commercially focused, entrepreneurial and innovative organisation in the future. As part of the programme to transform the organisation by 2020, the council has strategically established a temporary design unit organised with an external design team including service designers brought from the external design agency within the Digital Transformation Department. To improve efficiency, the main aim of the team is to digitise existing services. The team is following the Government Digital Service(GDS) framework which is based on the Agile approach, applying the various service design methods and tools for the better engagement of participants. Council A recognised the advantages of this new way of working, particularly in engaging stakeholders and discovering their needs during the process of reforming services. They then decided to extend the role of the team in order to build design capacity into the organisation and equip their employees with skills for a new way of

working. The council expected that their staff could continue to employ the service design approach by giving their employees chances to apply the approach to the actual projects while working closely with service designers as a team.

Case 2. Council B

As part of the new governance arrangements to enable the organisation to manage financial challenges and prepare for the future, Council B decided to set up a board dealing with tasks with regards to design and innovation. An interdisciplinary team was deliberately consisted of various people from different departments as of December 2016. The goal of the board was to support innovative thinking and help employees to be able to develop their entrepreneurial and explorative ideas- that may enable the council to become a self-sufficient organisation. A cross-organisational team was, additionally, established in January 2017 to initially undertake two individual projects redesigning services aimed to provide financially sustainable and user friendly services with an external design agency. A Transformation and Change Team at Council B was in charge of managing and leading both the board meeting and the cross-organisational team through three main activities. Firstly, the team tried to introduce and promote a design mindset and a service design approach to other colleagues across the organisation, by conducting user research together or supporting co-designing activities so that they can see the benefits of new way of approaching. Secondly, they held monthly lunchtime learning sessions regularly and innovation events occasionally for people at all levels across organisation in order to convince them of the need of innovative approaches when considering service users as co-designers, as well as to distribute Service Design as a new approach to public service innovation. The members of the Transformation and Change Team were design-led innovation champions. They played a key role to promote this new way of working based on their self-taught knowledge, as well as hands on experiences and the skills developed through the service design projects in collaboration with external design agency. They also adopted and sometimes created design methods and tools in order to adjust them to their own conditions, and set up a systematic and standardised process. Lastly, as mentioned above, the team organised and managed the board meeting that involved multidisciplinary members at all levels including a chief executive officer. The meeting helps the council to support and realise innovative ideas that generated by employees across organisation, by giving them a chance to present innovative ideas, supporting the developing process, and keeping track of new and ongoing innovation and design projects, by running a board meeting regularly.

Case 3. Council C

In October 2013, Cabinet of Council C consented to a major organisational change programme that aims to redefine the council so that they can continue to meet their residents' needs by achieving a balanced budget, reinforcing the place for local democratic leadership, and establishing a new business model while managing additional budget cuts from central government by 2020. As part of the programme, the establishment of a group was proposed to put the residents in the heart of the process in designing and delivering services. The group was planned to consist of three sub hubs: a procurement hub supporting procurement and commissioning decisions; a data and information hub providing intelligence and data which support procurement and commissioning decisions; a clienting hub supporting client management. In October 2015, after the group had been strategically set up, an in-house service design team was established with three service designers and two business analysts. Unlike the other two councils above, the Council C had decided to set up their own service design team by directly recruiting service designers. The team aimed to bring together insight, procurement and commissioning expertise and design innovative services, fulfilling the residents' needs. The team often leads the service redesign process for a portfolio of commissioning projects that aim to ensure the delivery of high quality and cost effective services that deliver positive outcomes for the residents, as well as the council. Each one of service designer works as an individual unit, by undertaking and managing separate projects respectively. They apply various design methods and tools based on service design

approach such as real life persona, basic user journey map, empathy map, and round table discussion during the workshop. A range of people from different department are invited to the co-design workshops in order to understand current situations, define problems, and come up with possible solutions.

Research Findings and Discussions

This paper has introduced four types of Design Intervention Model illustrating how design has recently intervened in local governments in England. Three cases of local councils in England has been presented, describing their different journeys towards embedding design within their own organisations, and showing which level they are positioned on the Public Sector Design Ladder.

Why local governments are trying to embed design

Councils A, B, C in this research are on the STEP 2 (See Figure 3). After a few successful design projects dealing with discrete problems, the three councils set up a dedicated team by taking different types of Design Intervention Model.

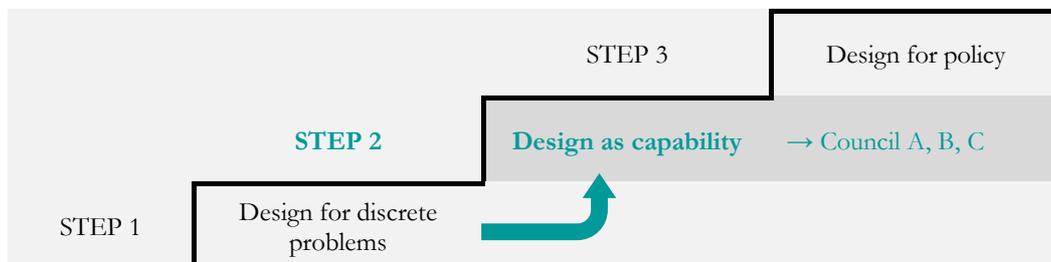


Figure 3. Position of three local councils on the Public Sector Design Ladder

Although the routes that each council has taken in their choices of Design Intervention Models are different, all three councils embarked on the journey towards embedding design within their organisations in order to achieve the goals below.

- 1. In the short term, to improve their services**

The common goal that the three councils aims to achieve in the process of embedding design within their organisations is to improve their existing services. Design approaches to service development have been considered as tools to help local councils to identify user needs and problems with their recent services effectively, by supporting co-designing processes involving various stakeholders.
- 2. To develop their own service design process**

The local councils tend to think that a new way of working based on a human-centred design process is a more sustainable approach to consistently understanding user needs and making decisions in a ‘democratic’ way. This is because it puts users at the centre of service development and delivery process. Therefore, each council wants to devise and develop their own service design process based on their working environment.
- 3. In the long term, to become a self-sufficient organisation**

They want to embed design within their organisations in order to reduce the cost of management and operation by modernising existing services. Furthermore, they want to create new business models enabling councils to increase their revenue in an attempt to prepare for budget cuts from Central Government and to become self-sufficient organisations in the future.

As identified above, the ultimate goal of the local council aiming at embedding design within the organisation is to become self-sufficient. They are trying to develop their own sustainable service design process and equip their employees with its skills in order to help them be able to apply the process into their day-to-day jobs without the help from any external service designers.

Challenges in embedding design

Shared challenges faced by service designers and public servants that arose during the journeys of applying and embedding design within the councils are identified and discussed as follow:

1. Understanding and changing a complex system for a long term effect

Improving services will not be achieved through a fragmented solution such as the improvement of a single touchpoint or the change of service staff. However, it inevitably requires the change and development of the service system based on an understanding of the local council as a complex system.

"the biggest challenge is that the council is a kind of complex system. changing one thing over here, this change over here, and change something here, and residents become confused and they start to phone the call centre, the cost of the call goes up. So, they start taking away telephone numbers, then people get more frustrated and then they start knocking on the door. You know this is quite a complex system now."

- Head of Transformation and Change department, CBP01 –

"...We've got the project based on short term goals. Possibly because people need to deliver something. So we are trying to change it a little bit. We are trying to shift the conversation a bit to think more about the bigger system that has a long term effect on it. If we are going to improve the service in a certain way, I mean more human-centred way maybe, it is going to make savings in a few years. But they (local councils) may be interested in 'what are you going to do for me in the those few months'. They are thinking like that. Maybe they are going to cut down something"

- Service designer, Project Lead, CAS02 –

2. Disseminating a design mindset and mobilising resources for co-creation

The design team itself regardless of the involvement of designers is good in understanding and applying design in their day-to-day jobs. However, it is difficult to propagate a design mindset across the organisation because public servants are normally under the pressure in their daily jobs; and therefore it is hard to bring them together in the same place to transfer knowledge on design and equip them with design skills.

"But also, people are always saying that they haven't got any time. So it's mindset and time of thing. But the thing is they have their ideas. So they know what is the capacity for this service, or what they can do change for you a bit. But I don't think they are given the time to... so they don't get given like spaces to be"

- Digital Services Delivery Lead, CAP03 –

"Especially where in this sort of non-designer redesign method space, I think it's about mindset and how you approach problem or question, different questions what we've asked before as a local government. I think that is really hard thing to teach someone to do or someone to do differently, particularly in local government. There are people who have been working here for long time with same job for 2, 3, 40 years. So how you get them mindset shift I think it is really difficult."

- Service Design and Engagement officer, CBP02 –

3. Maintaining momentum for behavioural and cultural change

Most local government employees who participated in the co-design workshops found the benefits of design as a new approach to public service innovation. However, their enthusiasm and passion for Design Thinking often fades away over

time because of a lack of continuous support from the senior level and a failure to track new or past projects that applied a design approach.

“But the way of working (designerly way) is quite different from the council culture. The council culture is frustrating race, you know, people come in and work for the council for thirty years and never retire. So it's challenging everything they know and of course change is scary.”

- Digital Services Delivery Lead, CAP02 -

“The culture is a really tough one. Changing cultural organisation is enormous. I think it is a, we find, steady step by step process. What we have done projects with certain service area, they see the value of our work. They tempt to often come and say that oh we got a new project coming up. We want to use the same methodology, we think this is important. This kind of shows they are changing the way they think about approaching redesigning of services.”

- Service designer, CCS02-

4. Keeping knowledge and transferring knowledge

The employee turn-over rate in the local council is very high, as cost saving in the council is often achieved by the reduction of a number of people. This is challenging for embedding design within the council because it does not motivate people to keep developing and transferring knowledge across the council.

“They (public servants) are not motivated by saving council money, they are motivated by making their lives easier and making and delivering a better service. So you have to somehow map on delivering a better experience for everyone”

- Service designer, Head of Product, CAS01 –

“The only problem is, basically here is temporarily assigned to this team. So, it's not given that they will stay within the team. They may return to their own team. So if we had someone who was in the team for a few months, but after change, they are still in the council but they move to another place in the council. So, there is a bit of uncertainty about knowledge transfer and how much with they can use them.”

- Service designer, Project Lead, CAS02 -

5. Developing skills and giving confidence to public servants in co-designing

Non-designers (public servants in this case) who are responsible for design support and building design capability are normally good at and confident in conducting the Discover and Define phases of the service design project. However, they are much less confident in carrying out the Develop and Deliver phases of the service design process.

“The hard bit is then giving them the confidence that they can solve the problems. Because they can see the problems. It is obvious that they experience things themselves, but they also know all the obstacles of the council.”

- Service designer, Head of Product, CAS01 –

“I personally much more feel confident with this diamond (Discover and Define phase of the Double Diamond model) than with this one (Develop and Deliver phase of the Double Diamond model). We've done a lot of that (the first Diamond phase) and I feel happy about doing those things. I think in this second diamond space particularly with big problems and big difficult things.”

- Service Design and Engagement officer, CBP02 –

Conclusion and future work

This paper presents why local governments are trying to embed design – Design Thinking or Service Design - and how they are actually applying the design-led approach for service innovation or organisational change through three different cases of councils in England,

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which are taking different Design Intervention Models respectively. This paper did not set out to determine which is the best Design Intervention Model or which is the most efficient journey. Rather, it aimed to explore different routes to embedding design and examine a number of different types of Design Intervention Models at local governments and identify the shared challenges faced by designers and non-designers. However, there are clear contributions to practical knowledge for non-designers such as elected councilors and public servants in the local government, as well as designers who are planning to apply design-led approaches within and for local governments. For example, this research might be able to share overviews and some insights into how design practices that support collaborations can help local councils to change their organisations and innovate their services. However, it does not mean that this paper covers everything about the ways of utilising design-led approaches. The contributions and value of this paper are, therefore, to give a better understanding of the different nature and conditions of design-led service innovation and organisational transformation in the local government context to design practitioners including challenges for embedding design. Furthermore, it helps public servants to understand different types of Design Intervention Model so that they can have a chance to think about which type will be suitable for their conditions and situations.

Future work of this ongoing research will give a better understanding of design-led approaches to collaborative service innovation and organisational transformation to public servants and their organisations to allow them to better use design practices. Moreover, it will identify different roles that designers and non-designers play in applying design-led approaches such as Service Design and Design Thinking in different contexts. This might be able to suggest ways to overcome challenges to embedding design within the local governments for designers so that they can develop essential skills and their own distinct professionalism with regards to collaborative design practices in the public sector.

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