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Ministry of Housing,  
Communities &  
Local Government

# VCS and Council Data Exchange

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## MHCLG show & tell

December 2020

## The Brief

How can we **overcome the data sharing challenges** between councils and the voluntary community sector (VCS) that stop organisations being able to **find and provide residents the right support when they need it?**

# What we learned

**Finding 1:** Lack of understanding is a bigger barrier than a lack of technology

**Opportunity 1:**  
New relationships before new tools

**Finding 2:**  
'Data' is a limiting term

**Opportunity 2:**  
Reframe what data can be to unlock the way forward

**Finding 3:**  
Pragmatism is creating progress

**Opportunity 3:**  
Scale small solutions for big gains

# Prioritised solution

## Community insights projects

bring together VCS staff and council data experts to explore how different types of quantitative and qualitative data can be used to deliver better support to residents during the pandemic and beyond. Combining their strengths, skills and capacity to address shared 'blindspot' issues. Planning, interpreting and responding as one.

## Why?

- Build relationships and trust
- Develop new insights to plan vital services
- Find new ways to share and use stories and data
- Improve forward planning
- Help residents and communities at risk

# This solution is an opportunity to foster more of...

## More of

**Conversations** – people with practical experience working through problems together

**Direct access** – put people with the knowledge in first hand contact

**Continuity** – strengthen relationships and trust with each project

**Outside sources** – actively investigate the work of other organisations and repurpose locally

**Show the thing** – provide feedback and develop on real examples, not abstractions

**Open communication** – share work for others to add to and make use of

**Outcomes** – what change is needed? Why?

## Less of

**Handoffs** – reduce upfront specifications, email exchanges, hierarchical decision making

**Intermediaries** – reduce the barriers to deeper investigation and relationships

**Delegation or outsourcing** – provide opportunities for local teams to retain local knowledge

**Reliance on in-house data** – focus on what we need to know rather than just using what we have

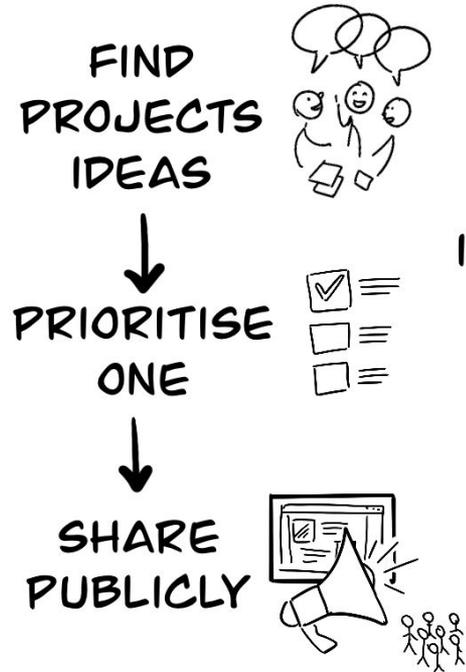
**Big and slow** – less emphasis on getting it right first time but instead on making it less wrong

**Data secrecy** – move away from the focus on proprietary data to shared insights

**Outputs** – dashboards, visualisations, reports

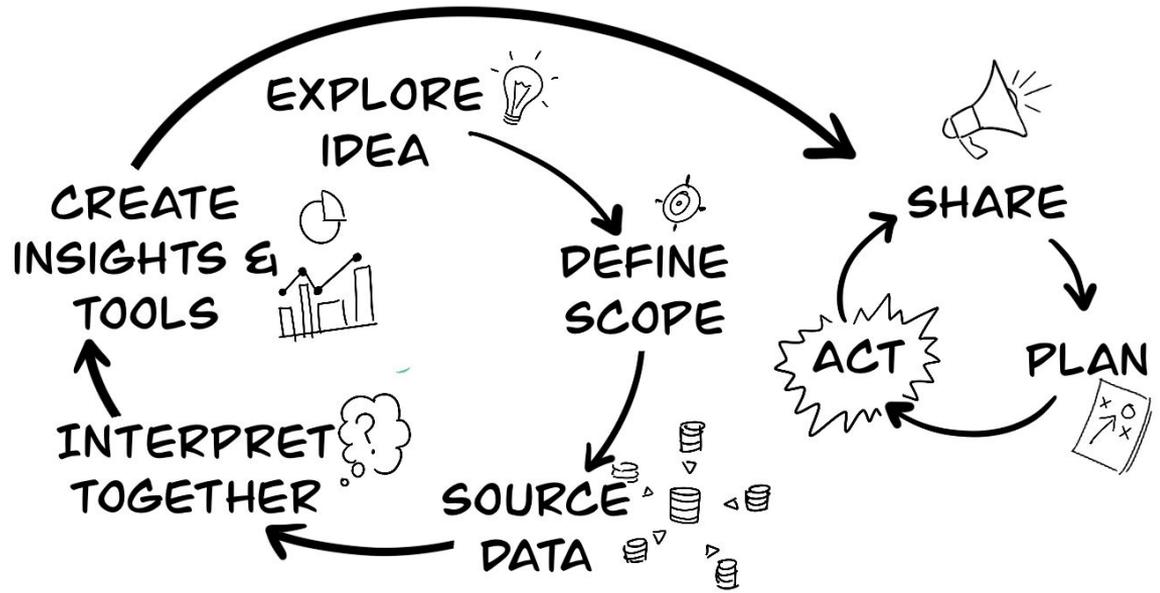
# How community insights projects work

**BEFORE**



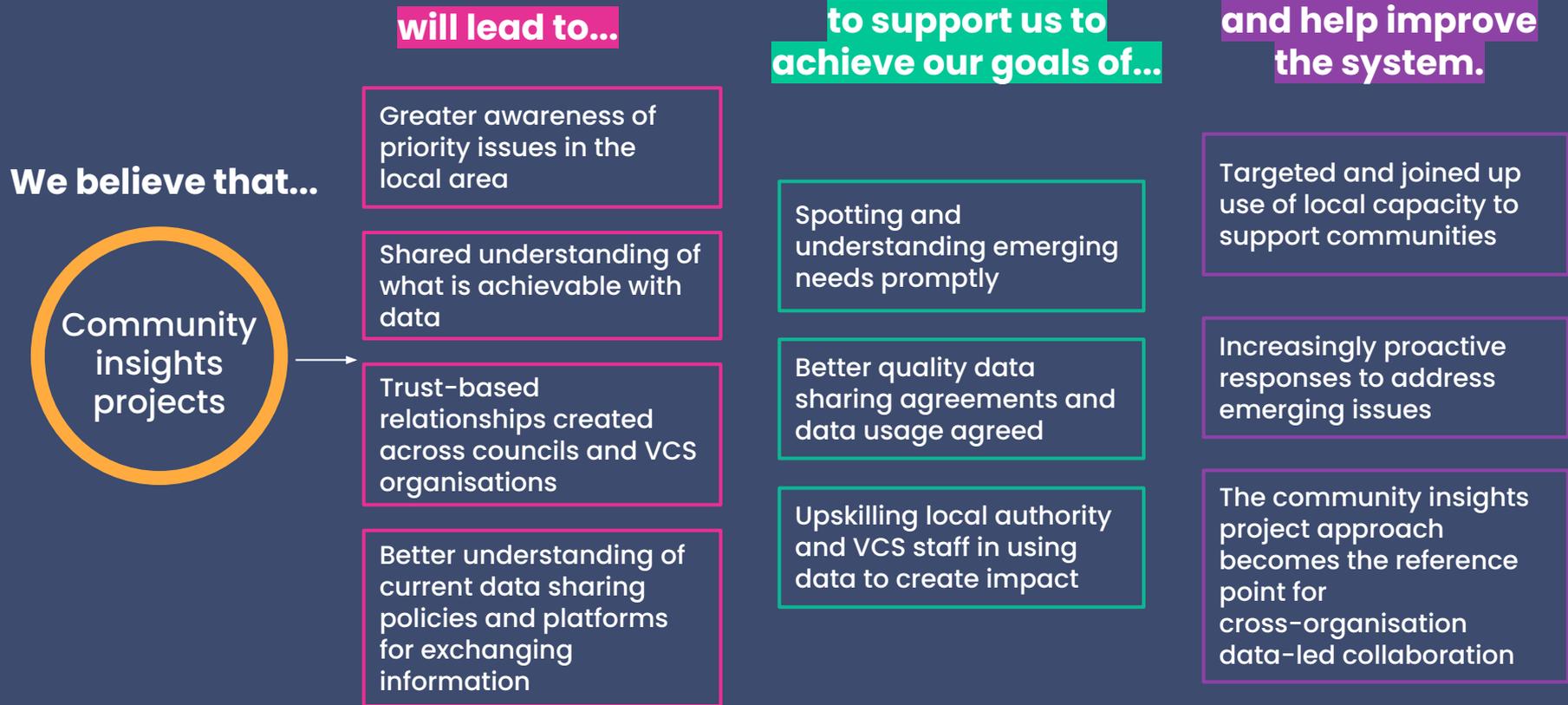
**DURING**

1 PROJECT  
8-12 WEEKS  
6-10 PEOPLE



**AFTER**

# How this solution delivers value



# From ideas to action



**I'm really fearful for at-risk groups of residents out there about which we have almost no information. Right now, we're simply guessing and reacting using our own instincts and numbers...together we must surely have different pieces of the puzzle to help us be smarter?**

**-VCS**

## Getting started

- Camden to setup first community insights project team in winter 2020/21.
- Initial ideas and participants identified
- User manual and learning framework created.
- Partnership of Central Bedfordshire, LOTI, MHCLG are continuing to support and publically share updates.

# Following progress

Access our report and user guide and follow ongoing work and progress via the project [web page](#) and through social media.'

## Start your own CIP

LOTI can provide advice and guidance for those starting a new CIP contact [jay.saggar@loti.london](mailto:jay.saggar@loti.london)

### Community Insights Projects

#### – User Guide

A guide on how to create and run Community Insights Projects: bringing together Voluntary and Charitable Sector staff and council data experts to explore how different types of quantitative and qualitative data can be used to meet the needs of residents.



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# Thank you

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