



**Case study**

# West London Alliance Outcomes Accelerator (DCIA)



## What is the WLA Outcomes Accelerator?

The Outcomes Accelerator is a pilot project to map publicly owned street and building assets such as lamp posts, street furniture and building assets to create a brokerage platform so the data can be shared with wireless network operators for the rollout of advanced digital networks, including 4G and 5G, across West London.

The project is led by the West London Alliance and its overall objective is to find a sustainable business solution which would make transactions between the telecommunication companies and local authorities, as well as the other public sector bodies who own the assets, as easy as possible, lowering costs of site acquisition and speeding up the installation of the infrastructure which will deliver the benefits of 5G sooner for residents and businesses.

The endgame is to create a blueprint for the rest of London to take forward their own asset data projects with platform providers and the industry.

In order to achieve its overall objective, the Accelerator needed to:

- **Find a fast track methodology to find sites and assets suitable for the ‘small and macro cell’ mobile infrastructure which can deliver 5G**
- **Create an easy-to-use platform which the mobile operators could use to find the assets, carry out transactions with the asset owners, and assess their viability**
- **Streamline processes with template agreements, clear tariffs and a standardised contract procedure**



## The Challenges

The Accelerator needed to find the solutions to many challenges, covering technical, legal and contractual, as well as establish partnership working models.

Deploying mobile infrastructure on public street furniture (e.g., CCTV poles, traffic lights, lampposts and bus shelters), usually via small cells with limited local coverage (e.g., useful for covering busy areas, such as shopping malls or tourist attractions), is already quite common in the United Kingdom.

However, such access often requires the mobile operators to enter specific negotiations and concession agreements with multiple local authorities, which may already have exclusive local arrangements with a particular operator. In addition, there is no easy way for the network operators to acquire the information needed to verify that a structure is suitable, such as its location, physical dimensions, proximity to the street or access to a power source (i.e., cells still need data capacity and power, which may be difficult to access).

To meet these challenges the pilot team would need to develop a digital inventory of more than 137,000 streetlamps alone across West London, as well as all the thousands of buildings, bus stops and other infrastructure, in addition to identifying which ones were suitable.

They would also need to find new ways of working to maintain and share the data with the telecommunications operators and find ways of developing templated agreements and clear tariffs in order to save both the code operators and local authorities time and money. And they would need to develop a digital platform (Asset Market Platform) which would work for all parties involved to manage the processes.



The WLA set up a series of test cases for the Asset Market Platform which would:

- **Determine the business process necessary to allow the seven local authorities in the WLA to review and approve tenant applications as efficiently as possible**
- **Understand whether a digital platform reduces costs for local authorities and the time to market for establishing 5G networks**
- **Explore the challenges of using publicly owned infrastructure assets to support the roll out of advanced wireless connectivity via a digital platform.**

## Test Case

## Outputs

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|--------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>1. Data collection and cleaning</b>     | Data was successfully captured, cleansed and imported it into the Asset Market platform from LAs and PFI who own and manage the streetlights. It was determined that the data was useful, helped to validate the selection of appropriate sites and API systems were investigated for both sourcing data from a public source and for users to extract data. There was a general view across all local authorities that MNOs should not be able to extract all asset data at once and this aspect was therefore not tested. |
| <b>2. Functional testing</b>               | All functional testing carried out successfully                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| <b>3. Operator Model</b>                   | Operator model was developed and tested with more testing needed before a business case can be developed for the convenor                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| <b>4. Process Mapping / Contract Model</b> | Completed, process improvements delivered and tested and standardised commercial model for small cells developed. Platform systems developed to reduce rejected applications and improve communications                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| <b>5. Total Cost of Ownership</b>          | Total costs of ownership identified, and funding options continue to be explored                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| <b>6. Data Ownership</b>                   | Data governance implemented and tested                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| <b>7. Security</b>                         | The platform was tested for its cyber security and found to be robust and compliant                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| <b>8. Power and Fibre</b>                  | The potential inclusion of power utilities and fibre data in the Platform was considered but not included on the basis that no owner of fibre data has to date been willing to share the data with the pilot and there was no strong advocate for the use or display of this data on the platform from the MNOs or other parties                                                                                                                                                                                            |

## Key findings included:

Participation and engagement rated as good or excellent

Growing interest from boroughs in adopting a platform for processing mobile operator requests and tracking applications

Time savings of around 30+ days in the application process

The platform adds organisation and an audit trail to the process, but should remain complimentary to human engagement and relationships

## Outcomes

There is emerging evidence that a digital platform, and enhanced process for site acquisition, can improve site location choices for digital infrastructure, and can reduce the time and cost for sites to be approved for the benefit of both MNOs and LAs, ultimately improving digital infrastructure for the benefit of communities. It was also felt that the platform could also address some of the issues currently being experienced across West London with a large number of Notice to Quits being issued.

Nevertheless, while the level of support was generally high for the pilot, the transition to a commercial model depends on adequate demand for sites from network operators deploying antennas. The net benefit to all parties appeared to be highly correlated to the level of demand for sites from MNOs and neutral hosts. In the project to date, demand has been modest and without sufficient demand, the economics do not stack up and it is unclear who would fund the cost to keep a capability up and running. That being said, demand is now starting to increase and the pilot is monitoring growth in demand closely.

## Recommendations

The team therefore recommended:

- the roll-out of the digital platform should be demand-led, focusing on local authorities where there is adequate current or planned demand, such as WLA.
- The importance of ensuring local authority buy-in, both in terms of prioritising the digital agenda and committing the level of resource required to support the operating model.
- Key to success in implementation would be the involvement of the DCMS in sharing knowledge and facilitating collaboration as well as providing guidance.
- The value of incorporating agents and other stakeholders involved in site finding and acquisition

## Next Steps

- WLA is exploring the business case for a London-wide deployment of the digital programme and city wide project to achieve scale.

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- Benefits modelling of new connectivity network to use cases to enable prioritisation of those 5G networks which best address boroughs' business problems in West London, keeping a focus on how technologies can tackle inequalities, net zero and generate prosperity.

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- Exploring how to bring supply, demand, assets and new business models into play to deliver multi-use assets across West London e.g: improving EV charging by supporting the installation of chargers on public land.

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- Producing a blueprint for the rest of London, promoting key finding and learnings from the project.

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- Exploring with other public bodies whether they have a pipeline of assets which could be brought into play to host network equipment and join the platform.

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- Scope the development of a Mobile Charter for West London supporting the move to new ways of working with operators and boroughs.

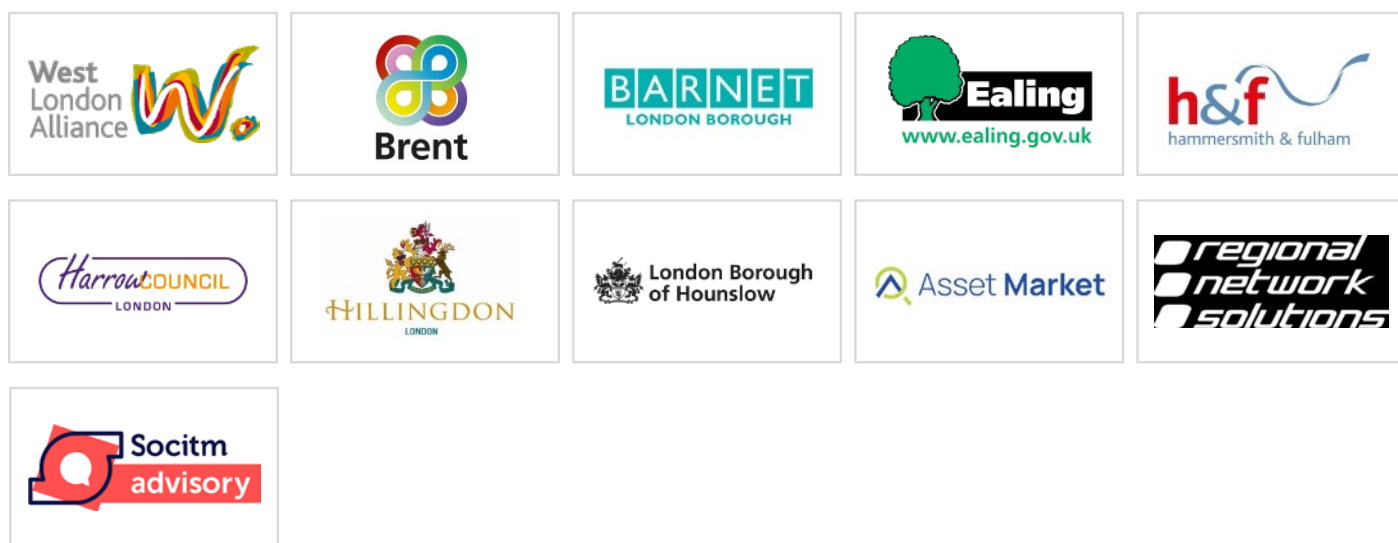
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- Exploring lease agreement standardisations and new commercial models for macro sites.



## Partners

The consortium partners in the Outcomes Accelerator were:



The wireless network operator pilot partners were:

