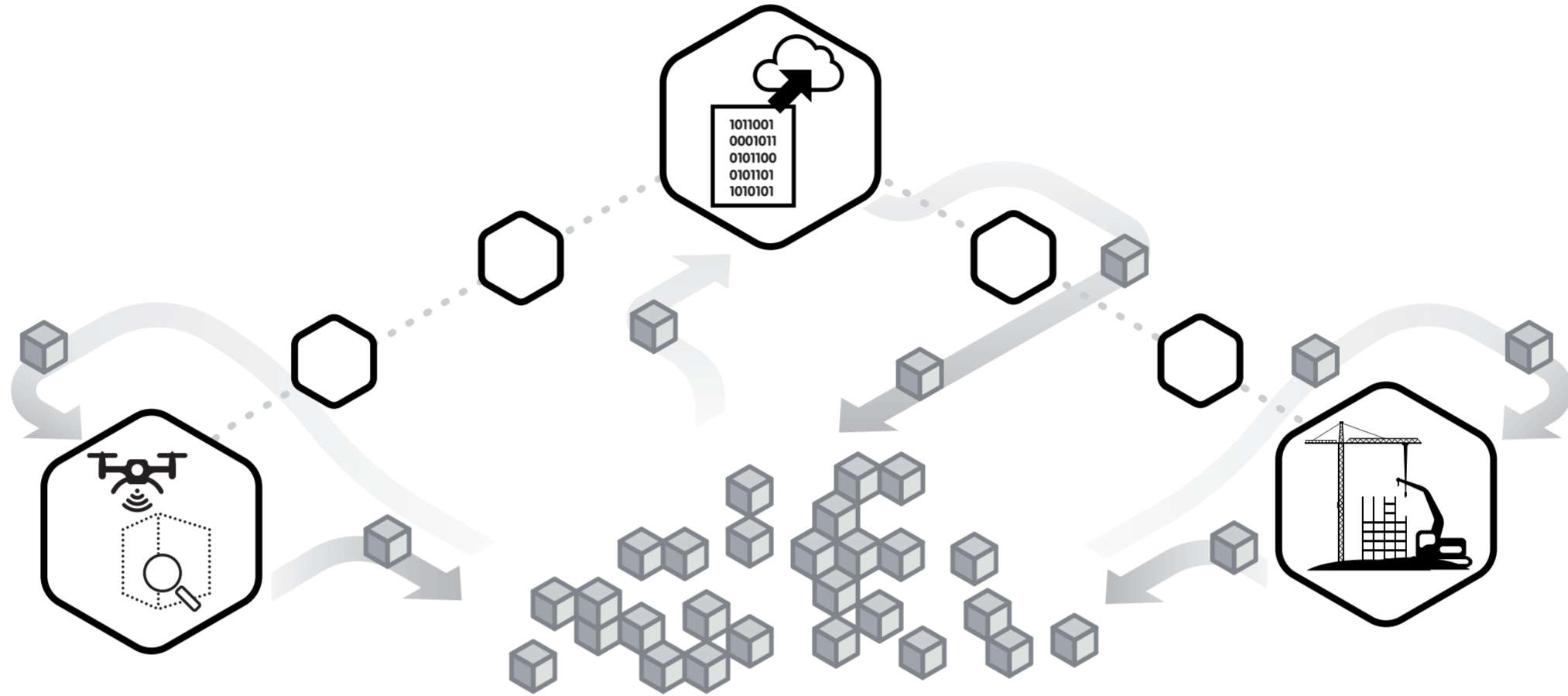# The time to build a digital planning system is now

Advances in technology present an opportunity to make our planning system more efficient, innovative and responsive to environmental, social and economic objectives.

Our vision is for a digital planning system where data is collected, used and shared in ways that promote **transparency, understanding, interoperability** and **inclusiveness**. Anyone wanting to develop property, improve places or understand why and how decisions are made should have better access to the information and knowledge they need.

A digital planning system must make it easier for diverse voices to participate in the creation of long-term visions for place. Plans must be supported by data which enables interventions to be made at the right scale, time and place, and agile enough to accommodate change. Policies must make it explicit where professional judgment is needed or where common rules can apply.

1 Ensure all published and commissioned documents and the methods and data within them are **machine readable**, so they are easy to interrogate, share and re-use.

2 Work towards **standardizing** common built environment **languages, processes and data** to support cooperation between government, developers, infrastructure providers and wider

3 Invest in **open source tools**, to provide the basic infrastructure for local planning authorities, the market and the public to **collect, analyse and visualise data.**

4 Build **scenario models** that allow local authorities to **experiment and test policies** and options in a standardised way.

5 Ensure that local planning authorities have the **capacity to procure and deliver** the right digital tools, and the **skills to interrogate** their outputs.

6 Be **inclusive and diverse,** considering everyone's needs and making our services, data and tools accessible to all, including those without the confidence or skills to use digital.

7 **Encourage new entrants** to the planning sector, to develop new tools, techniques and technologies that can improve the way we plan.

8 Develop tools and methods for better analysis, monitoring and **reporting of the economic, social and environmental outcomes** of planning policies and decisions, beyond those usually measured.

9 Establish a **common structure and data schema for local plans and planning applications**, linked to an objective and open national evidence base.

10 Communicate the **differing weight and flexibility of individual policies** and trade offs between them.

11 Harness digital technology to **foster participation** in planning, **unpack the decision-making** process, and **communicate the impacts** of development.

These principles are just the beginning. Everyone involved in planning should contribute to this vision for how to create a more inclusive, efficient and effective planning system using digital technology – join the PlanTech community on Slack, use #PlanTech on social media to continue the discussion, or get in touch with Connected Places Catapult or the RTPI to learn more.

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