



Right people, right place, right time

'A digital solution that enables a flexible & agile workforce, building on the foundations of shared knowledge, skills & expertise within and across local government organisations'

1. The Need

"Businesses today operate in an environment that is far more complex and competitive than at any time in history. Markets are increasingly interconnected; businesses have become borderless; and technology continually disrupts business models. These and other factors make managing large enterprises more challenging than ever. Yet organizational structure has not kept up with the pace of change. In fact, businesses today are largely structured the same way they have been for a century" Deloitte 2016

Councils are facing challenging and complex pressures that require them to transform the way they operate resulting in a set of organisational, talent and workforce challenges that will need to be addressed.

Council's are experiencing unprecedented pressures including cuts to funding, rising demand for services, and a necessity to generate economic growth - requiring them to rethink what services they deliver and how to deliver them. These changes raise huge challenges and Councils are already making difficult decisions regarding their workforces, e.g. recruitment freezes, cuts to training budgets, etc.

Most Council's operate with a traditional organisational structure; hierarchical job levels based on professional expertise in specific areas. This structure has been designed for efficiency and effectiveness, but has inadvertently created silos, with predictable and risk-averse patterns of behaviour. Council's need to think beyond traditional working practices and structures to achieve better outcomes for taxpayers.

In the future, staff may be asked "What are you working on?" and "With whom do you work?" rather than "In which department/directorate do you work?"

Local government staff are working with their communities to deliver the services that matter to them. The sector is already thinking differently about the provision of public services and the need to address the critical challenges, to ensure public services are fit to secure the best possible future for the people of this country.

Local government needs a system that works for people, not people that work in a system. The challenge is considerable with a workforce some 1.5 million strong, 800 distinct occupations and a pay bill of around £22 billion a year. A modern, enthused and engaged workforce is at the heart of bringing people together at a local level, contributing to the stability they seek in an uncertain world, delivering the core services they need,

The world of work is changing as well. Just a few of the things we are already seeing or expect to see in the near future are:

- demographic change and growing diversity

Michelle O'Neill Worcester City Council, Claire Smith Staffordshire County Council; Jane Dall Warwickshire County Council



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- changes to the state pension age
- evolving consumer needs, including on demand services and gig economy models
- a workforce that will contain multiple generations from Generation Z to those in their 60s, with different needs and expectations
- changing technologies, digital services and automation/robotics.

From these shifts, we can anticipate:

- changing work environments
- cross-disciplinary skills changing professional lives
- growing desire for a better work/life balance
- income uncertainty
- a more commercial, income generating approach taken by councils

The 21st century public servant reports the following characteristics needed to fit the future model for Local government workforces

- is a 'municipal entrepreneur', undertaking a wide range of roles
- engages with citizens in a way that expresses their shared humanity and pooled expertise
- is recruited and rewarded for generic skills as well as technical expertise
- builds a career which is fluid across sectors and services
- combines an ethos of publicness with an understanding of commerciality
- is rethinking public services to enable them to survive an era of 'perma-austerity'
- needs organisations which are fluid and supportive rather than 'siloes' and controlling
- rejects heroic leadership in favour of distributed and collaborative models of leading
- is rooted in a locality which frames a sense of loyalty and identity
- reflects on practice and learns from that of others.

Every local council and combined authority values what makes their place different; their special circumstances and their unique approaches. These unique qualities are reflected in their workforce and the challenges they face. But all councils and combined authorities have one thing in common – they are continuing to develop a workforce that is:

- **productive** – affordable, efficient, motivated, technologically literate and flexible
- **joined up** – properly integrated across all the different organisations providing services, especially in health and social care
- **involved in co-designing and co-creating services** – so that the ideas and experience of the people most involved in services day to day can be fully utilised
- **truly valued and respected** – supported throughout the stages of life and career and able to enjoy good quality benefits as well as fair pay
- **diverse** – reflecting the communities it serves and making use of all the talent in those communities.



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To achieve that vision we believe that the sector needs to focus on:

- **great leadership** that is visionary, ambitious and effective and the development of leadership skills at all levels
- **organisational change and development** that is focused on people, their wellbeing and resilience
- **skills development** that is truly innovative and focused on combining organisational and individual needs
- **improved recruitment and retention** outcomes based on proper planning and use of best practice techniques
- **pay and reward** systems that attracts and retains talent, motivating and helping people throughout their careers

The LGA recognises that a 'one size fits all' approach to a workforce strategy won't work but what we can do at a national level is help to refine strategic thinking and work with others to ensure that ideas, thinking, approaches and tools are shared helping to enhance approaches to workforce planning. The LGA's aim is to agree and promote a set of shared priorities and actions to support councils as they continue their work.

- support councils to explore new ways of working that continue to modernise the working culture of local government
- enhance approaches to recruitment in other key specialisms such as planning and building control
- work with government departments to align workforce priorities across sectors and work together to build on existing synergies to overcome challenges
- provide a range of tools to support councils in ensuring their workforce policies and processes and employment practices robustly manage the skills, attitudes and contributions of their workforce
- work with government departments and unions to promote ways of maintaining the quality of local government's workforce in terms of skills, qualifications, engagement and motivation and staff turnover.

There is an urgent need to improve business efficiency and therefore productivity and from our discussions with local leaders, it has emerged as a key priority for them. There are of course many approaches to improving productivity, including technology and restructuring basic tasks to add greater value. Undoubtedly, reducing employment costs will always be a factor.

However, it will be important to focus on making sure people feel more engaged by addressing issues of wellbeing and personal development, as well as making the right investments in technology and processes.

2. The Opportunity

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One of the key themes throughout aspire has been the changing nature of work; external factors such as technology and globalisation are changing how and when we work but also there is a change in what the workforce wants and expects from employers.

Jacob Morgan, a keynote speaker and author, focuses on the Future of Work. His research suggests that the future employee will want a different model of working from the past 9-5 worker, who sat in a corporate office with predefined work set out in the tight job descriptions. The future model is one of flexibility; where the employee will want to customise their work and focus on new ways to communicate and collaborate. The emphasis of the future employee is to continually learn and share knowledge. Jacobs vision of the future employee is one that will embrace, or even expect, an agile model of working.

In his podcasts Jacob talks about successful organisations in the future being those that focus on creating a great employee experience - moving from being an organisation where people need to show up to one where they want to show up. If local authorities want to be one of those successful employers they will need to respond to changing employee expectations.

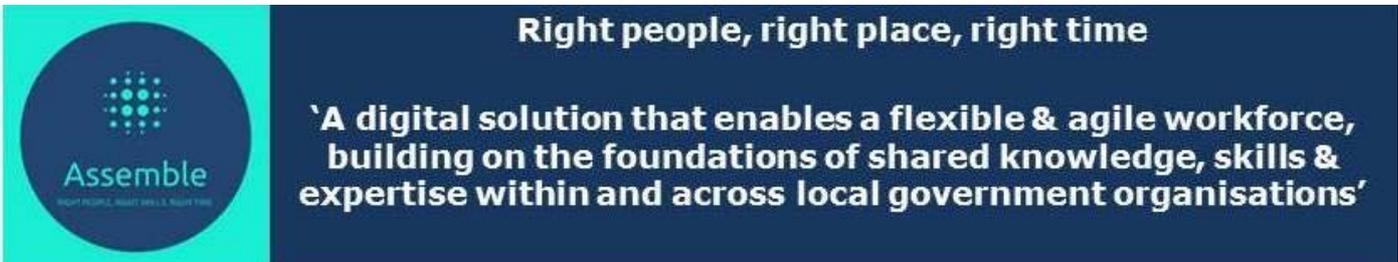
Our Councils

Helen Riley from Staffordshire County Council explained in her interview how Staffordshire are seeking to create a more agile workforce. A key aspect of their strategy is to enable their employees to work across the organisation on different projects, they want to create opportunities for people (on an informal and temporary basis) to experience something new, in a different area, with different colleagues. Stafford wants to tap into people's interests and skills and deploy them to work where they can best use those skills or provide them with opportunities to develop. They believe this approach can:

- Fosters innovation, creativity, empathy and leadership capabilities.
- Identifies, nurtures, shares and spreads talent across the organisation.
- The workforce will be used more effectively by targeting individuals and their skills to where business need is greatest.
- Improves productivity, staff retention, and the Council's reputation as an employer.

We also spoke to Joss Scatlebury, an Officer at Staffordshire, who explained the benefits she had experienced in being part of their pilot scheme. She was motivated by work she had chosen, working with new people, learning more about the organisation and developing her skills.

David Blake, Managing Director for Worcester City Council, explained the need to revisit how staff are best utilised to provide the maximum value for the organisation and how it is vital to get the right people in the right place. He also believed that the skills staff had outside of work could be harnessed to benefit the workplace.



Rob Powell, Strategic Director for Resources Warwickshire County Council has stated *'that there is not a public authority in the country that is not looking for more project management skills'*.

Warwickshire County Council is reviewing its approach to project management to better share project learning and 'collaboration' has been chosen as a key value, with the focus to developing a culture of towards joined up working, pooling resources and being able to do more by working as one organisation.

There is recognition of the need to maximise the capacity of employees to deal with the challenges facing the public sector. Our Councils can see the advantages of developing a more agile way of working and have given compelling business benefits as to why they want to move towards a more flexible workforce.

However in addition to those benefits cited by our authorities research also shows:

- by creating an environment that employees want to work in and offering them opportunities they value it can improve retention rates and create a more motivated workforce.
- If employers have an understanding what drives their employees, their skills and capabilities, they can fit them to where they can achieve the best results for the business. The workforce will be used more effectively by targeting individuals and their skills to where business need is greatest. The LGA states *'that membership of task and finish groups should be based on skills and motivation not job titles'* Changing the Councils Working Culture (2016)
- If employers create a more flexible / adaptive workforce, they can maximise their internal skills rather than buying in resource. Many organisations bring in contractors at a high cost; they complete a project and leave taking with them the knowledge and experience gained to use elsewhere. By deploying existing staff they get to develop their knowledge and experience and that knowledge is retained and can become shared learning with others in the organisation.

There are challenges in deploying staff differently but there are opportunities and benefits to outweigh those difficulties. If local authorities want a more flexible and agile workforce ready for future challenges, and one which makes them attractive to the future workforce, they will have to reconsider the how work is structured.

If the future employee is seeking a more flexible model of working and local authority employers are looking for more agility in their workforce surely there could be benefits to all.

Survey Results



WME circulated a survey asking local authorities for their feedback on their current project management arrangements and their desire to collaborate across other authorities. Our responses, all agreed that 'becoming agile' was now one of their top 3 priorities.

71% of those responding were pulling together project teams on an ad-hoc basis and were not confident in their ability to successfully deploy the right people to deliver a project. While those responding would like to get staff more involved in projects some concerns were expressed about the ability to release them because of workloads.

All those responding were interested in a solution which would provide a collaborative working space and would want to be able to access a system designed for the local government sector to support this. All would also be interested in wider collaboration and knowledge sharing with other Authorities on common areas of work, of particular interest were:

- Case Studies
- Discussion Forums
- Lessons learned/best practice

Evidence from within our organisations, our survey results and the overarching research on the changing nature of work shows there is an opportunity and appetite for Local Authorities to share and learn more from each other and to work more effectively within their own organisations. There is an opportunity to share knowledge through a single database, enabling local authorities to share learning and support each other through one simplistic tool that captures a short synopsis of project data and key contacts.

3. The concept

ASSEMBLE is our proposed digital solution for creating a flexible and agile workforce whilst building on the foundations of shared knowledge skills and experience within the sector. It is a concept focussed on assisting local authorities, primarily, to get the right internal people in the right place at the right time doing the right things.

It is essentially an organisational planning and performance tool driven by its ability to quickly and efficiently build the most effective delivery teams. Its' advanced AI matches the right skills, behaviours and expertise with the right work opportunities and continually uses the results of that match and subsequent performance to shape future matches.

It sets the foundations for the sector to be able to transition to portfolios of work rather than traditional job descriptions. It enables the deployment of skills and expertise, playing to the current strengths of all concerned and lends itself to true agile working, removing the traditional hierarchical approach of static line management to one of genuine, fleet of foot matrix style leadership.



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Assemble provides an overall and all encompassing performance road map that keeps employee data live and in real time whilst recognising the different tools or approaches that may already be in place in some organisations

Assemble is a mix of open and closed working spaces that enables complete and transparent project delivery that builds on intelligence across the sector.

It is the internal market place where colleagues can promote themselves, their passions and their interests in work opportunities, whatever the size and scale.

It is the internal market place where organisations can openly share and seek with ease the breadth of expertise required for the delivery of their priorities and encourage all sorts of cross council working and collaboration

It is the internal market place where communities of people from across the sector can be sharing experience and learning from others right at the critical point of delivery

Assemble (slide 19) is:

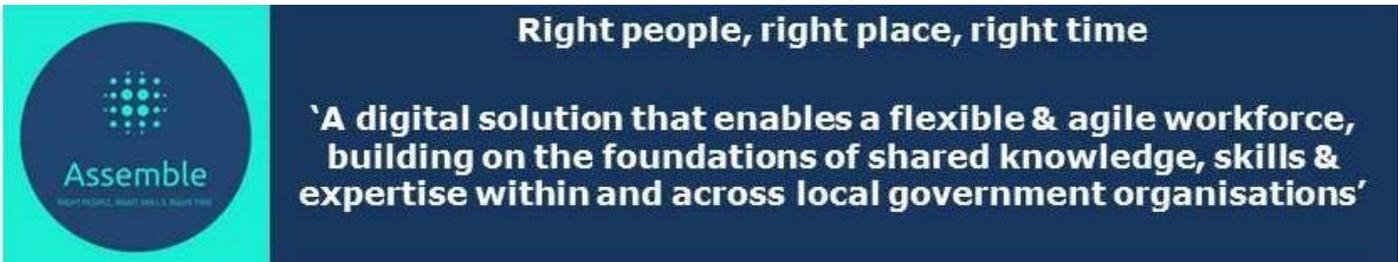
- A series of interconnected but separable modular components
- A digital solution that everyone can use and allows people, work and partner experience to be matched effectively together
- Machine intelligence. Its' AI translates data into elevated employee performance and engagement by providing a natural business workflow
- An intelligent system that perceives the environment and takes actions which maximises its chances of success

Assemble 'My People; 'My Work' and 'My Community' is the front end of getting the right people in the right place at the right time. To make this all work effectively, Assemble has a solid foundation of three key digital principles. These principles work as a bespoke and total wrap around solution designed to enable local authorities to flexibly deploy with ease their available internal labour capacity and passion.

1) **ASSIGN (slide 21)** is where we can start using the intelligent data we gain from employee profiles and work opportunities to gain a 'match'

It draws upon current and up to date experience, knowledge, skills, interest and passion of our internal workforce and links that too new opportunities whilst simultaneously making connections with other public sector bodies who are interested to learn or have something to share

2) **ACTION (slide 22)** seamlessly takes the team and capacity created in ASSIGN into a closed shared collaborative working space



It allows the team to work effectively together wherever they are and track and monitor their collective performance. Only a couple of our survey respondents indicated use of a similar tool such as office 365, Asana or Verto.

ACTION could work regardless of current software use. In fact it provides the opportunity for us to consider finding/ recommending a preferred supplier which would enable in the future increased shared cross sector performance delivery. It is not something new that would need to be built.

3) **APPRAISE (slide 23)** is the third and final principle that underpins the three components of assemble and takes us back into the open space

It uses the information from action to continually fresh and update assign. It also feeds and maximises on the knowledge sharing across the sector

In other words performance and lessons learned can be used to drive employee profiles and collaborative working in real time

Assemble is a total wrap around/ one front door solution. At its best is interdependent but functional enough for each element to work independently and build on existing provision. **ASSIGN ACTION AND APPRAISE**; all working together build the foundations and technical solution that can smartly use the intelligence that comes from the three main components.

Assemble is reliant on the success of an intuitive and responsive search functionality, similar to those we are all familiar with when using Facebook, LinkedIn, shopping on Amazon, trip advisor or even a dating app. That search is going to assemble the best team for each piece of work.

My People (slides 28-30) - this is where employees keep their own profiles up to date and fresh, sharing their latest skills, experience, interests and passions. It also benefits from performance ratings, endorsements and feedback that can optimise their likelihood of match

My Work (slides 31 – 33) - where public sector managers would promote work opportunities internally, highlighting the skills, knowledge, experience and interest needed to help shape the most effective team. This would include the involvement of others across the sector who have lessons to share or gain

My Community (slides 34-35) -

This is where things get really exciting enabling the sector to work as one big team. Genuine sharing and learning from others in real time on things of common priority for all. It maximises the concept of agile working, allowing anyone in any location to be involved in project delivery, inputting expertise when needed or benefitting from experience as it happens

4. The Future

The LGA recognises there are wider opportunities for local authorities to work together stating:



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'Local governments should look towards partnering with other public services to create effective leaders of 'place', who can move between public services and help to develop effective partnerships across systems and services. This can retain talent within public services while promoting a focus on leadership qualities over technical expertise.'

(Outside the Box - The Council workforce of tomorrow, Lucy Terry and Claire Mansfield with LGA December 2016)

If we can start by getting our own organisations working more flexibly, the benefits could then be applied across the public sector.

Local Authorities are all facing the same challenges and there are tried and tested models from the same sector that can be captured and shared. There is a great wealth of experience across the public sector that we could better tap into, for example we have found colleagues in this Aspire cohort have worked through projects while others are just embarking on them. By learning from each other and working collaborative together across authorities on shared issues we can improve economies of scale and share best practice.

Ultimately we can look to share staffing resources, deploying people across the sector to where their expertise is most needed.

Assemble has the ability and potential to extend beyond internal working and enable ease of movement in and around the sector. It could enable employees to customise their own work portfolio with opportunities across a number of authorities ultimately supporting short term capacity issues or transformational change initiatives by using capacity and experience from elsewhere.

With the real time cross sector knowledge sharing, Assemble really could lend itself to a future local government employment passport. It takes the pressure off traditional recruitment and places emphasis on employee development.

Most importantly Assemble could be an effective future workforce planning tool, particularly when considering the live training needs analysis it provides at any time. No further gap analysis required as Assemble tells you all the skills you have available to deploy and by default the skills you need to develop. It's inbuilt performance tracking allows an evidenced based almost 360 approach to identifying talent.

It gives opportunities for people to try new things, explore other opportunities, self customisation of workload and naturally developing succession plans

Assemble is the future for the local government workforce.