

UK local authorities join innovation programme that aims to save one billion pounds by 2022

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New £Billion Challenge encourages the sharing and development of innovation and income generation ideas to save and make money in local government

London, 03 December 2020 – UK local authorities have come together to join a new initiative that will allow them to collaborate and innovate in new ways and collectively make or save £1billion by September 2022.

The £Billion Challenge (<https://billionchallenge.co.uk/>) initiative was started by public sector consultancy Commercial Gov (<https://www.commercialgov.co.uk/>) and currently has 113 local authorities involved, including Cheltenham Borough Council, Dudley Council and the London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham.

Participants, typically commercial directors, finance managers, divisional heads and board directors, submit ideas to an innovation platform provided by idea management software and services firm Wazoku (<http://www.wazoku.com/>). They can then discuss and develop those ideas, pilot them where appropriate, and allow many more local authorities to benefit from the savings.

“Local authorities have worked tirelessly to reduce costs and make efficiency savings but there is not much left for them to cut,” said David Elverson, managing director, Commercial Gov. “It’s now a question of thinking differently and local government will not achieve the results and savings it needs by acting in the same way that it has always done. There are many innovative ideas in the UK public sector and the £Billion Challenge can help share and scale those ideas in local authorities across the country to maximise savings.”

Local authorities are encouraged to submit innovation and income generation ideas in The £Billion Challenge in response to four different challenges:

Innovative to save - looking for ways in which innovation help local authorities to do things differently so they can achieve more with fewer resources.

Income generation – seeking bigger and longer-term ideas for new revenues and ventures, whether through services, assets, place-shaping or unique competencies.

Quick wins – focusing on ideas that local authorities can implement within a maximum of 6-12 months, and that must also be able to demonstrate clear ROI in the same timescale.

Joint procurement – looking to realise savings from the joint commissioning and procurement between local authorities.

“All local authorities are currently experiencing the same financial pressures, whether it’s from unprecedented times or ever-decreasing funding streams,” said Sanjay Mistry, Commercial Programme

Manager, Cheltenham Borough Council. "Collaboration is key in helping to alleviate this strain, and to provide the opportunity for greater benefits and shared success. The £Billion Challenge provides a driver for like-minded authorities to come together to innovate and solve problems for the greater good."

Wazoku's platform is used by a variety of businesses (Waitrose, Enel, HSBC) and public sector organisations (Ministry of Defence, Worcestershire County Council) to capture, evaluate, improve and implement ideas from all across an ecosystem. It's a collaborative platform that makes it simple to discuss and develop ideas and comes with a range of features to make the entire idea process more engaging and effective.

"We work extensively with the public sector and see first-hand just how much creativity and innovation there is within it," said Simon Hill, CEO and founder, Wazoku. "But it's true that for many local authorities, innovation exists in siloes and pockets and isn't shared across that authority, let alone authorities elsewhere in the UK. The £Billion Challenge makes meaningful collaboration much easier, giving participants the means to share ideas that can deliver tangible and sizable savings."

Other UK local authorities interested in joining the £Billion Challenge can register for the initiative [here \(https://billionchallenge.co.uk/join-the-challenge/\)](https://billionchallenge.co.uk/join-the-challenge/).

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For further information about the £Billion Challenge, visit <https://billionchallenge.co.uk/>

For further information about Wazoku, visit <https://www.wazoku.com>

For further information about Commercial Gov, visit <https://www.commercialgov.co.uk/>

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