



Improving Local Government

Why is governance important in Local Government in the 21st Century? How can local people improve their local area? How can scrutiny and better working practices improve decision-making? These are some of the questions that we wanted to answer when designing the Govern-IT learning-simulation (serious game). Govern-IT needed to shed light on these issues, and also make them relevant and 'real'.

Complexity to Clarity

Govern-IT was developed in partnership with Cheshire County Council for use in workshops to improve existing skills and knowledge and for induction.

Govern-IT models 3 years in the life of a local authority. Teams play services, members and external partners. The community has to be lead and the current situation needs improving. Efficiency savings need to be made, quality improved, and risks managed. Finally, after each round (simulated year), the teams are scored on the Cipfa / SOLACE governance framework, political pledges, public opinion and local outcomes.

Govern-IT brings **clarity to a complex problem** by showing cause and effect. Delegates get to see the 'big picture' and to develop win-win solutions, which makes the issues real, relevant and manageable.

Proven Learning Approach

Blending the best of traditional and interactive learning, the approach has been used in over 450 workshops, successfully training more than 6,000 people.

Example uses of Govern-IT:

- **Cheshire CC** - Officer Training in Governance.
- **St Helens MBC** - Member training (capacity building).
- **Sefton MBC** - Capacity building in overview and scrutiny.
- **Copeland BC and Allerdale BC** - Member induction.
- **Wyre BC** - Succession Planning.
- **Yorkshire Councils** - Member Training.
- **Coventry City Council** - Apprenticeship Training.

Perspective: The Enron scandal and rogue traders grab the headlines, but public sector fraud costs Britain £6.4 billion every year. Official figures state that it equates to £330 for every man, woman and child. How much more is wasted because of mistakes and poor decisions?



Govern-IT models a local authority. Teams play services, members and external partners, together they need to improve the local authority. The members team have to show leadership and, along with corporate team, steer strategy. Efficiency savings have to be made and quality improved while managing risk. Govern-IT has been used in local council member induction, cabinet member recruitment, shared learning across city councils, and governance training.



"Very interactive and gave an opportunity for all members to understand the sometimes difficult decisions that need to be taken." - Elaine Woodburn, Leader of Copeland Borough Council

Inspiration (motivation to act) + Simulation (how to act) = Improved Decisions.



Key Objectives and Messages:

- Local people know what they need.
- Community leadership is fundamental to localism.
- Understanding the need for a whole council approach.
- Governance is not just about rules and regulations; it is about good decision-making.
- Good decision-making requires information, understanding and communication.
- Members, officers, the public, and partners need to work together and behave appropriately.
- Overview and scrutiny improves service delivery, community focus, and decision-making.
- Considering impacts across the whole organisation generates improvements and efficiencies.



Real World Improvements

With clarity comes real world improvements. Our delegates consistently highlight improvements in the following three areas, which in turn translate into **improved decisions**.

- **Strategic Thinking** – Understanding the key driver against which your decisions need to be measured. Does a particular decision help you get closer to your goal?
- **Joined-up Thinking** – Understanding cause and effect generates perspective, reduces the chances of perverse outcomes, and increases the likelihood of your decisions being win-wins.
- **Collaborative Working** – Wider involvement improves decision-making. In essence, it allows your organisation to benefit from the 'wisdom of the crowd'.

"Enjoyable and challenging way of learning - understanding how the organisation works as a whole and how different parts need to communicate and pull together ."

Who Might Benefit from a Govern-IT Workshop

- Local Authority Officers (who need to refresh their understanding).
- Existing Members (who need to refresh their understanding).
- New Members and officers (Induction).
- Individuals involved with partnerships and community groups.
- Individuals involved in procurement and other key decision-making.
- Anyone involved in Overview and Scrutiny and other governance roles.

Over 99% of delegates have rated our workshops good or very good. Long term evaluation has identified better collaboration and decision-making; leading to significant savings.



Do you want an innovative approach to induction and governance training?

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For more on learning-simulations visit: www.pixelfountain.co.uk

... and let learning ripple *through* your organisation