Doing research on data uses, needs & capabilities with local authorities

Transcript from webinar video recording

1
00:00:00,765 -> 00:00:03,572
Welcome again to this webinar.

2
00:00:03,672 -> 00:00:05,531
And, as I was saying,

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00:00:06,024 -> 00:00:08,631
we're both based at the Urban Big Data Centre

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00:00:08,998 -> 00:00:14,044
and, really, we're coming from a sociology/social science perspective

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00:00:14,144 -> 00:00:18,490
on this topic of researching data uses, needs, and capabilities

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00:00:18,847 -> 00:00:20,424
by local authorities.

So, based at the Urban Big Data Centre, which combines social science with data science.

But here today, we're really going to bring the social science perspective to this topic.

So, to get us started and warm up a little bit on this broad topic,

I would like to do a little round of Mentimeter
which I'm sure you have engaged with before.

If not, I'm just going to guide you on how to do that.

So, I'm going to stop sharing my screen and share the other screen, if it's okay with you.

So, it's really a way of warming up and starting to engage with the topic.

So, hopefully you will...

Please let me know using the chat or even on your mic.
if you can’t see my screen, you can’t hear me,

or if there are any problems with the Mentimeter.

But you just go onto www.menti.com

and then you will be prompted to put a code,

which is appearing now on the screen and you should see it.

It’s 3-6-8-6-8-0-7-8.

And the first question today is,
And I know it's a very broad question.

And it's just to get us started and warmed up a bit around this topic.

So, I will let you get... Yeah, exactly, perfect.

And we see the answers popping up on the word cloud on the screen.

And that should be an interesting exercise.

So, we've quite a number of possibles. I'm going to give it some time.

Any more that... Yeah.
So, we have survey data that is coming out strongly.

A wide range of other data that are all related to local government.

Social demographics data. Such as age, gender.

Quantitative data but also qualitative data with interview data.

Spatial, that's a different type of data.

Spatial data as well.
Council tax, homelessness, yeah.

Really interesting.

Census data.

Yeah. So, using this.

So, obviously, continue to put in/fill in if you haven't done so.

But I think it really shows the wide range of data

that local government use and that,

for instance, census data,
and that local government also produce.

So, data around housing occupancy,

road network, yeah.

Transportation, council taxes, all of this.

Fantastic. So, hopefully this gives you, like,

it really warms you up for this webinar

and gives us, already, a good overview of

the complexity of this topic.
Okay. So, now I'm going to move, hopefully, to the next question.

And you should be prompted with a question now, which I will bring up onto the screen.

Same code.

So, what do you think are the challenges of doing research on data with local authorities?
It's a very open question

so I'm curious to see what challenges you think are there

when we start thinking about doing research on data with local authorities.

Please let me know if it works with Mentimeter, but it should be okay.

Yeah, it's also started arriving.

So, I can see now authenticity of data,
licensed data, bias, yeah.

So, some more of, like, the technical infrastructure of data

but also, kind of, broader governance issues

emerging here, like politics, I guess.

Not matching boundaries.

That can be with data but also within local government, I guess.

Timescales, yeah.

Skills is also a very important one that is emerging here, yeah.
Just leaving some more time for people to engage.

Not open access is also an important challenge that you can encounter doing research with local authorities here.

Anything else?

Okay. We'll leave it for one more minute and then we'll be moving on.

Lack of consistency.
Access to data, yeah.

So, I think it's obviously a similar topic to not open data.

Access, lack of data, yeah.

Access.

So, I think we have here a good overview of some of

the technical infrastructure issues


around the data itself.

Access, its quality, consistency, where it's located, its ownership.

But also, maybe, broader issues and challenges around governance and timescale of local government.

politics of local governments.

The skills, the data skills, also, that are available to local governments.

So, all of this.

GDPR, that's the legal framework as well.
So, really, this really captures well the variety of challenges, but also opportunities when you're doing research with local authorities to engage with these challenges and hopefully try to solve them or resolve them, at least, as much as possible.

Okay. So, I'm going to stop sharing this and hopefully this has given us some food for thought.
And I'm just going to share, again, the presentation.

Okay. So, the structure of the webinar.

The training webinar today will be around four discussion points.

I think the understanding the landscape of local government and its different data uses,

and I think that's really important to get started with.

Doing research on data uses, needs, and capabilities with local authorities is really understanding the context in which
those uses and needs are located.

Then we're going to get into more details around how do we map the different data types that a local government uses and produces, and also the different areas of data engagement.

And hopefully you will know more about that by the end of the webinar.

Then we will look at designing a mixed-methods approach
to doing research on data uses, needs, and capabilities with local authorities

00:08:37,199 --> 00:08:39,979
and combining qualitative research methods

00:08:40,079 --> 00:08:41,773
with quantitative research methods.

00:08:42,363 --> 00:08:45,072
And finally, we will look at

00:08:45,200 --> 00:08:48,919
collaboration and its essential role

00:08:49,609 --> 00:08:53,677
in the project we run, as I was mentioning earlier,

00:08:54,456 --> 00:08:57,552
with the Digital Office for Scottish local government

00:08:57,652 --> 00:09:01,619
on Scottish local authorities' data engagement during COVID-19.
So, that's the project I'm running myself,

we've been running for the last year.

So, you can see at the bottom of the screen there's a link to the full report if you're interested in it.

And I will share the slides as well at the end anyway.

So, these are going to be the four discussion points of the webinar today.

Please let me know if you have any questions using either
the chat function or raising your hand

and I will also give you some opportunities to engage during the webinar.

So, starting with understanding the landscape of local government and its data uses,

I think what is really important here to remember,

and I'm sure you're aware of this,

local government has a very complex organisational structure.
And it also has a breadth of policy areas and delivers a wide range of services.

So, here, I've just put on the right a table that summarises the main areas of responsibility of local authorities in Scotland and it really gives you an understanding of the wide range of policy areas they are dealing with.
So, education, social care, environmental protection,

road and transport, economic development,

housing and planning, waste management,

and cultural and leisure services.

So, if you think in terms of data

and the data they collect in each of these areas of responsibility,

you can quickly see how varied this is going to be.

And this complex organisational structure of
local government and the range of services they deliver is

also topped by the fact that they engage, obviously, with,

first of all, other public sector organisations

like Police Scotland or NHS bodies and share data with them.

There are also other entities such as third sector organisations and private companies.

And all of this is kind of embedded within an ecosystem of organisations at national and local levels.
So, for example, in terms of digital transformation in local government, the Improvement Service and Digital Office for Scottish local government are really two key local government organisations that are active in that field. So, they are also supporting local government with data sharing. And I think when you are looking at doing research on this topic, it's very important to look at these organisations as well.
So, this is more on the understanding of the landscape of local government when it comes to digital and digital transformation. But also, it's kind of important to look at the different types of data activities that local government are doing on a daily basis. And here it's quite useful to look at the diagram that I've collected from.
van Ooijen, Ubaldi, and Welby.

00:12:00,795 --> 00:12:03,554
I've provided the resources at the end

00:12:03,654 --> 00:12:06,103
and, again, I will share the slides with you.

00:12:06,398 --> 00:12:10,006
But here, it's four main activities.

00:12:10,106 --> 00:12:12,855
So, first of all, collecting and generating data.

00:12:13,775 --> 00:12:16,758
Then storing, securing, and processing this data.

00:12:17,527 --> 00:12:20,933
The third one is around sharing, curating, and publishing.

00:12:21,001 --> 00:12:24,669
And the last one is using and reusing data.
So, already you can see the variety of data activities that local government is involved with.

And in terms of data uses, local government uses data for a wide range of reasons. So, that could be operational monitoring.

That could be making more strategic decisions and using performance and indicators using data.

That could be monitoring the services uptake
and trying to predict future trends

and tailoring services.

That could be designing policy or informing policy making.

So, really, again, I keep putting an emphasis on that,

but it's a wide range of data activities, data applications,

and different types of data

that local government uses.

So, maybe, it might be useful now
just to stop for a minute and think, what do we mean by data?

And here, helpfully, Kitchin,

Robert Kitchin, has provided a definition, as you can see on the screen. So, data is the raw material produced by abstracting the world into categories, measures, and other representational forms.

And here you start thinking,
this is going to be massive.

00:13:39,855 --> 00:13:42,758
It’s a very wide, encompassing definition.

00:13:43,026 --> 00:13:46,664
And these forms are considered the building blocks

00:13:46,991 --> 00:13:49,259
from which information and knowledge are created.

00:13:49,700 --> 00:13:53,579
So, you start thinking, we need some more categories

00:13:53,679 --> 00:13:56,382
or something like a narrower definition of

00:13:56,482 --> 00:13:57,660
what we mean by data

00:13:57,760 --> 00:14:00,009
to really try to engage local government.
And Kitchin has provided several criteria that you can use
to define data, in particular, big data.

And I’m sure you know and are aware of
how big data is traditionally defined with the three Vs.

So, volume.

So, it’s very large quantities of data.

Velocity, created in real time.

And variety. So, structured, semi-structured,
unstructured data.

And since this first definition came about in 2014, there have been a number of other criteria added to it.

So, you have exhaustivity, relationality, resolution, scalability.

So, you can see that on the screen.

And he tried in his work to really distinguish between big data and small data.
So, that will be one way of looking at what do we mean by data and trying to narrow it down.

However, you have other ways of looking at this and that might be too technical for your participants.

So, another way to look at trying to map data types and engage with the different types that local government uses
might be looking at the idea of the data spectrum,

which was published by the Open Data Institute,

which is based here in the UK.

And here you have three kinds of criteria.

You have, again, the size.

So, the categories are between small, medium, and big data.

So, really, it's a spectrum rather than clear cut categories.

You have the type.
So, on the top, you can see personal versus commercial versus government data.

Government data, sometimes, is understood as more administrative data.

But, more recently, government is also starting to collect and generate more novel types of data, such as social media data, such as sensor data, for instance, using smart means,
or such as mobile phone data

using commercially owned data

and getting that.

So, again, a spectrum.

And often this data is personal

so aggregated and anonymised.

So, again, it's really important to see it as a spectrum

as the diagram shows.
And the last criteria is around accessibility.

So, here you have closed data, shared data and open data,

and, again, a spectrum of different types of access
to these data and examples.

So, other classifications that you will find online,

and there are plenty, can be public sector data versus private sector

versus community data.
So, again, it's really seeing that there are many, many ways of looking at different types of data and how you can categorise it and what might be the most helpful for you, for your research questions, but also, what type of categories are familiar and talk to your participants.

If you choose, for instance, personal, commercial, and government data and think, that's helpful for me,
if your participants don't really engage with these types of categories,

it might be difficult for them to take part in the research.

So, it's really thinking both ways.

Because we are 23 people here,

it might be difficult if I ask everybody to do that.

But if we look at mobility,
what specific types of data do you think local government uses and generates to understand mobility?

So, if you could just try to make some guesses here in the chat.

Traffic surveys, yeah.

Vehicle counts, which...

Interesting. Vehicle counts can be both novel data if they use sensors
but that could also be cordon, which they do several times a year.

Yeah, use of services like Nextbike, definitely.

Yeah, I think that we definitely love data on how we commute to work.

I think that's something we'd definitely love to have more detailed data on.

Census, household data on mobility, yeah.

Ticket sales on public transport.

Surveys, yeah.
Yeah, public transport.

317
00:18:57,667 --> 00:19:02,956
Yeah. So, definitely, all of these are

318
00:19:03,056 --> 00:19:06,265
absolutely what they use.

319
00:19:06,365 --> 00:19:10,954
So, I have mapped, roughly, what Glasgow City Council use

320
00:19:11,204 --> 00:19:14,378
at the moment. And I'm sure it's not exhaustive.

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00:19:15,206 --> 00:19:19,236
But, yeah, there are traffic sensors and bike counts as well

322
00:19:20,605 --> 00:19:23,183
that are installed by the council

323
00:19:23,283 --> 00:19:25,412
and that do collect data.
So, at the moment, a project, actually with UBDC,
in which they're looking at CCTV, anonymised pedestrian counts,
they are developing this and will use it for understanding mobility.

So, that's, kind of, more on the real-time data.

Then there's less real-time data

and I think you've mentioned that in the chat.

So, obviously, surveys, census, statistics,
the cordon which also has the sensing and counting the number of cars
and number of buses.

But literally doing that manually.

And then you also have private data

or private phone data

that can be real-time or can be more historic data.

So, you have, obviously,

the data around the different types of public transport.

So, SPT, Scotrail, bus companies.
Nextbike, which was mentioned in the chat,

there is also an API for that.

Strava data, which was made available to all cities recently by the company.

Or, even more broadly, Google mobility data,

which obviously won't have a lot of granularity in those data.

But these are all potential types of data

that are used by local government.
Yeah. Okay.

So, here I'm just going to present the terminology that we used in our project and why we decided to go for that one.

So, the typology is around five different types of data and we first decided to use public sector, private sector, third sector terminology which is used by several scholars.

And we decided, actually, to distinguish between
internal and external public sector data

and that was really because

we were interested in capturing local government’s data uses

but also how they interact with other organisations,

and that included other public sector organisations.

So, first, public sector data is

data collected either by local government

or by Scottish/UK government and public bodies.
And, as I said, it's internal or external.

Third sector data, we defined that as

data provided by charities, voluntary organisations,

community groups, and social enterprises.

Private sector data is data provided commercially by private companies and data brokers.

And then we added onto this terminology novel data,
collected via social media or applications,

or via connected infrastructure and sensors, such as the Internet of Things.

And we are aware that there is an overlap between private sector data and novel data.

In particular, within smart city initiatives that are taking place within local government.
But, really, our research was interested in capturing whether local government was using these novel forms of data.

So, that's why we decided to add it on to the typology.

Sorry. It's going too fast.

So, here, really, what I wanted to highlight is there is no one way of looking at data and creating one typology that works for every context.

I think it's really trying to think about your research question.
and what you’re interested in capturing

and adjusting your typology to that.

So, really scoping the literature,

eventually, if possible, engaging with the stakeholders

and data practitioners in local government

to really see if your terminology resonates with their experiences,

and really trying to align your typology to your research objectives.

And here, I'm just going to ask if you have any questions at this stage.
So, you can raise your hand or interact in the chat if you have any questions.

Yeah. There is one question by Emily.

Hi, thanks. This is really interesting so far.

I don't know how much engagement you did with people working in local authorities about this typology and how much it was informed by their understanding of different data types.
and their uses.

Yeah, no, it's a really, really good question.

Thanks for asking.

And you will see in the tips later I'm going to touch on that.

We created this typology by both scoping the literature,
but also, we went back to the Digital Office for

Scottish local government,

which is the organisation that works with local government

in Scotland and help them, support them

in their digital transformation,

and really asked them, does that resonate with you?

Is it something that makes sense?

Because we didn’t want to come in and kind of impose one terminology.
When we used that sort of terminology in the research,

in particular, in our survey,

we also defined it clearly at the beginning to make sure that

it was clear for participants.

So, that is how we dealt with this.

Great. Thanks.

Any other questions?

No? Okay, so I will move on from here.
But, again, feel free to ask questions at any time.

Okay. So, the second area

when we started the project,

we were looking at different data types

and how local government used these different data types.

And then we said, well, actually, there is more to it.

And we started mapping the local government data engagement,
in relation to data.

And here, again, we had several iterations of this and we had discussions with the Digital Office about this as well.

It's really trying to understand what are the different aspects of data engagement within local government.

And here, we were like, okay,
there are different data types, obviously,

but also, local government is engaging within a broader data ecosystem.

And I think I've mentioned that already.

Sharing data with public sector organisations,

third sector, private corporations.

They're collaborating together
to generate insight and so on.

So, it was more than only the data types.
So, we started mapping this around four areas.

So, the first one was around the different sources of data for local government, that are external to local government.

Then the different types of data capabilities that they use and need and maybe lack in some aspects to engage with data.

Then the data sharing they do with external organisations.

And then, if possible at all,
we were interested in capturing the collaborations that were taking place.

And I'm just going to go into detail on each of these areas so you can hopefully get a better understanding of the mapping.

So, we started with the sources of data and the data sourcing. And here we're really interested in mapping the different sources for local government of the different types of organisations they got data from
or they accessed data from.

So, here you can see what we've done on the screen.

So, we added different bubbles for each type of source.

So, public sector.

And I think in the survey we detailed that

in more fine-grained categories,

such as NHS Boards or Police Scotland
or different types of government agencies and so on.

So, we had a fine-grained understanding of the different public sector organisations they were sourcing data from.

Then private corporations and local businesses.

We kind of wanted here to have a distinction between big tech corporations and maybe the corporations that would provide these services.
and local businesses that were obviously on a different scale

but that are still private sector data.

Then third sector

and grassroot community and citizens.

Research institutions, such as the UBDC, for example.

But also, other research institutions

such as the Data Lab and other organisations that

collaborate with local government.
And connected infrastructures and system sensors.

So, that's all the new novel data around the Internet of Things.

And that is captured here.

So, the second area of data engagement we mapped was

around data capabilities.

And I think, in many ways, this one was the trickiest one

because you would see in the literature,

and, again, I will share the slides and you will have the references at the end,
but there is a wide range of understanding of what needs to be captured in terms of data-related capabilities. And so, here, for example, you have a framework that includes IT governance, IT resources, attitudes towards data, sort of data culture, legal compliance, data government, and data expertise.
So, it's really, really broad

and, at the same time, you also want to think about

the different uses

and data activities that I've mentioned earlier in the presentation.

So, the processing of data,

the capturing of data,

the maintenance, analysis, and interpretation of data.

So, it's really a lot of things to capture within data capabilities.
But we really wanted to do this because we wanted to capture the needs and potentially the gaps that were impinging local government to use data.

So, here we settled for different areas that hopefully captured the capabilities and also the different aspects of the data lifecycle.

So, we started with capabilities around Human Resources and skills.
Then we moved on to infrastructures and software.

So, infrastructure is more the hardware and software, for instance,

visualisation tools that they use but also processing software.

Then we had internal capture and retrieval,

and here, really tried to capture the internal sharing data capabilities and maybe the internal silos and how that worked.
Then processing and integration of data.

And within local government, the analysis of data.

Storage and maintenance.

And the last one which was of interest to us but also, I think, spoke to the broader research question was whether there was a strategy in place with regards to data use within local government.
So, the strategical aspect

in terms of capabilities here.

That was the second area.

The third is around data sharing and here we really focused on

not internal data sharing because

that was captured in the capabilities in the previous slide.

but external data sharing

and trying to understand how we can capture that.
So, instead of having, again, the potential organisation

with local government cultured data,

we decided to use the mechanism by which they do share data.

And here we listed graphical user interfaces

such as dashboards,

Application Programming Interfaces,

but also licenses and agreements,

such as data sharing agreements, for example,
or the publication of open datasets.

And, for us, that really provided us with a way of capturing the maturity of local government with regards to data sharing. And we saw it as in terms of data accessibility and visibility. And finally, we were quite interested in exploring whether local government was collaborating with different stakeholders.
to collect, use, and analyse data.

So, that's a step further from data sharing.

So, data sharing is, basically,

implementing protocols to make data accessible to other stakeholders.

Here, data collaboration is really working together to

create, collect, use, and analyse data

and produce insights from data.
And here we replicated the number of stakeholders that local government is collaborating with in this sector.

So, overall, we had a good, quite complex map that emerged from this exercise.

And this was really useful for us to understand, first of all,
the context in which local government data engagement is located,

but also to design the survey, which I'm going to come to in a minute.

And the survey that we wanted to do
to systematically capture
what the data practices of local government are.

And so, we designed it around these four broad areas.

And at this stage...

Oh, no. I have another slide on quick tips
and then I will open it up for questions again.

So, in terms of practical tips,

I would say it’s very important to review

the academic and policy literature,

as you would do, but also the grey literature.

So, for instance, blog posts by data practitioners are

quite useful in that way

and also quite useful to really capture the terminology
that practitioners use,

especially if you want to do a survey with practitioners.

So, keeping in mind your research objectives/questions.

So, as I said, the terminology that we ended up using was

adding novel types of data because

we were really interested in these new forms of data

and whether local government were
making use of it.

And, also, we had quite a big part on data collaborations and different networks that are emerging in Scotland and within data collaboration because we were also really interested in that.

But maybe if your research objectives aren't really around this, you can have broader, more finely defined data capabilities, for example.
Using mapping and visualisation tools.

Actually, it's quite useful to write it down, map it with those tools and really show the different areas you can engage with.

As I just had the question earlier on, if possible it's great to consult with stakeholders and practitioners.

So, as I said, we had several meetings with the Digital Office and we really discussed with them.
the relevance and whether the terminology was working.

Also, whether we have missed any big areas of data engagement and whether they recognised the terminology we used.

And create several iterations and use different possible focuses and levels of detail because I think it’s really important that you see that data can be looked at in different ways.

So, you need to make sure that you get the lens that will answer the question.
you are interested in.

So, really playing around with it.

And it's a process, so you won't get it right the first time around.

You really need to play with it for a little bit.

Any questions at this stage?

Yeah, I can't see any hands.

Was it difficult to match data?
Yes, it was.

627
00:36:56,444 --> 00:36:59,891
So, what was interesting in this project was that

628
00:37:02,728 --> 00:37:07,238
we designed a survey and it was obviously in the context of COVID-19.

629
00:37:07,338 --> 00:37:12,367
So, for example, we had to map the internal public sector data

630
00:37:12,467 --> 00:37:15,467
that local government potentially use

631
00:37:16,354 --> 00:37:18,134
in the context of COVID-19.

632
00:37:18,244 --> 00:37:22,068
And what we did is we really scoped the literature

633
00:37:22,168 --> 00:37:25,164
and, as I said, we also engaged with the Digital Office
for Scottish local government.

That really helped us to have a list of different data that local government use.

But I also put in the survey a little box saying "Other" and then "Please specify" because it was good to capture as much as I could in the survey and list it.

But then I was like, oh, if there is another type of data
I haven't thought of or the literature hasn't identified,

maybe it's also good to give the participants the option
to add another type of data.

So, that was how we went around this.

Okay, I'm just going to move on. I'm aware of the time.

So, let's move on to the design itself.

And again, with the report,
So, we designed a mixed-methods approach here.

And the first part of the project was around scoping the literature, as I said.

The mapping exercise that I just showed you.

And consultation with stakeholders.

And then we used this to design the survey.

And focus groups and interviews. And I'm going to get into more detail
about quantitative data collection and qualitative data collection

and data analysis.

But really, using a mixed-methods approach is referring to a methodology that advanced the integration of quantitative and qualitative data.

That really helps the robustness of the research, but also helps to validate the findings.

So, you really see, you look at your research questions.
So, how does local government use data in the context of COVID-19 from different perspectives.

So, from the survey perspective or from a more qualitative data insights perspective.

And that really helps to ensure robustness but also the validity of your findings.

You can corroborate your findings.

So, here, first we started with
a survey of the 32 Scottish local authorities.

So, as I said, the survey was designed drawing on the mapping exercise that I just went through with you and in consultation with the Digital Office.

And we decided to actually have a sample of 64 participants.

So, two people from each of the 32 local authorities in Scotland.

So, first, we targeted one data specialist or someone that had a portfolio around data or digital transformation.
And then, the second person was someone working with a team around recovery or more like senior management level.

And we thought it was really useful to have the data practitioner perspective and the senior management recovery perspective.

And that was our way of capturing these perspectives.
The Digital Office acted as a gatekeeper

and really helped to produce the survey and focus groups

Then the second part of the design was

around the qualitative data collection.

And here we had two strengths.

So, focus groups, a series of focus groups,

and, again, we decided to have

a slightly different scope for each focus group.
So, first of all, the first one was with local authorities, amongst themselves,

and they really discussed the types of data they used to respond to the crisis.

The second one was around data collaboration and sharing between local authorities and public sector organisations.

And the third one was around data collaboration and sharing between local authorities and third sector organisations.
So, that was really to corroborate some of the survey themes.

And we actually used some of the survey results as prompts and that sort of helped with data triangulation as well.

And we also had a series of interviews with experts that were representing different organisations in Scotland.

So, Improvement Services, Scottish Cities Alliance, and so on.

So, in terms of data analysis, we did a descriptive statistical analysis of
the survey results and we really combined that with a textual analysis of the expert interviews and focus groups.

And we used a range of software to support the analysis and visualisations.

So, we used NVivo, which is quite good for that.

And we also used some of the inbuilt software
in the JISC online survey as well.

And we really did this triangulation to help ensure the validity and robustness of the research.

So, we looked at whether the emerging themes from the survey were also emerging in the interviews and the focus groups. And maybe the interviews and focus groups would provide us more in-depth insights into something emerging from the surveys.

That was really how we did it.
in terms of triangulation.

So, just some quick tips for a mixed-methods approach.

I'm just aware of the time.

So, obviously follow ethical guidance.

Think about the order of each step and how they feed into one another.

So, we started with the survey and it took quite a bit of time to get going and to design.
And then we did the focus groups and interviews roughly around the same time.

Because we wanted the survey results to inform the interviews.

We really had to have a substantial amount of time between the survey and the more qualitative phase of the research.

So, it's really something to keep in mind when you're designing your research.
The ordering of each step and whether you want to do them simultaneously or one after the other because they inform or they feed into one another.

Be aware of the time commitment required to prepare each step.

So, I think I've touched on that with the previous comments.

And also make sure that you detail the organisational requirements.
So, if you need support to run your focus group.

00:43:49,358 --> 00:43:51,765
If local authorities use specific tools as well.

00:43:51,865 --> 00:43:53,239
So, for example, we know that

00:43:53,339 --> 00:43:56,788
local authorities mostly use Microsoft Teams

00:43:56,888 --> 00:43:58,157
so you will have to use this.

00:43:58,257 --> 00:44:01,626
So, really consider all of these organisational requirements.

00:44:01,965 --> 00:44:05,113
And maybe also consider skills or software training.

00:44:05,213 --> 00:44:06,592
So, for instance, NVivo
or if you want to get into more depth with statistical data,

maybe R as well.

Okay. And the last...

And I will open it to questions in just two minutes.

But the last point is around collaborating with key stakeholders.

So, the research project we ran in the past year was really successful.

And a large part of that was because
the Digital Office for Scottish local government.

And the organisation really helped with recruitment,

especially for our survey and focus groups,

but they also brought their expertise,

their perspective on how local government engage with data,

and really guided us from a practitioner’s point of view.

So, here you can see on the screen,

the benefits of the collaborations.
So, bringing this variety of perspectives.

And being informed by practitioners' expertise improved the quality of the research.

And that's really something we've seen in our project and something that you should consider,

I think, if you're doing research with local government.

It can also facilitate access to
hard to reach organisations and communities.

In our specific case,

local governments aren't necessarily hard to reach

but I think there are organisations that have limited resources

and it's easier to engage with them

if you have a gatekeeper that can introduce you

and if you have someone who shows the relevance of your research for them.

So, that can really facilitate this access.
And finally, it promotes knowledge exchange leading to change/innovation.

I think it's very important to have this impact and applied research built into the design from the beginning and really make sure that the research questions you're examining and you're thinking of are relevant from an academic point of view but also from a practitioner point of view.

And in our research, we drew on the findings
and we made policy and practical recommendations

for data practitioners in local government.

So, quick tips here for collaborating with key stakeholders.

So, identifying relevant partners.

So, doing your homework and, basically, mapping

your data ecosystem in local government or in Scotland

or wherever the boundary of your research is.

Defining the boundaries of your collaboration.
So, you can have a memorandum of understanding from the start.

Also, really defining the type of involvement and tasks that you require from your participants or your collaborators and the time that you would require. It's very important to be clear on that. And that would help you to set and manage expectations.

So, the specific role, the timeline of the project,
when they can expect to have some of the output of the research,

what the anticipated outcomes of the research are.

All of this it's quite important for it to be said at the beginning of
the collaboration.

And finally, define the communication procedures and collaborative tools.

I think I mentioned that. So, using Teams, for example,
But also defining, roughly, the number of meetings with the key contact person.

So, very practical details.