



Government
Digital & Data



NDX, Opportunities for London Boroughs

Chris Nesbitt-Smith • Wing Lau, Hackney

LOTI AI Community of Practice • 21 May 2026





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The problem

You've got an AI vendor pitch.

Your CIO wants you to prove it works before signing.

Your procurement, for even a £0 trial, says wait.

Your security team needs to see it running first.

Six months later you decide not to buy.



£1.2bn

in annual savings – if government bought tech better

Feryal Clark MP – gov.uk, June 2025

The screenshot shows a gov.uk press release page. At the top, the gov.uk logo is visible. The page title is "One stop shop for tech could save taxpayers £1.2 billion and overhaul how government buys digital tools". Below the title is a sub-headline: "A first-of-its-kind digital marketplace is being built to help shake up how the UK public sector buys technology - hoping to unlock £1.2 billion in annual savings, save time and give public servants the power to rate suppliers." The release is attributed to the Department for Science, Innovation and Technology and Feryal Clark MP, published on 7 June 2025. There is a graphic with the text "NEW DIGITAL HUB SET TO SAVE TAXPAYERS £1.2 BILLION". A bulleted list highlights key points: a new platform for public sector tech procurement, current plans to unlock £1.2 billion in savings, and the role of the National Digital Exchange. The page also includes a paragraph about the digital marketplace and a link to the State of Digital Government report.

gov.uk

Home > Business and Industry > Science and Innovation > Artificial Intelligence

Press release

One stop shop for tech could save taxpayers £1.2 billion and overhaul how government buys digital tools

A first-of-its-kind digital marketplace is being built to help shake up how the UK public sector buys technology - hoping to unlock £1.2 billion in annual savings, save time and give public servants the power to rate suppliers.

From: Department for Science, Innovation and Technology and Feryal Clark MP
Published 7 June 2025

New digital hub set to save taxpayers £1.2 billion.

- New platform to allow public sector to rate and review tech products, helping hospitals, schools and government departments avoid costly mistakes and make smarter, faster decisions on which tech to buy.
- Currently in early development, the platform is set to unlock £1.2 billion a year in savings and modernise how the public sector invests £26 billion-a-year on tech.
- The National Digital Exchange will support the government's Plan for Change - giving the UK public sector faster access to better deals, while boosting small business involvement by 40% within 3 years.

A first-of-its-kind digital marketplace is being built to help shake up how the UK public sector buys technology - hoping to unlock £1.2 billion in annual savings, save time and give public servants the power to rate suppliers.

By making it faster and easier to buy the right technology, the National Digital Exchange (NDX) will aim to drive forward the [government's Plan for Change](#) - helping to deliver simpler, smarter, and more responsive public services for the people who rely on them, while ensuring better value for taxpayers.

In a major shift, the platform hopes to allow teams across the public sector to access pre-approved tech deals at nationally negotiated prices, with an AI-powered engine that matches them with suppliers based on what they actually need - all in a matter of hours, not months.

The platform is designed to open the market to more UK tech firms, with a target to boost small business involvement in government contracts by 40% within 3 years.

It follows the [State of Digital Government report](#) which warned that 209 NHS

320

councils "go it alone when negotiating tech contracts"

gov.uk press release • 7 June 2025

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It follows the [State of Digital Government report](#) which warned that 209 NHS secondary care organisations and **320 local councils go it alone when negotiating tech contracts, despite widely using similar tools - missing out on essential bargaining power**. Only 28% of public sector leaders said their organisations were able to track and make sure that their tech suppliers were delivering proper value for their services.

Users will be able to rate and review what they've bought, lifting the lid on which tools have delivered, and where promises haven't matched performance - creating a platform comparable to an app store for the technology that underpins the British state and essential public services.

The announcement comes ahead of London Tech Week, where the role of digital innovation in transforming public services will be in the spotlight.

Minister for AI and Digital Government, Feryal Clark said:

"We've all heard the stories - months of red tape, tech that doesn't deliver, and money wasted. That's not good enough for the people we serve.

"The National Digital Exchange aims to change that. It will make it faster, fairer, and focused on what works - with real reviews, upfront pricing and smart AI to match buyers with the right suppliers in hours.

"It's a clear example of our Plan for Change in action: cutting waste, boosting innovation, and backing British tech to deliver better public services."

The platform, which will be created under the revised Procurement Regulations to help shape a smarter, more open future for digital procurement, and is being developed alongside a 'digital playbook' to guide officials responsible for buying technology towards best practice - making sure the long-term impacts of their decisions, and the social value of contracts are considered.

Today's news also follows the government announcing plans to test new ways of funding AI and tech projects, aiming to bring a start-up mindset to testing the application and use of AI experiments on small budgets, and then building on proof of success.

DSIT is also working closely with organisations like techUK helping to ensure



NDX:Try



"Secure, time-limited access to cutting-edge tools, with no upfront effort or cost."

technology.blog.gov.uk • 17 April 2026

The screenshot shows a GOV.UK blog page. At the top left is the GOV.UK logo. The page title is 'Technology in government'. Below the title, it says 'Organisations: Civil Service'. The main article title is 'We're piloting NDX:Try, a new platform to help local councils test digital services before they buy'. The article text includes: 'We recently launched a pilot for NDX:Try to help local councils try new and innovative digital and AI services for free before deciding whether to buy them. You can access the service here: ndx.digital.cabinet-office.gov.uk'. A highlighted quote states: 'The platform will provide secure, time-limited access to cutting-edge tools in a non-production environment, with no upfront effort or cost.' The article continues: 'It's designed to help tackle challenges with buying technology that we see across the public sector: organisations with tightly controlled budgets are limited in their ability to use technology for free at the point of use. The pilot of NDX:Try includes a range of scenarios for councils to experiment and build with, such as: LocalGov Drupal: an AI enhanced website management system created by councils, for councils, and supported by UK businesses. Minute: an AI-powered meeting transcription and minuting tool that automatically turns audio recordings into structured, actionable minutes — helping councils cut hours of manual note-taking. A Chatbot application to support users understanding the impact of different AI models, guardrails, knowledge base, and other configuration on both cost and useability. Digital Planning Stack (PlanX + BOPS + Digital Planning Register): a complete open-source planning journey — residents submit applications through PlanX's guided digital forms, officers assess them in the BOPS case-management system, and the public track decisions on a modern, searchable Digital Planning Register. A completely empty cloud sandbox for free exploration'. It also mentions 'There are currently 8 scenarios on the platform with accompanying guided walk throughs in addition to access to hundreds of underlying services available from Amazon Web Services, an early supporter and collaborator of NDX:Try.' The article concludes: 'We're already in conversations with technology companies of all shapes and sizes to add more, along with broadening out to include a wider range of public sector organisations and use cases. If you have a solution you'd like to be available on NDX:Try, you can get in touch with the team on this email address: Ndx@dsit.gov.uk. Finally, this is a pilot, and therefore everything is experimental, so we welcome your comments and feedback.' At the bottom, it says 'Tags: GDS Local, Local Government, NDX'. On the right side of the page, there is a 'Search blog' box, a 'Technology in government' section with a description, a 'Categories' dropdown menu, a 'Work with us' section with an image and a link to 'GDS careers site', a 'Sign up and manage updates' section with 'Email' and 'Atom' options, a 'Find out more' section with a 'Join the conversation' link, a 'Recent Posts' section with three links, and a 'Comments and moderation' section with a 'Read our guidelines' link.



**Re-launch as often as
you want.**

Each session is fresh.



~\$50

per session, fair use

figure under review

Most things you'll want to try fit well inside this.



AWS pays.

DSIT operates.

You consume.



17 scenarios live today · 8 more in the backlog

AI Contact Centre

Council Chatbot

Empty AWS Sandbox

FOI Redaction

LocalGov IMS

Paperless-ngx with AI

PlanX Digital Planning

Simply Readable

Text to Speech

BOPS Planning

Digital Planning Register

FixMyStreet

LocalGov Drupal with AI

Minute

Planning AI

QuickSight Dashboard

Smart Car Park





**Last week, in Hackney,
with Wing**



Beta This is a new service. [Take part in user research](#) to help us improve it.

[Home](#) > [Catalogue NDX:Try](#)

Catalogue NDX:Try

Products available for hands-on evaluation through NDX:Try

These products are available for hands-on evaluation through NDX:Try. Each product has its own evaluation period and budget cap — no commitment required.

Select any product to learn more and start your evaluation session.

[AI Contact Centre](#)

Try Before You Buy

Dial a real UK phone number from your own phone, talk to an AI bot that triages distressed callers, send a photo through a messaging simulator, and watch one case form across voice and photo on Amazon Connect

Tags: AWS, Amazon, Contact Centre, AI, Voice, Multichannel, Local Government, Sandbox, Evaluation, try-before-you-buy

[Back Office Planning System \(BOPS\)](#)

Try Before You Buy





Pattern: document AI

paperless-ngx with AI



Beta This is a new service. [Take part in user research](#) to help us improve it.

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Paperless-ngx with AI



Self-hosted document archive with OCR, full-text search and AI-powered classification, tagging and chat — built on AWS for UK parish and town councils

Try Before You Buy

[Sign In to Try This Now >](#)

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category [AI](#) [source](#) [GitHub](#)

Overview

Your filing cabinet, but searchable.

Paperless-ngx is a popular open-source document management system used by parish councils, small charities and individuals to digitise and search their paper records. The NDX:Try deployment adds Amazon



Pattern: content AI

LocalGov Drupal with AI



Beta This is a new service. [Take part in user research](#) to help us improve it.

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LocalGov Drupal with AI



Explore an AI-enhanced content management system for UK councils - the most comprehensive AWS and AI experience on NDX:Try

Try Before You Buy

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[source](#) [GitHub](#)

Overview

Most comprehensive experience on NDX:Try

7 AI features • 8 AWS services • 40-minute guided walkthrough • Built for local government



Pattern: voice AI

AI Contact Centre

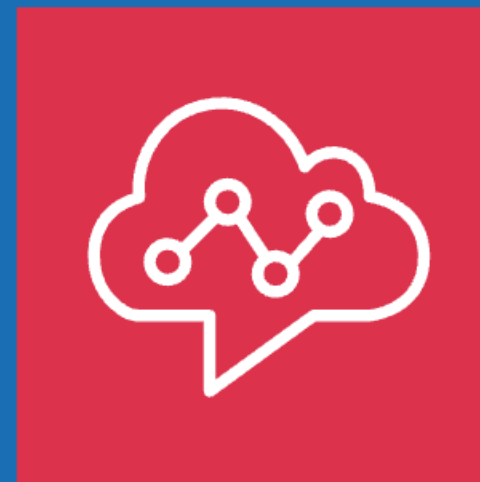


Beta This is a new service. [Take part in user research](#) to help us improve it.

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AI Contact Centre

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category [Contact Centre](#) [source](#) [GitHub](#)

Overview

One resident, one case, two channels





**~5 min deploy •
<£1/day • 24h
ephemeral**

AWS picks up the bill



What we want from you

 *Sign up. Click one scenario this week.*

 *Tell us what's broken. What works. What's missing.*

 *Tell other boroughs. Tell your suppliers.*



3 starts

Try is the first feature. **Catalog, Campaign, Challenge, Assist** are coming.

Local government is the first audience. **Wider public sector** next.

AWS is the first vendor. **Others** at their pace.





Next: Catalog

*Assured marketplace •
peer reviews • published
trust evidence*

by 75% while improving response quality." - Manchester City Council"

User reviews

Rating ★★★★★
Excellent

Reviewed by sarah.jenkins@nationalparks.gov.uk

Date 10 April 2024

As someone who was initially wary of AI, I'm amazed at how intuitive SynapLyte is. It's transformed how we handle visitor enquiries and incident reports. The natural language understanding is exceptional - it even correctly interprets our park-specific terminology. The time saved on administrative tasks means more time actually protecting our natural heritage.

Rating ★★★★★
Excellent

Reviewed by it.manager@ruralauthority.gov.uk

Date 22 March 2024

Integration with our existing systems was smoother than expected. The API documentation is excellent and the sandboxed testing environment helped us validate everything before going live. My only minor concern is ensuring all staff complete the AI ethics training, but MindWeave Labs provides excellent resources for this. The productivity gains have been remarkable.



Next: Campaign

***Pooled demand • co-funded builds
• the Kickstarter mechanic***





Next: Challenge

*Public sector problem
book • suppliers respond •
innovators target*

The screenshot shows the GOV.UK National Digital Exchange website. The header includes the logo and navigation links: Home, About, Catalogue, My Try Sessions, and Sign in. A beta notice states: "Beta This is a new service. Take part in user research to help us improve it." The main heading is "Challenges" with a sub-heading: "Government challenges and problem statements seeking innovative solutions from industry and academia". Below this, there is a section for "Government Challenges" with a description: "Government departments are constantly facing complex problems that require innovative solutions. The Challenges section provides a marketplace for departments to publish detailed problem statements, inviting industry, academia, and innovators to propose solutions." To the right of this section is a "Filters" sidebar with links for Defence, Digital Transformation, Security, and Research. A "How it works" section follows, listing two steps: 1. Challenge Publication: Government departments identify and publish specific problems or capability gaps; 2. Solution Development: Industry and academic partners review challenges and develop innovative responses.



What you can do this afternoon

 **Use it**

ndx.digital.cabinet-office.gov.uk



Come hands-on *AWS, 4 June* –

aws-experience.com/emea/smb/e/300f4/hands-on-with-ndxtry



Tell your suppliers Name "NDX:Try" →

ndx@dsit.gov.uk



5 questions to ask your supplier

1. Can I try this without signing anything?

2. What does it cost to stop using it?

3. Where do I find peer reviews from other boroughs?

4. Why isn't this on NDX:Try yet?

5. What problem on the NDX Challenge book are you working on?

Bonus, for procurement: which framework lets us score peer reviews as previous performance? (Procurement Act 2023.)





Questions

Wing's on the line for "*what's it actually like to use*" questions.





Thank you

ndx.digital.cabinet-office.gov.uk

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