



— OUR —
DIGITAL STRATEGY
A TRULY DIGITAL
COUNCIL
AND BOROUGH
2019 - 2024





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Feedback on this strategy

Foreword: Leader of the Council, Councillor Hall and Councillor Shahul-Hameed



This administration was elected on a manifesto that clearly outlines our commitment to you – the nearly 400,000 residents of Croydon.

That manifesto has been translated into our [Corporate Plan for Croydon 2018-2022](#), a bold set of actions to deliver more efficient, effective and accessible services and to ensure that the people and the place of Croydon are thriving. In that plan, we defined how we will take a radical new approach, with residents and locally tailored services at the heart of how we deliver.

It is clear that such a radical new approach, and the future economic growth of our borough, both rely upon our making more and better use of the new opportunities that digital, data and technology provide. This new Digital Strategy is therefore a crucial enabler of how we will deliver our Corporate Plan.

Historically, Croydon is renowned for technology and innovation, from being home to the UK's first international airport to being home to more than 2000 digital businesses in the borough today. As a council, our pioneering work on digital inclusion and transformative technology earned national recognition as Digital Council of the Year in 2017.

But technology and the internet continues to change the world around us at a fast and ever-accelerating pace. Our population is growing rapidly, at a time when central government funding for local authorities is decreasing. We face increasing challenges and urgency around environmental sustainability, and we cannot afford to stand still as we work towards our vision of becoming a digitally connected town and borough fit for the 21st century.

We're already on our way towards becoming a truly sustainable city. Right now, Croydon is going through an unprecedented period of growth and revitalisation. We're well underway with some £5bn of borough-wide investment that will be completed over the next few years, transforming Croydon into a world-class destination for the high numbers of residents and businesses moving here.

It is vital that digital is at the heart of this regeneration. Using technology, we must deliver tailored services and build sustainability into the design of our built environment, to provide you with the very best living conditions. Working with our local tech sector, we must continue to grow our digital economy, and make sure you can access and are equipped for the jobs of the future. We need to push further, faster with our use of digital approaches, data and technology, to ensure our borough thrives through the 4th industrial revolution.

This strategy sets out how we will make the most of the opportunities digital presents us, to:

- transform your experience as a resident by making our online services simpler, clearer and faster - and tailored to your specific needs, across our different localities
- work more openly with you as Croydon changes, engaging you on the decisions that affect you

- help our local tech economy to grow stronger and larger, creating the jobs and skilled workforce of the future, and making sure nobody in our borough is left behind through lack of digital skills or access to the internet
- make our borough and our public services smarter and more sustainable using innovative ideas and technologies

We and our Cabinet colleagues are pleased to endorse this new strategy. It sets a clear path for the next 5 years, to maximise the opportunities of digital to improve the services you use, the places where you live and work, and how efficiently the council functions so that it can provide the best services and best value to residents. There's no shortage of political will to make Croydon a truly digital council and borough.

Tony Newman
Leader of the Council

Simon Hall
Cabinet Member for
Finance & Resources

Manju Shahul-Hameed
Cabinet Member for
Economy and Jobs

Introduction: Jo Negrini, Chief Executive and Neil Williams, Chief Digital Officer



This strategy is about recognising the way the internet has changed our lives, and harnessing that change to provide better outcomes for the people of Croydon.

Residents, businesses, workers, visitors and students in Croydon rightly expect their interactions with the council and their experience in and around our urban spaces to be as straightforward, connected, convenient and technologically advanced as the very best of their experiences elsewhere. Council staff, too, have similar expectations of the tools they use to do their jobs. And, at the organisation level, we have political and financial imperatives to operate as efficiently as possible.

We have a remarkable opportunity to seize these opportunities. Croydon is a naturally ambitious council, and our borough is going through a multi-billion pound transformation.

However, delivering these new imperatives requires not just a new set of actions, but a radically different approach, hence this new strategy and accompanying roadmap.

It is important to recognise that digital is not a separate activity in its own right, but an enabler of everything else the council is doing (defined in our [Corporate Plan for Croydon 2018-2022](#)) and of how we are doing it (due to be articulated in our upcoming Workforce Strategy). This strategy and accompanying roadmap exist to support the whole council's goals, by radically re-imagining how we design, deliver and operate our services in the internet age, tailored for different localities.

It is essential we do this well, to stay competitive as a council and place, and to fulfill our duty to residents, communities and businesses by helping them survive and thrive as the world changes rapidly around them.

We are already well underway building new capability in the council to deliver this strategy:

- we've [brought in new digital leadership](#)
- we've signed the [Local Digital Declaration](#), a public pledge along with hundreds of other councils to meet high standards for our technology and digital services and adopt digital culture and ways of working
- we are a founding member of the new [London Office of Technology and Innovation](#)
- we're putting in place new techniques and capability for agile software delivery and user-centred design
- we've moved the council's core technology services to new specialised providers and shorter contracts, giving us greater flexibility to improve the tools we rely on
- we are working more openly, blogging about our digital delivery for transparency and public feedback

This strategy itself was developed in the open, as a public conversation via the [croydon.digital](#) blog. Thank you to all who provided ideas and comments.

Digital moves fast, and digital strategy documents date faster. Therefore while this strategy sets a high level framework for where we're going and how we'll move forwards over the next few years, the specific timings of what we do will continue to evolve as we deliver and learn - in the open, via our public roadmap at <https://croydon.digital/roadmap>

You can feedback and influence it at any time - these are your digital services after all.

Jo Negrini
Chief Executive

Neil Williams
Chief Digital Officer

Key statistics

A LARGE INTERNAL TECHNOLOGY ESTATE



4,175 staff

provided with laptops, Office 365, networks, mobile and fixed telephony.



120+ line of business applications

powering the council's activities from council tax collection to social care casework, needing maintenance, support, frequent upgrades and regular replacement.



3,100 tech support requests

raised by council employees per month.



180+ TB of data

in the cloud, our business intelligence data lake and on-premises data centre.

35+ business intelligence dashboards

for monitoring performance and informing policy decisions, with more in the pipeline.



HIGH AND GROWING DEMAND FOR ONLINE SERVICES

384,837 residents



(2nd highest in London) growing by 14% to approx 445,000 by 2031. 51.7% BAME and over 100 languages spoken. Highest population of under 18s in London.



180,000 registered accounts

for accessing the council's 100+ online services. Around 30% of contact with residents currently happens via online self-service.



140,000 visitors to the council website every month

55% via mobile or tablet devices. On average a person visits the site 3.5 times a year.



3,600 downloads

of the Don't Mess With Croydon mobile app, used 900 times each month to report problems with waste and other issues.

STRONG FOUNDATIONS FOR A DIGITAL BOROUGH



2,045

technology business

in the borough employing 7,725 people - a growth of 41% between 2013 and 2018.



2.8 million ft²

of new Grade A office space under development.



WWW

98.5%
of postcodes

can receive broadband speeds of at least 30 MBPS.



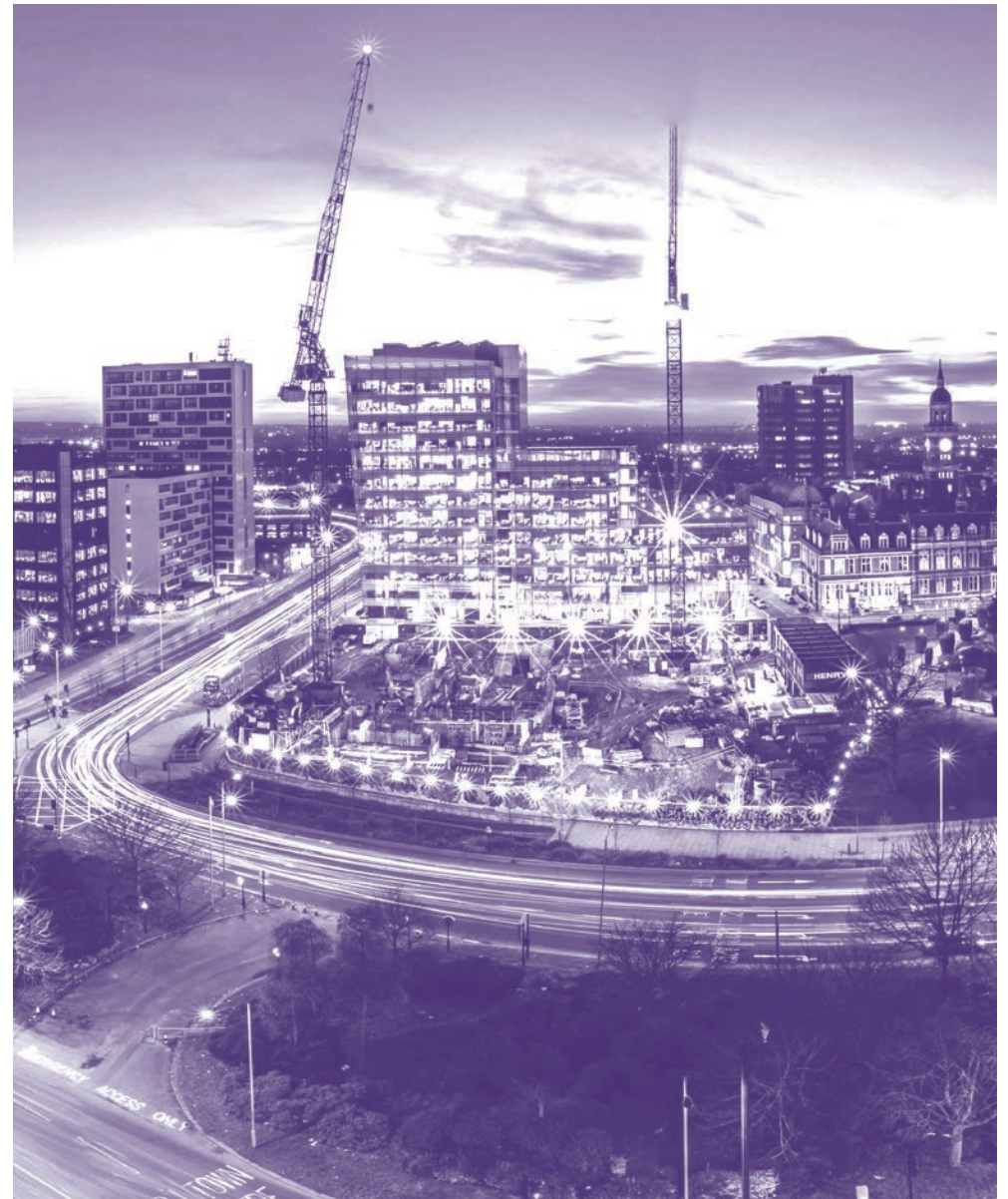
85%
of people

in the borough are more likely than the national average to use the internet at least once a week. (Source: ACORN)



Ideal conditions

for Smart Cities, GovTech and UrbanTech innovation: 45 public sector organisations, a complex and compact town centre, London's growth borough with a £5.25bn regeneration programme.



► About this strategy

Digital is not about technology, it's about changing the way people live, connect and work.

"A truly digital council will be more connected and integrated, using digital to reimagine service delivery that is user-centric and meets users' needs - with citizens, communities and businesses reaping the benefits."

Council of the Future: A digital guide for councillors - Tech UK 2018.

This strategy, therefore, is about how we will deliver the services and infrastructure our residents need in order to thrive and live happy, healthy lives in Croydon, now and for years to come. It's about how we as a council can achieve more, with less, to serve our residents better and tailor how we deliver services to meet differing needs in our localities. It's about creating a modern, sustainable town and borough that is a great place to live, work, play and do business, and about making sure we remain resilient and competitive in a rapidly changing world.

As a consequence of delivering this strategy:

- Croydon residents will have a radically better experience when accessing the council's services and information, with an easy-to-use website that works on any device, digital services so good and convenient that people prefer to use them when they can, and digital communications which inform and consult them on the issues they care about
- Croydon residents will also have access to an enhanced digital skills offer, helping them build their confidence in areas from basic computer literacy through to the professional skills they need to access the jobs of the future
- Croydon residents, visitors, students and businesses will enjoy faster broadband connectivity and a digitally-enhanced public realm, through initiatives including public WiFi, digital wayfinding information, apps that bring the community together, and smart technology solutions that help reduce energy consumption, lower emissions, improve public safety and help make Croydon a more attractive place to be
- Croydon will have a thriving digital business sector, with start-ups, scale-ups and established businesses creating growth and prosperity, working together as a cooperative ecosystem, and helping to change perceptions of Croydon as we become more widely recognised a leading destination for tech
- Croydon council staff will have access to continuously improving technology and have the skills and confidence to use it well, helping them deliver great services to residents as efficiently as possible and freeing up more of their time for frontline services
- Partner organisations will be able to work with the council and with each other more effectively, supported by digital collaboration tools and more open communications, and making use of shared data and digital platforms to enable a more joined-up, system-wide approach to delivering positive change in Croydon

Definition of digital

When we say digital in this strategy, we mean the following definition, widely adopted in the UK public sector:

“Applying the culture, processes, business models and technologies of the internet era to respond to people’s raised expectations”

Tom Loosemore, Public Digital

Policy context

This digital strategy is an enabling document to the council’s [Corporate Plan for Croydon 2018-2022](#). Having a responsive, agile and user-centred digital service is key to the successful delivery of the council’s ambitions.

Six themes are discussed in the Corporate Plan which represent the council’s way of operating in the future. Digital contributes meaningfully to each:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence is key • Preventing issues becoming problems • Locality matters • Residents drive what we do 	<p>We will put residents at the heart of our approach to designing digital services, using research and continual testing to ensure our services meet their real-world needs, enabling them to achieve their goals as quickly and efficiently as possible. As we transform our digital services we will also create rapid, often real-time feedback loops, enabling services and underlying policy to be continuously improved based on evidence of how well they are meeting residents’ needs.</p> <p>Data science and new data analytics platforms enable evidence from multiple sources to be combined and interpreted in new ways, for better (sometimes automated and predictive) decision making. The council is already making good use of these new capabilities, developing dashboards to provide rich insights, and has plans to embed a culture of business intelligence to support our localities model.</p> <p>Thirdly, through better use of digital engagement tools and social media, we can increase the scale and openness with which we engage residents in decisions that affect them.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A system wide approach 	<p>Digital enables collaboration across organisations and sectors to achieve shared outcomes, and collaboration is one of our main themes of this digital strategy.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organisation design 	<p>Every part of the council workforce relies upon effective digital tools, and stands to benefit from the adoption of digital culture and ways of working in order to become a more adaptive, connected, mobile and collaborative organisation.</p>

► Vision

Our vision is to become a truly digital council and borough.

We will harness the potential of digital design, data and technology to work efficiently, transform the relationship between residents and the council, and make Croydon a leading destination for growth, opportunity and quality of life.

We will do this by focusing on three main themes (supported by a fourth):

1. Digital council

We will optimise how the council uses digital design, data and technology to work efficiently, collaborate, make informed decisions, adapt and innovate.

2. Digital services

We will transform the relationship between residents and the council by providing online services so good that most people choose to use them and can do so unaided.

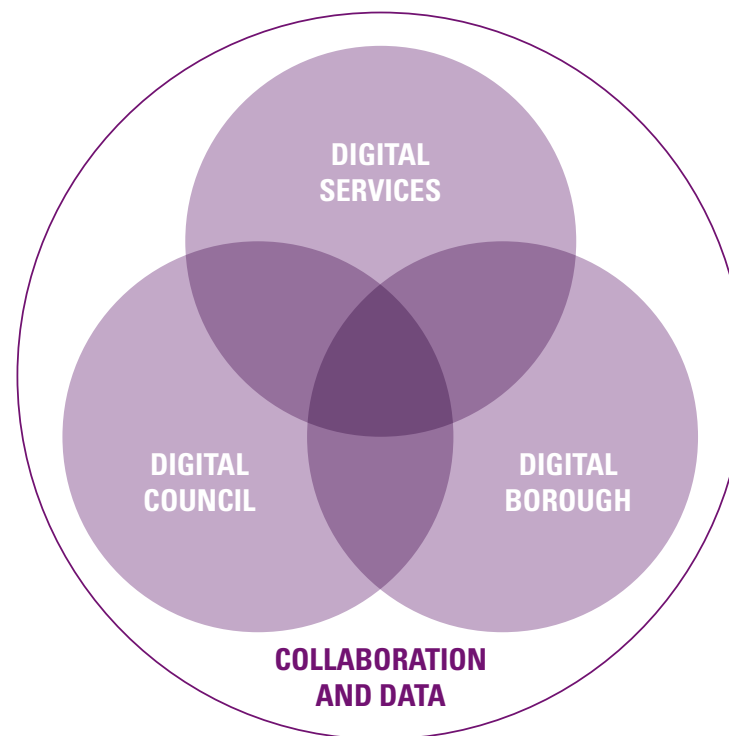
3. Digital borough

We will maximise opportunities for digital design, data and technology to enhance economic growth, quality of life, sustainability and individual opportunity in Croydon.

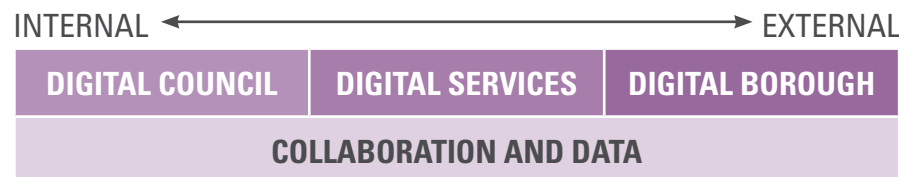
Success in all of these three main themes above will be unlocked and accelerated by progress in a fourth, cross-cutting theme:

4. Collaboration and data

We will use digital tools to collaborate with organisations across all sectors, make Croydon's data open and share digital assets for the public good.



By delivering against all these themes we will become digital inside and out, maximising the opportunities for our council and borough in partnership with organisations across the system.



► Principles and approach to delivery

Our strategy is underpinned by the following principles, which guide the way we work as we pursue our vision.

1. We focus relentlessly on meeting user needs

As a digital service, we exist to meet the needs of our users (from residents to internal colleagues). Every piece of work we undertake will be based upon meeting a need that our service users have, which will help us to always build the right thing. We do this by speaking directly to our users and observing how they interact with our services, focusing on what they show they need rather than say they want.

We make sure our digital services are accessible to all users, regardless of disability.

We are acutely aware of the digitally excluded, and so we make sure:

- **assisted digital** support is available to help residents use our digital services
- **digital inclusion** learning opportunities and public computers are available across the borough, to help more residents get online
- non-digital channels always remain available to those who really need them

2. We support and continuously improve all our products and services

We only implement technology solutions we are confident we can sustainably operate, support and continuously improve. We adopt a “shift left” approach to our operational support, continuously improving our ability to solve users’ problems and requests on first contact.

No service is ever finished, or complete. There are always improvements that can be made. We will embed this concept into our work as much as our resources allow, putting working products into the hands of users early so we can test how well they work, providing us with the insight needed to improve them over time. We won’t be afraid to experiment and fail, delete things that don’t work, learn from them and try new approaches.

3. We base our decisions on evidence

We will base all of our design and technology decisions on the basis of the insight gained through activities such as user research, service performance metrics, the study of web analytics, user feedback and other available evidence, rather than relying on guesswork. We have an enormous amount to do, so will prioritise rigorously based on evidence of what will deliver the best outcomes for users. We will ensure that we monitor the performance of live services and use that data to identify where we need to improve them.

4. We invest in teams, not projects

Our aim to become a truly digital council and borough is predicated on investing in the people and technology needed to effect this significant change. Digital work is often packaged into programmes of work, with defined, time-limited budgets, and teams that disband once the project is ‘complete’. But we know that digital products and services are never complete, and must be continually improved and iterated upon. We therefore intend digital work to become a mainstream activity, to develop the council into an organisation that is digital rather than just does digital.

5. We work in the open

Our aim is to work as openly as we can on all of our projects. This means we blog about our work and what we are learning, and we share our ideas widely to get feedback and suggestions. Where we can we will share code, learnings and other products we create, enabling others to benefit from our efforts. We also share our data, safely putting it out there to help others create value from it. This helps us to do better work, as it creates a much bigger community around what we are doing than just an internal audience.

► THEME 1: Digital council

We will optimise how the council uses digital design, data and technology to work efficiently, collaborate, make informed decisions, adapt and innovate.

"Digital is something you are, not something you do. It's about how you think, how you behave, what you value, and what drives decisions in your organisation."

What a Digital Organisation Looks Like - Doteveryone 2017

Our desired outcomes:

- All council staff have fit for purpose corporate technology and line of business systems which facilitate rather than constrain their work, which work well together, are resilient and can be changed rapidly to meet their users' changing needs
- All council staff make effective use of cloud collaboration and productivity software to communicate, safely share and store information, and work with increasing efficiency
- All council staff can work effectively from anywhere, including fast and reliable network and telephony access in all council-owned buildings across the borough, and suitable assistive technology for staff who need it
- All technology-related projects in the council provide value for money, have clearly defined outcomes, meet quality and cybersecurity standards, and are managed well
- The council has a full understanding of its total expenditure on digital, data and technology and the return on this investment, and is reducing this total over time
- All council staff are confident in their wider digital skills and understanding, including agile delivery methods, user-centric service design, data literacy and GDPR, cybersecurity, online engagement and working in the open
- All council staff can and do access data intelligence and have the knowledge, support and skills to manage and use data legally and ethically, to measure service performance, predict and anticipate demand, and make well-informed decisions
- The council's political and executive leadership exemplify and champion digital expertise and culture including user-centred design, agile methods and working in the open
- All council staff can find internal guidance and information quickly and easily on the council's intranet, and are digitally engaged in leadership decisions

Where we are now

As set out in the [ICT Sourcing Strategy](#) paper to Cabinet in November 2017, we have made significant progress in recent years to equip council staff and members with flexible, modern equipment and software, while delivering multi-million pound savings and mitigating cybersecurity risks. We can be proud that we have some of the best IT of any council.

Our ambitious ICT transformation programme proposed in that same paper is now nearing completion, and has successfully delivered a more flexible, multi-vendor technology ecosystem for the council's core, corporate technology. This forward-thinking transformation is the bedrock for all our future digital ambitions, meets principle 2 of the [Local Digital Declaration](#) ("fix the plumbing"), and is regarded as an exemplar by many of our local government peers. The council now has more control over quality of service for all technology we currently use and the ability to respond more rapidly to changes.

Across the council, we also make use of hundreds of line of business systems which enable our organisation to function and our workforce to deliver public services. We have powerful tools at our disposal for data intelligence and reporting, an emerging Business Intelligence Strategy, a number of dashboards and a growing capability in developing and using them to manage performance metrics, predict issues and inform policy decisions.

However, current expenditure on digital, data and technology initiatives is spread across departments, making it challenging to get a true total cost of investment. The quality of our delivery is variable, and there is considerable duplication and inefficiency as well as usability challenges across our software estate. Like all councils, we have a sprawling portfolio of legacy applications and databases, built in a pre-digital era and often unfit to support modern online services. We also continue to operate a high number of paper-based and manual processes, and there is significant potential for the council to achieve savings, higher staff satisfaction and provide better services for residents from digitising more of our internal operations.

Going forward, we need to improve capability across the council to make the best use of the equipment and software we already have. We need to improve governance and visibility over IT spend in delegated budget lines, establishing stronger controls to ensure value for money and standards assurance. We need a clear architectural vision that will enable us to reduce the complexity and size of our back-office software estate and reduce duplication over time, and to increase use of Software as a Service models so that we only pay for what we need. Where practical, we need to begin using service design methods for our back office systems, to improve usability for council staff, and adopt a more agile, digital culture across the organisation that places user needs at the heart of how we choose, buy, build and implement technology in the council and how we design our internal processes.



► THEME 1: Digital council continued...

What we will do

To move forward in this area, we will:

1. Develop a clear architectural vision for all council technology systems, working towards an irreducible core of specialist applications and shared components that provide common functions once, integrated through APIs, using cloud and Software as a Service solutions wherever possible
2. Put in place a new, robust governance framework to ensure all changes to technology across the council are fit-for-purpose, cost-effective, secure, in line with the architectural vision and meet the government's [Technology Code of Practice](#) and [Service Standard](#); and to get clarity on the council's total spend on technology
3. Re-tender our (recently disaggregated) corporate ICT contracts every few years to ensure best value and service, and diversify our supplier base including buying local where possible to do so
4. Create permanent capability for transforming major line of business systems, recognising that this is a continuous activity, and work with peers in other councils to positively disrupt the marketplace for these systems
5. Conclude the development of our Business Intelligence Strategy and implementation plan to further our use of data-led intelligence across the council, with a particular focus on supporting localities-based service delivery
6. Design and run a mandatory learning and development programme and provide ongoing learning opportunities for all staff to increase digital confidence, instill cybersecurity best practices, improve data literacy, awareness and stewardship, and embed a more digital culture including agile methods and working in the open
7. Develop digital leadership capability within the council, in line with the [Local Digital Declaration](#), prioritising the corporate leadership team (the top 3 tiers of council officers) and Cabinet members
8. Implement a best-of-breed contact centre and enterprise telephony system, ensuring residents can contact and hear from the council reliably and consistently
9. Review and improve how we support and train users of corporate and line-of-business software to maximise their effective use, including introducing agile and user centred service design methodologies to optimise the usability of our software
10. Seek out opportunities to use new and emerging technologies such as robotic process automation and machine learning to automate low value tasks and improve operational efficiency, freeing up officer time for frontline services to residents
11. Review current processes for providing assistive technology for staff with disabilities, ensuring we make the best use of available technology to support all our staff
12. Support the council's communications team to transform the corporate intranet and provide improved tools for internal digital engagement and information-sharing
13. Deliver an ongoing portfolio of improvements to council systems, corporate ICT and automation of sub-optimal or paper-based council processes, prioritised on our public roadmap

Indicative dates for priority deliverables

- New governance processes are in place now (July 2019) and will begin to create savings within this financial year and in subsequent years by preventing unnecessary or wasteful spend on technology, while driving up quality and usability for internal users and residents
- Digital leadership development has begun and will continue with digital-themed learning and development days for 30 of the most senior leaders in the council in July and again in autumn 2019. An internal learning programme for all council staff will be in place by December 2019, with the aim that all staff complete mandatory elements by July 2020
- A programme is underway to replace major internal systems used for adults and children's social care, expected to complete by October 2020, delivering improvements to the quality and efficiency of vital social care services
- We will complete transformation of the council's telephony systems by March 2020

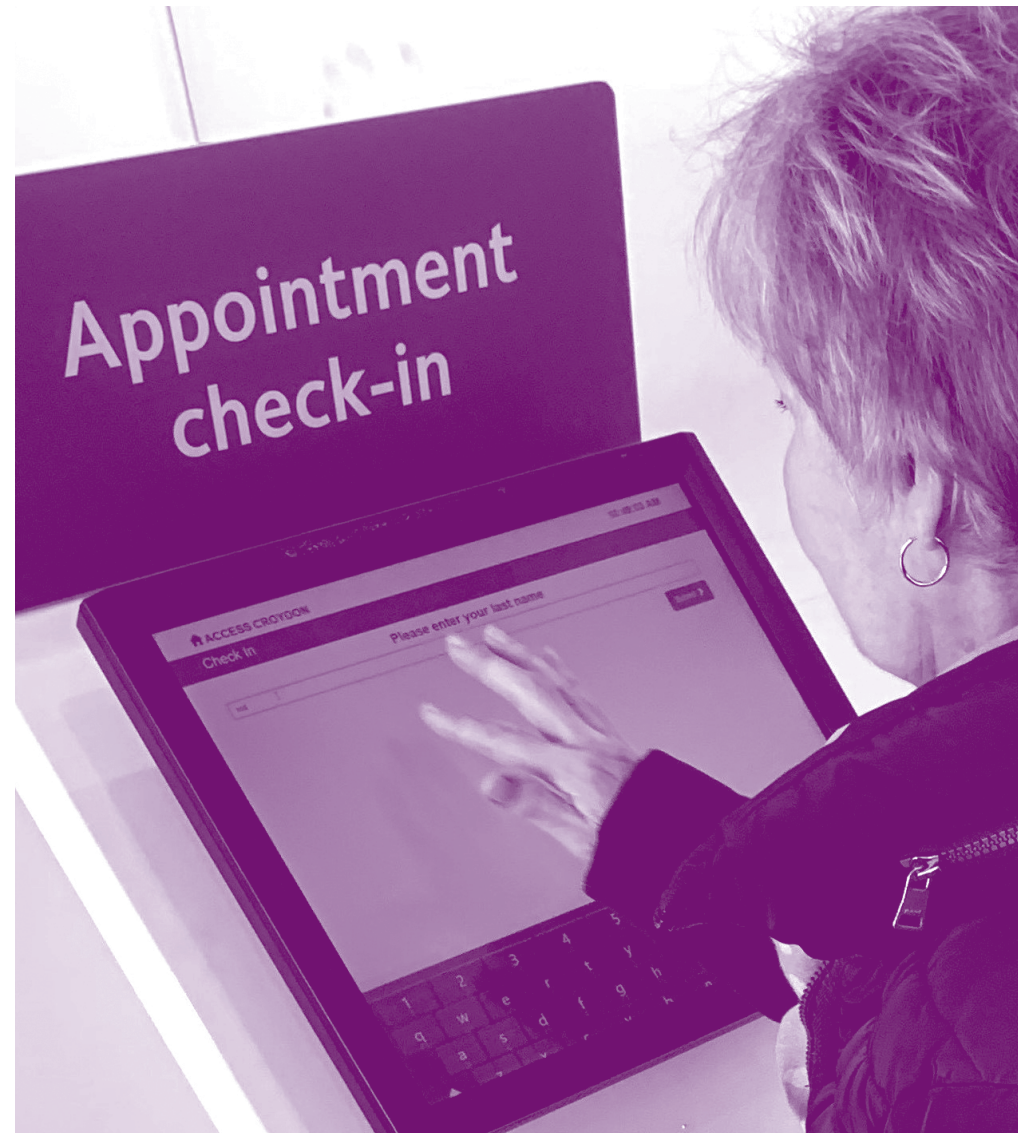
Check our live, continuously updated roadmap to see specific deliverables, track our progress, offer help or give your feedback to influence what we do next: croydon.digital/roadmap

"I would like to see digital technology used to facilitate open fair and transparent procurement at Croydon Council"

"It would be a great idea to do digital training for staff working in Access Croydon so that they can help residents quicker. Many come in because they do not know how to do certain things on the website and it would be better if we are trained properly."

"Embrace a culture of agility and acceptable risk taking, find out enough to move forward, write down what needs to be written down, review and learn regularly, without requiring slavish adherence to a methodology"

Comments from Croydon residents and council staff as part of the online conversation and internal survey that helped shape this strategy



► THEME 2: Digital services

We will transform the relationship between residents and the council by providing online services so good that most people choose to use them and can do so unaided.

"This is not about polishing websites and making online copies of existing, paper-based transactions - broken services delivered onto a computer screen. It's about a new, better approach to the design, operation and consumption of its services, focused on citizens and outcomes."

Digitising Government - Alan Brown, Jerry Fishenden and Mark Thompson 2014

Our desired outcomes:

- All council services that could be made available online, are available online, with digital as the default service supported by an "assisted digital" offer and alternative channels still available for those who need more help
- Most users choose to use digital services over alternatives, so that the vast majority of interactions between residents and the council (75% or higher, excluding planned casework) take the form of online self-service
- Of people using the council's online services, the vast majority (75% or higher) can complete them successfully, unaided, first time, and rate them good or excellent
- Information about the council's democratic process, decisions, delivery and policies are easy to find, understand and (where appropriate) influence through online platforms
- Residents who want to do so are able to receive relevant notifications from the council about issues and opportunities of interest to them, from the status of services they rely on through to policy and planning decisions
- The council's website and digital services are built with re-use in mind, so that our information and services can easily be found through search engines, and are accessible using 3rd party devices such as voice assistants
- All council information is in open, accessible formats by default, removing any barriers to access for people with disabilities, and enabling online sharing and preservation
- All online council services and official information have a consistent user experience, sharing a single design system and interaction patterns

Where we are now

We have made visible and impactful inroads into digitising our services in recent years, through our Customer Access and Digital and Enabling transformation projects.

As a result, there are around 180,000 registered users of the council’s “My Account” system, which enables access to more than 100 services online 24/7, including waste collection, housing services, council tax and appointment booking. This has reduced face-to-face demand in Access Croydon, cut waiting times and increased communication with residents, delivering savings of over £10m per annum. Our website is heavily used with 140,00 visitors per month looking for guidance and information. Our mobile app, “Don’t Mess with Croydon” has been downloaded over 3,600 times and enables residents to report fly-tipping, potholes and other issues with our public spaces.

These achievements notwithstanding, there is considerable potential to improve the quality and further reduce the cost of services to residents by providing more of them online, and by applying the user-centric design methods used by the private sector and central government to ensure that more people can use them successfully. Currently, around 30% of all contact between residents and the council takes place via online self-service. We want and need this to be much higher, making all council services digital by default, while also ensuring that we always cater for the digitally excluded.

Recent analysis has found that usage of My Account has begun to decline and a quarter of all website visits result in users contacting the council for help, suggesting their needs are not being fully met online. Our web estate has inconsistent design, has been rated poorly in some external reviews, and in places fails to comply with new, higher standards of accessibility. There is clear demand from residents for more convenient, truly accessible and higher quality digital services they can access 24/7, and more open and transparent information and engagement through digital channels.

Recognising the need for continuous and rapid improvement of our digital services, the council has recently invested in new capability, forming the Croydon Digital Service - a new directorate in the council that is already bringing about a step change in the council’s approach to delivering user-centric services for residents. We have signed the [Local Digital Declaration](#), a public pledge to deliver digital services in accordance with the methods set out in the [Government Service Manual](#) and to ensure all new and updated services going forwards meet the high quality standards set out in the [Government Service Standard](#). CDS is working in close partnership with the Residents First Programme, to ensure we understand our residents and customers so that we can listen and respond and work together to improve our front line services.

Potential savings from digital services

Cost per transaction through different channels:



Digital:

0.9p per transaction



Phone:

£2.59 per transaction



Face-to-face:

£8.21 per transaction

Source: [Business Case for Digital Investment](#), ADASS, the LGA and Socitm, 2016

► THEME 2: Digital services continued...

What we will do

To move forward in this area, we will:

1. Transform the council's website, introducing a consistent, mobile-first design system across all official sites and digital services, applying the user-centric design methods as set out in the Government Service Manual to ensure it meets residents' needs
2. Overhaul our processes and standards for creating and maintaining content, ensuring all guidance is succinct, clearly understandable by users and reliably up to date so that residents trust the website as the canonical source for official information
3. Review the technology underpinning our digital services, to ensure we have a resilient, supported and fit-for-purpose set of platforms that in combination enable us to rapidly and sustainably build, maintain, and continuously improve digital services to better meet the needs of our users
4. Review and tighten up our criteria for permitting the creation of separate websites, with the aim of significantly decreasing the number of microsites and subdomains the council operates
5. Transform how we deliver digital services, working in multidisciplinary agile delivery teams capable of redesigning services from end to end, ensuring that a user's needs are considered and met throughout the whole process, and that back office systems and processes are integrated with front end delivery
6. Introduce robust assurance processes to ensure all digital services developed by the council or its suppliers are of high quality, meeting the Government Service Standard
7. Redevelop the [Explore Croydon](#) website as a more effective 'digital induction' for new residents, a promotional tool for visitors and prospective residents, and a definitive local guide for existing residents, working collaboratively with other interested parties
8. Review and improve our online engagement with residents, including formal online consultation, the council's email newsletters and push notifications, and informal engagement and customer support through social media, working with the communications and customer contact departments
9. Continue to blog about our work on [croydon.digital](#) and encourage other service areas to do the same on a new corporate blogging platform, supporting them with the skills and technology to more openly communicate about the work of the council
10. Ensure that there is a sufficient "assisted digital" support for residents who cannot use council services online, through the contact centre and face-to-face touchpoints including Access Croydon, library services and the emerging localities delivery model
11. Investigate and experiment with emerging technology where there is an opportunity to better meet our users' needs, including live chat, chatbots and voice operated services
12. Deliver an ongoing portfolio of improvements to existing online services and the creation of new digital services, prioritised on our public roadmap

Indicative dates for priority deliverables

- We aim to deliver an 'alpha' (prototype) version of new website by August 2019, for testing with residents and stakeholders. A public 'beta' version will follow by November 2019, and begin replacing popular parts of the current site. The new site will become the default from March 2020, with ongoing work to replace all remaining parts of the old site through 2020/21
- To support this work, we aim to have a new, flexible digital services development platform in place by January 2020 so we can digitise and improve more of the council's transactional services for residents
- All new and redeveloped digital services will be assessed against the Government's Service Standard from July 2019 onwards, and the outcomes of these assessments will be published on [croydon.digital](#)
- Improvements to the council's online engagement with residents will begin to be visible from October 2019, with a full review of social media usage to follow in 2020

Check our live, continuously updated roadmap to see specific deliverables, track our progress, offer help or give your feedback to influence what we do next: [croydon.digital/roadmap](#)

“Services to do with council tax updates, claiming benefits and anything to do with residents need to be automated. Residents usually get delayed responses as everything is done manually [...] Automation will result in happier residents and less call traffic as well as less visits to Access Croydon for minor issues. Many residents are frustrated, please sort it out.”

“The Croydon website is not easy to use. Hard to find things. Make the website clear.”

“Make online forms easy to understand. They should be faster to complete as people have things to do!”

Comments from Croydon residents and council staff as part of the online conversation and internal survey that helped shape this strategy



► THEME 3: Digital borough

We will maximise opportunities for digital design, data and technology to enhance growth, quality of life, sustainability and individual opportunity in Croydon.

"We need to be bold and to think big. This involves being willing to try new ways of doing things. I see London's future as a global 'test-bed city' for civic innovation, where the best ideas are developed, amplified and scaled."

Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan,
Smarter London Together plan, July 2018

Our desired outcomes:

- Croydon has a thriving digital business sector and community, with a mixed ecosystem of startups, small to medium sized enterprises and large technology companies moving to and growing in the borough
- Croydon has outstanding digital infrastructure, including ultrafast internet and mobile network connectivity, able to support the ambitions of our residents, businesses, community and voluntary sector, and public services
- Croydon has a digitally-confident population, able to make the most of opportunities that being active on the internet brings, should they choose to do so, reducing social exclusion
- Croydon residents have the skills to access the jobs of the future, and employers have access to a pipeline of local talent for digital, data and technology careers
- Croydon's digital and tech workforce indexes higher than the national average for BAME (Black, Asian and minority ethnic) and female employees, reflecting our diverse borough
- Croydon's community and voluntary sector is digitally mature, able to adopt the culture, processes, business models and technologies of the internet era to fulfill their mission
- Croydon is using a range of innovative data and technology driven solutions to create a sustainable and more efficient borough, with a growing reputation as a leading destination for innovation in Smart Cities, GovTech and UrbanTech

Where we are now

Croydon has a strong reputation as a fast-growing digital ecosystem, a pioneer in digital inclusion initiatives and an early adopter of innovative technology.

We're incredibly proud of our thriving tech sector, which has grown by 41% in the past 5 years to over 2,000 businesses and nearly 8,000 jobs, and of our desirable conditions for tech startups and scale-ups including co-working spaces such as [TMRW](#) and the [Sussex Innovation Centre](#). We owe much to Croydon Tech City, the voluntary organisation that promoted Croydon as the "Silicon Valley of South London" between 2012 and 2018, and we have recently launched [Croydon Digital](#) to continue to convene, promote and grow our tech economy.

On digital skills, in recent years we have supported digital inclusion initiatives through the Our Community fund, and partnered with Doteveryone to bring 3rd parties and the community together to change people's lives through digital skills and access. [CALAT](#) provides adult courses in digital skills, and the council itself provides apprenticeship opportunities in digital and technology roles.

In the [Smart City Programme](#) paper to Cabinet in December 2017 we set out our ambition to become a world-class digital and smart city, with a forward plan of activities in partnership with private sector and community. Since then, we've made significant progress on all themes of the paper, with a wide variety of initiatives both underway and in development.

Smart City initiatives completed since December 2017

- **Internet of Things (IoT) infrastructure:** 4 LoRaWAN gateways now in place across the borough
- **Air Quality Monitoring around construction sites:** 3 month pilot completed and we are now exploring extending the pilot to cover all 20-26 regeneration construction sites
- **Humidity and temperature monitoring on a social housing block:** pilot underway on a housing unit undergoing recladding works to measure the impact of black mould, and build the business case for wider deployment
- **Broadband connectivity:** full fibre rollout for social housing underway across the borough. Mobilisation is planned from June 2019 onwards and is due to take 2-5 years
- **CCTV upgrade:** feasibility study completed and business case under development
- **Pothole detection:** pilot completed using connected vehicles and machine learning for early detection of defects and damage on road surfaces
- **Smart parking pilot:** 12 month pilot underway since April 2019 to trial a fully automated parking payment system, which uses number plate recognition cameras to detect when drivers enter and leave a car park, and bill drivers accurately
- **Sustainable mobility:** installation of new electric vehicle charging points across the borough in progress, with a corporate commitment to having 400 public charging points by 2022

However, there is room for improvement across all these areas, and enormous potential to change perceptions of Croydon and ensure our people and businesses thrive in the internet era.

We need to do more to promote Croydon as a destination for tech businesses, and rebuild momentum and grow the ambition for tech community events. Digital skills work has

tailed off and should be brought back to the fore to ensure no resident is left behind as a consequence of low digital literacy, and to ensure people of all ages have access to the jobs of the future. Our Smart Cities work is still nascent, and now needs to come together as a mainstream activity in our digital roadmap, aligned to the Smarter London Together and sub-regional plans, with a particular focus on improving broadband connectivity speeds across the borough.

► THEME 3: Digital borough continued...

What we will do

To move forward in this area, we will:

1. Take a proactive role in convening, facilitating and promoting Croydon's digital, data and technology community under the brand [Croydon Digital](#), further developing the brand, events programme and website to support business-to-business connections, recruitment, careers advice and skills, resources for non-digital businesses, and to encourage inward investment
2. Form a Croydon Digital Board with representation from Croydon's tech community and wider experts to collaboratively develop plans to grow Croydon Digital, with ambitions to establish Croydon as a leader in Smart Cities, GovTech and UrbanTech and launch an annual digital festival
3. Seek out and exploit opportunities to strengthen and expand the availability of tech co-working spaces, incubators, co-ops and accelerators in the town and other district centres
4. Work with the education sector and other partner organisations to boost the number of people with the skills needed to contribute to our local digital economy, by improving the tech skills offer for people of all ages at existing institutions, and creating a new offer working with schools, FE and HE institutions to provide a wide range of learning opportunities for all ages, from code clubs through to university courses. Tech will form a core part of the Croydon Creative Campus
5. Take a research-based approach to identify the skills needed by our local digital businesses and the best means of developing them, including working with local businesses to create more apprenticeships and work experience opportunities in digital careers. (Within the council, we will provide 3-5 apprenticeships and 2-3 internships in digital roles on a rolling basis, and additional digital apprenticeships through our supply chain)
6. Deliver our [already published action plan for connectivity in Croydon](#), working with providers of fixed, wireless and mobile solutions in a holistic manner to deliver ultrafast broadband to all homes (prioritising social housing) and businesses, public WiFi where it is needed most, and prepare Croydon for the future with 5G and small cell networks
7. Launch a Croydon Digital Challenge, to identify and seed-fund innovative solutions to local civic problems, starting with 2 challenges in 2019/20 with a view to repeating and growing the approach if it delivers value both for the council and participants
8. Continue to take forward Smart City pilots using our Internet of Things network and advances in sensor technology and artificial intelligence to better manage public assets and improve sustainability in public services, with the aim of converting at least 1 successful pilot into a full-scale solution each year, starting in 2019/20
9. Take forward pilots to improve the public realm through Smart City solutions, looking at innovation such as smart pavements, smart parking, smart benches, electric vehicle charging points, digital signage and interactive experiences
10. Optimise digital advertising across the borough to leverage council-owned street furniture for improving street safety, monitoring air quality, footfall and other non-personal data, and explore the provision of free WiFi, wayfinding and local information
11. Actively work with property developers to encourage uptake of Smart City solutions in the built environment, and explore the potential to develop a digital and Smart City infrastructure standard for all new property development
12. Take forward the CCTV digitisation programme to enhance safety in Croydon including implementation of on-street cameras, an enhanced control room and connectivity
13. Undertake a review of our current digital inclusion offer to inform a new approach to providing residents with the confidence and access to use the internet, and to improve social inclusion
14. Promote and develop our offer for the innovative use of assistive technology in enabling residents to remain healthy, safe and independent, including helping those with care needs to stay longer in their own homes
15. Explore opportunities to support and promote the use of community-focused platforms to enhance the local economy, encourage 'buying local' and create social value, for example activities, business and volunteering listings, b2b collaboration apps and a local currency
16. Deliver an ongoing portfolio of smaller Smart City, digital economy and digital skills initiatives, prioritised on our public roadmap

Indicative dates for priority deliverables

Rollout of fibre broadband to all social housing in the borough will begin mobilisation in November 2019, and take 2-4 years to complete. As well as providing fibre to social housing tenants this will create infrastructure to accelerate fibre rollout to other areas

We aim to deliver a comprehensive digital business directory and advisory content on croydon.digital, launch a challenge fund competition and hold a first meeting of the Croydon Digital Board by October 2019

We will complete our review of the current digital inclusion offer and form a plan to improve it by December 2019

We expect to have maximised the opportunity to achieve Smart City benefits from digital advertising in partnership with a leading provider within 2 years

We will deliver a Schools Roadshow promoting technology skills and careers across Croydon secondary schools in 2020

Check our live, continuously updated roadmap to see specific deliverables, track our progress, offer help or give your feedback to influence what we do next: croydon.digital/roadmap

"It is hard to recruit good local technical people. But I believe that the transformation that Croydon is going through could generate the assets required to get there. It must start with schools preparing kids to the jobs of today and of the future. Croydon is massive and should host an International level University with degrees such as finance, marketing, and engineering of all kinds, including computer science."

"It would be better to have more WiFi spots to video call people so that you have a backup if you run out of data."

"Croydon needs to plan for connected street furniture, smart parking, wireless mesh networks, the changing nature of public and private interfaces (e.g. in-car voice assistants) and what 5G will bring. [...] The technologies exist for Croydon to do something ground-breaking. It'd be great to see Croydon pioneering their use"

Comments from Croydon residents and council staff as part of [the online conversation](#) and internal survey that helped shape this strategy

► THEME 4: Collaboration and data

We will use digital tools to collaborate with organisations across all sectors, make Croydon's data open and share digital assets for the public good.

Our desired outcomes:

- Appropriate digital channels are in place to facilitate the council, other public services, business and the community and voluntary sector to share information and collaborate effectively
- There is a culture of collaboration and reuse of digital assets and data between all organisations delivering public good in Croydon, minimising duplication of effort and accelerating our collective capability to deliver better outcomes for our communities
- All organisations in Croydon can contribute to and access a growing set of shared data stores and common platforms that they can make use of to create and enhance digital products and services
- The council plays an active role in local and national digital communities of practice, sharing our experience and capabilities, and is a recognised leader in digital

"Working together in partnership to create one shared purpose and one shared vision, we will work with the voluntary sector, public services, business community and community groups to deliver our outcomes"

Tony Newman, Leader of the Council, Corporate Plan 2018-22



Where we are now

The council has existing partnerships and alliances with a number of organisations, most notably the One Croydon Alliance - a partnership of 6 bodies collaborating across organisational boundaries for better health and wellbeing outcomes - and we work closely with statutory agencies and the community and voluntary sector across a range of other deliverables outlined in our Corporate Plan. There is considerable potential to make better use of technology to facilitate information-sharing across these existing partnerships, and help us forge new ones.

An effective system-wide approach also relies on shared local data. A wide range of data about Croydon, and transparency information about council operations, is already publicly available via the [Croydon Observatory](#), [our corporate website](#), the [London Data](#) store and [data.gov.uk](#). However, there is more to do to unlock more data, improve quality, make all our data easier to find and ensure it conforms to open standards. Of particular priority is the geographic data held by the council, which is currently split across disparate systems and needs work and clearer ownership to get it where it needs to be and make it available for reuse. However, we are in a strong position to radically improve how the council uses, combines and shares data from multiple sources, having invested in a fit-for-purpose cloud business intelligence platform. For example, we have recently begun scoping work on data intelligence to help us take targeted action across the system to prevent violent crime.

As the council reviews and refreshes its core digital platforms and rationalises its portfolio of back office software, there is an opportunity to create common platforms and codebases that are shared not only within the council, but with partners across the system as “public good” civic assets. A small example of such a platform exists already in



the form of Croydon Digital (www.croydon.digital) - a shared publishing platform for the tech and digital community. The council has a number of open source capabilities that can be enabled for reuse across the local system, and we expect that other organisations are similarly creating digital assets with untapped potential for reuse. We want to explore the potential to share these actively across the local system.

Similarly, it is imperative that we reuse and share ideas, technology and approaches across both central and local government. As one of London’s largest boroughs, Croydon has a major role to play in contributing to joined-up solutions for

the whole city, and co-delivering the [Smarter London Together](#) plan. Our status as one of the founding members of the new London Office for Technology and Innovation stands us in good stead to collaborate closely with other London boroughs.

Nationally, local authorities have similar problems to solve and increasingly limited resources, and so wherever possible we will both contribute to and make use of common solutions, shared platforms and lessons learned with all our local government peers. We have committed to do so by signing the Local Digital Declaration, and are active participants in networks of our digital peers such as [LocalGovDigital](#).

► THEME 4: Collaboration and data continued...

What we will do

To move forward in this area, we will:

1. Publish data openly wherever possible, in reusable formats, and work with partners to identify the most appropriate channels to use to do this
2. Put in place the necessary technology and governance to allow for easy appropriate data sharing across the borough
3. Develop and steward a digital platform of reusable technology components, to be shared with partners within the borough
4. Explore the potential for a shared Croydon authentication capability between the council and other organisations - providing a trusted, secure way to prove identity online and enabling users to access a wide range of local services with a single login
5. Where we have a need to acquire a new technology solution, we will seek to reuse existing shared capabilities, contributing back any improvements we make
6. Work closely with existing collaborative partnerships, such as the One Croydon Alliance, to ensure user-centred digital products and services are delivered across organisational boundaries
7. Combine a growing capability in data science and business intelligence with experiments and innovations in emerging technologies such as machine learning and artificial intelligence to enable the council to predict demand and prevent it occurring

8. Improve the council's strategic offer and delivery of geographic data for internal and external use, starting with establishing clear ownership, roles and responsibilities across our currently disparate systems and data sources
9. Through our status as signatories to the Local Digital Declaration, we will work to become an exemplar digital council and acknowledged as a leader in the sector in this area of work, liaising closely with the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government
10. Be deeply involved in digital networks within our sector and beyond, including being founding and active members of the London Office of Technology and Innovation (LOTI), and contributors to [LocalGovDigital](#)
11. Deliver an ongoing portfolio of improvements to existing, and the creation of new, data and collaboration initiatives, prioritised on our public roadmap

Indicative dates for priority deliverables

- We are already sharing our digital work and learning via [croydon.digital](#) and will continue to do this actively
- We will begin using the Local Government Digital Pipeline by September 2019, to share our plans and identify opportunities to collaborate with other local authorities, and contribute the findings of our user research to the shared library developed by Hackney council to benefit other councils
- We will complete a discovery project by March 2020 on the concept of a shared digital component library for Croydon, and develop our plans to take this forward

Check our live, continuously updated roadmap to see specific deliverables, track our progress, offer help or give your feedback to influence what we do next: [croydon.digital/roadmap](#)

“Insist on data generated by infrastructure in Croydon is open by default, with stable identifiers. Also, provide sample procurement contracts that are open and flexible, for use in Croydon and other local government. Build a basic digital layer into all projects – eg Westfield”

“The council has a limited budget to spend on tech improvements.[...] There are already people in the borough that work in software, so why not leverage them? If you open sourced some parts of the software you use, residents could contribute and improve the software itself, saving you money and also giving residents ownership.”

“Success for your digital strategy is about more than delivering the same processes in a new way. Digital transformation means providing a seamless experience to citizens meeting all their needs, predicting and preventing problems and putting the analytics in the hands of decision-makers to drive policy. Data and location are at the heart of this.”

Comments from Croydon residents and council staff as part of [the online conversation](#) and internal survey that helped shape this strategy



► Measuring progress

Progress against this strategy overall will be tracked through existing corporate measurement frameworks. At a high level, we will report regularly on the following two metrics:

% of total demand met through digital self-service	<p>This stands at approximately 30% at present and we aim to increase this year on year, towards the ambition set in this paper of 75% or higher.</p> <p>This is a measure not just of our success in improving the quality of the council's website and online services, but also in improving digital inclusion and connectivity across the borough so that more residents are able to use digital services, and in transforming our internal technology and processes to remove removing barriers to user-centric service design.</p>
% of staff completing digital confidence training	<p>This stands at 0% at present and we aim to reach 100% of existing and new staff.</p>

Specific deliverables which move us towards the commitments set out in this strategy are detailed on our roadmap at croydon.digital/roadmap, using the format of Objectives and Key Results (OKRs). This means each piece of work we undertake will have its own clearly defined objective and between 3 and 5 specific measures of success.

In addition, we routinely track and report on a set of internal Key Performance Indicators including service levels, take-up and user satisfaction for existing products and services.

► Feedback on this strategy

We welcome feedback on any part of this strategy at any time. Please visit our blog at [croydon.digital](https://www.croydon.digital) where you can comment in response to this strategy and all of our ongoing work, or you can email digital@croydon.gov.uk with any thoughts you may have.

We are grateful to everyone who shared their thoughts online or in person in the months before this strategy was published. You can read a summary of how your input helped to shape the strategy at www.croydon.digital/tag/strategy



— OUR —
DIGITAL STRATEGY
A TRULY DIGITAL
COUNCIL
AND BOROUGH
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