

An aerial photograph of Hackney, London, with a green tint. Several large, semi-transparent gear shapes are overlaid on the image. Each gear contains a different scene: a meeting, a presentation, a crowd, a smart home interface, and a group of people working together.

A Digital Strategy for Hackney

2025 - 28

Delivering the best of modern digital, technology and data to transform services for residents and staff

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Foreword from the Mayor of Hackney

Over the last 20 years, Hackney has become one of London's best performing councils.

The borough's public services and schools have improved to amongst the best in the country. Public transport has improved hugely and the borough has experienced more significant business growth, with particular emphasis on the tech, hospitality and creative sectors and population growth. In this time we have pioneered new approaches in areas such as delivering new Council homes and tackling the climate emergency, led the way in creating high-performing schools, accessible and quality leisure facilities, and well-maintained green and public spaces.

As for much of local government, this period has not been without challenges also. The impact of the Covid19 pandemic coming after a period of prolonged austerity, which had already undermined public services in the borough was particularly tough in Hackney, given our comparatively high levels of demand from vulnerable residents. Following this, in October 2020, Hackney's IT was devastated by a criminal cyber attack, which had a huge impact on our

technology and digital services and from which we continue to recover and rebuild from, to this day.

Although we have made significant progress with recovery there remain services which continue to be managed via low tech rather than high tech fit for purpose digital solutions and solving this will be a key driver of greater efficiency and higher quality service provision over the coming years. We also need to rebuild trust with our residents so they are confident in sharing their sensitive data to support effective digital journeys. This means developing digital services that collect and store information in ways that are sensitive, trauma-informed and accessible to the borough's residents, its many and varied communities and its businesses to make use of.

To meet the demanding challenges ahead, and not just maintain but continue to improve the quality and flexibility of our services, the Council has to be prepared to challenge the way it has been working and become more resourceful



and enterprising in providing quality services for residents. **Our digital strategy sits at the heart of this transformation.**

We aspire to be a digitally enabled, efficient and effective organisation. We want our residents to have a great experience when interacting with our services and this means ensuring we make the most of modern technology and properly equip and skill our staff. **We want to provide a personalised approach for our residents, not one size fits all, and enable those who can to self-serve, freeing up time for staff to spend with those who cannot.**

Strategic Context - “Working together for a better Hackney”

The Strategic Plan, ‘Working Together for a Better Hackney’, sets out the ambitions and challenges for the Council and the prioritised outcomes of the organisation.

To achieve our strategic priorities, and with consideration of key challenges we face as a council and a borough, we have recognised the need to change how we work. This means evolving the way we operate and finding new opportunities to meet resident’s expectations by collaborating with partners and communities and empowering and enabling staff.

The Council’s Corporate Transformation Strategy, “Working Together for a Better Council” sets an ambitious and progressive approach to change. It focuses on securing Hackney’s future by meeting challenges differently and creating an enabled, effective and efficient Council. It embeds the commitment to support the workforce and evolve the organisational culture to deliver an efficient high-performing Council that always puts its residents first.



Our digital strategy is one of the key building blocks for this transformation. Our ambition is to equip our staff with the skills and technology they need, allowing our residents to access our services more effectively, improving connectivity across the borough and ensuring our residents and communities are all digitally enabled to live their best lives.



“Our ambition is to equip our staff with the skills and technology they need, allowing our residents to access our services more effectively...”



Hackney's Digital Journey

Hackney's digital journey has been a challenging one over the past five years - having been an industry leader in delivering modern digital services, the 2020 cyber attack set us back significantly.

We were fortunate that work that had begun before the cyber attack strengthened the Council's resilience - for example, our migration from on-premise servers to hardened cloud hosting, improving our security by isolating services, enabling modern security practices and tooling limited the full impact of the attack.

Since then, we have made significant progress with managing our cloud first infrastructure and completed the move to a zero trust architecture (a modern cyber security approach which means we don't trust by default but by repeatedly verify all users of our systems), built a Data Analytics platform and introduced low code solutions and new software. We have also

strengthened our policy and governance frameworks for cyber security, information governance, engineering, cloud engineering, artificial intelligence, data management, and customer services.

By committing to invest in and implement this strategy, we are seeking to develop as both a digital place and a digital council. We will work to ensure residents, partners and businesses are able to thrive in the digital future, and play active roles in shaping Hackney into a digital borough where technology is used to improve the lives and life chances of everyone.



“We believe that our current position is one of huge opportunity - we have moved out of a period of reactive recovery and are now in a position to really transform our processes and leverage the latest technology to transform our services.”

Our VISION



**Digitally
Accessible
Council**



**Digital
Workplace**

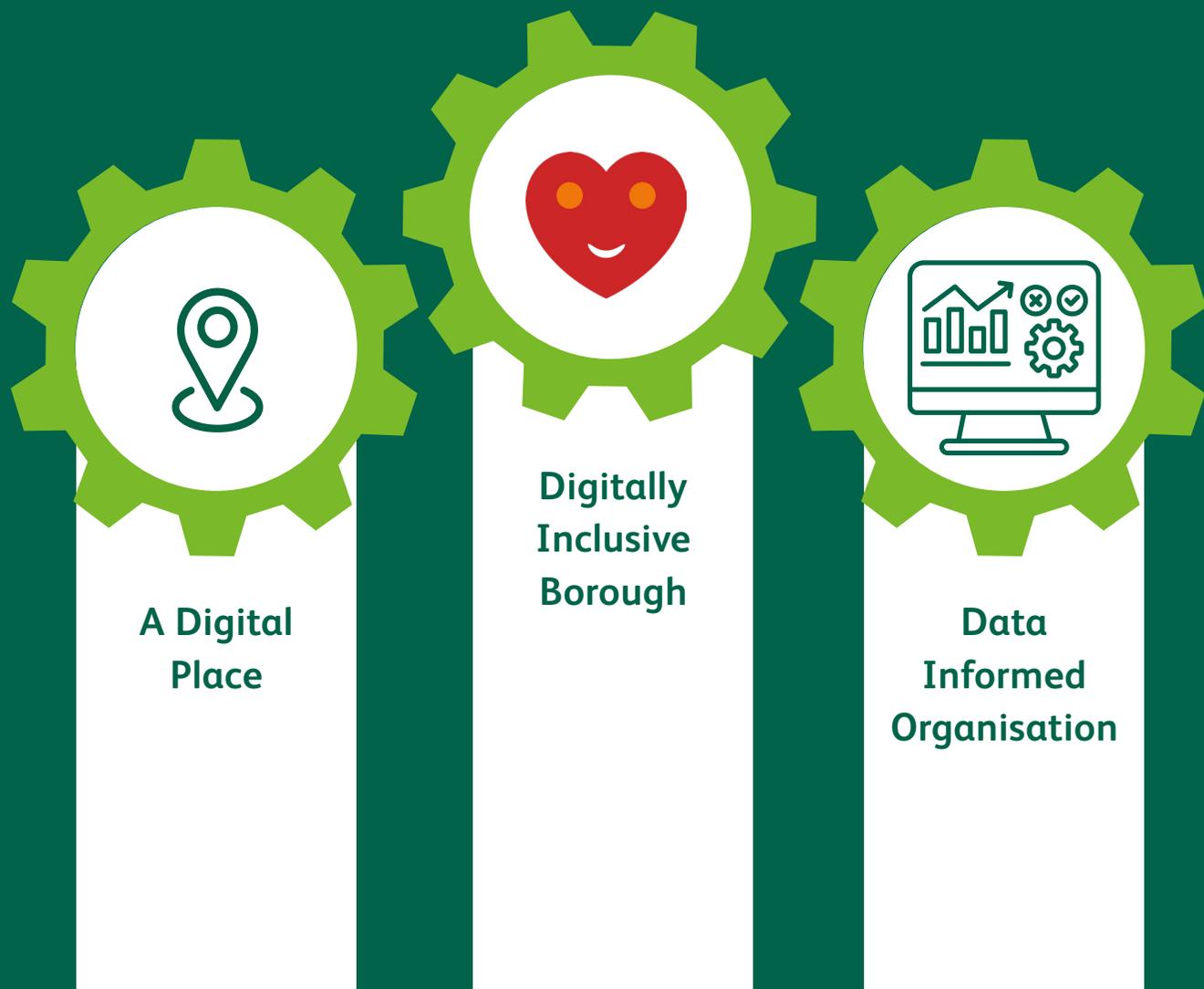
We will deliver seamless digital services to our residents using the best of modern technology

Including digital and data approaches to ensure people can do what they need, when they want. We will be ambitious and unrelenting in our focus to design services that work for our residents and meet their high expectations. We will focus on our underlying business approaches not just on technology, ensuring we fix processes rather than just moving problems around.

Our technical strategy will see us continue to adopt a flexible, secure, Cloud first, zero trust approach and deliver services on top that make repeated use of high quality data and common design standards so we offer a consistent and trusted look and feel to our residents and staff.

We will use our digital strategy to support a fundamental transformation of how we operate as an organisation - recognising that equipping our staff with the right tools and information will only ever improve the service we offer residents and businesses.

Our Vision continued...



Our digital strategy themes are:

1. A Digitally Accessible Council: We will put in place modern, digital back end systems to support all core Council services. Our services should feel seamless for residents and staff - people should be able to apply for services, pay for things and share important information with us easily, just like they expect in all other aspects of their lives. The experience will be consistent whether someone self-serves online or contacts the Council to support them in accessing a service. We will support residents not just to contact us, but to resolve issues.

2. A Digital Workplace: Our staff's time is precious and we will focus on ensuring they have the tools they need to do their job. We will treat the experience of our staff with the same respect we afford to the experience of our residents and make sure we understand their needs and can offer them modern digital solutions to meet them.

3. A Digitally Inclusive Borough: We will identify residents who are digitally excluded and provide them with access to devices and digital skills, or alternative support, to enable all residents in Hackney to engage with our services.

Our core design PRINCIPLES

To deliver this ambitious approach we will focus on the following core design principles:



Digital First



People Centred



Inclusive



Co-create



Optimise



Secure
by Design



Data
Informed



Digitally enabled
independence

4. A Data Informed Organisation: We will leverage data (including from smart devices and assistive technology) to better understand our residents and improve service delivery, making timely and informed decisions to meet their needs.

5. A Digital place: Hackney will become a digital borough where the Council, our businesses and wider public services offer the best opportunities for digital access and connectivity for our residents.

How will we know if this strategy has been a success?

If we deliver what we're setting out to achieve here and in the associated delivery plan, we believe:

- Residents will be receiving better services from us - more targeted to their needs, more efficient by joining up data to reduce the burden on a resident to explain their circumstances over and over again. We will see a reduction in the amount of repeat callers trying to get a single issue resolved.
 - Residents will have a better experience of dealing with us and trust us more - our service provision will be seamless and sensitive, appropriate to the situation regardless of the channel used. We will see more positive response rates in our Resident's Survey.
 - We will reduce unnecessary contacts from residents where we have failed to get it right the first time, and use those resources to provide better customer services.
- We will see measurable reductions in the officer time spent managing our services through the introduction of new systems, integrations and automation.
 - We will see a reduction in the number of complaints to the Council about our services.
 - We will see an upskilled workforce, confident to use new technology and innovation.
 - We will empower the wider organisation to achieve its savings targets and ensure value for money.



Theme 1: A digitally accessible council

The majority of our residents live 'online lives' and they expect to be able to access most, if not all, Council services, easily and conveniently from their phones and home devices.

Transforming our provision in this area is fundamental if the Council is going to manage the twin pressures of reduced funding and increased demand in the coming years.



Our ambition

We have modern, digital back end systems in place to support all core Council services - these are built to allow accurate data to securely flow throughout the organisation as needed and means staff and residents are able to access up to date information about their service provision easily and quickly such as rent balances or status of an application. Our services should feel seamless for residents and staff - people should be able to apply for services, pay for things and share important information with us easily, just like they experience in other aspects of their lives. The experience will be consistent whether someone self-serves online or contacts the Council to support them in accessing a service.



Our commitments

- We have put in place modern, digital back end systems to support all essential core Council services so no core service is relying on spreadsheets or interim workarounds.
- We will reduce the number of standalone spreadsheets used to collect and maintain core datasets. We will look to use low code solutions to allow us to move quickly, recognising the value this will bring to services and overall data quality.

- We will fix processes not just bring in digital solutions as an 'add on' - we will support services to overhaul their business processes, consider automation and AI and other ways to streamline and be genuinely digital forward.
- Services will be easy to access on our website and residents will be able to do what they want to do on their first visit, reducing the need for residents to contact us again and again to resolve an issue.
- If residents are not able to self-serve, they can easily get support from a range of locations around the borough.
- The outcome will be consistent whether they self-serve online or contact the Council to support them in accessing a service.
- We will ensure that the way we design services has the end user in mind at all points so the resulting service is easy to use.
- Wherever we make services available digitally, they will be optimised for mobile devices.
- We will support communities to be self-sufficient while understanding the cultural or religious barriers they may face to accessing services digitally.
- We will work with local VCS partners to ensure there is broader support for residents in accessing services digitally - recognising how the wider ecosystem needs to come together to deliver for Hackney.



Theme 2: A digital workforce

Our staff are the fundamental engine of Hackney Council and over the last 5 years they have stepped up to deliver service continuity under some of the most trying circumstances.

Our ambition

Our staff's time is precious and we will focus on ensuring they have the tools they need to do their job well. **We will treat the experience of our staff with the same respect we afford to the experience of our residents and make sure we understand their needs and can offer them modern digital solutions to meet them.**

Our commitments

- We have the right modern tools, devices and connectivity that are fit for purpose, and enable our staff to work effectively.
- We will ensure all mobile staff have access to the appropriate technology to enable them to work effectively in the community.
- We will develop our physical ICT infrastructure and digital resources to meet growing and changing needs.



- We will improve productivity, efficiency and cost effectiveness through common platforms, reusable technology components, workflow automation, and integrations across systems and applications.
- We will continue to ensure that staff who do not have regular access to digital services, due to the nature of their jobs, still have opportunities to access important information and engagement opportunities.
- We will leverage AI and automation to improve our processes and release staff from routine duties, allowing them to focus on providing support to our more vulnerable residents.
- We will give our staff the right training and support to allow them to benefit from the full suite of digital services we offer including features such as AI.



Theme 3: A digitally inclusive borough

Hackney, like much of the country, has an ever increasing digitally literate population with many people across all age groups highly confident using digital channels to manage almost all aspects of their day to day lives. According to our 2024 Residents Survey, only 5 % of residents don't have access to the internet. We know this group is disproportionately older residents, disabled residents or those struggling financially. Hackney is also home to Europe's largest community of Charedi Jews, many of whom do not engage with a digital service provision and we have a unique role in supporting this community in accessing services.



Hackney will become a digital borough where the Council, our businesses and wider public services offer the best opportunities for digital access for our residents. We will cultivate networks across the capital and with central government to make the most of investment opportunities that could improve accessibility in Hackney. We will support all our residents, regardless of their background, to get access to the services they need from us.



- If residents are not able to self-serve, they can easily get support from a range of locations around the borough.
- We will support residents who are unable to get online, through device and data gifting.
- We will ensure residents have places to go where they can study or work online.
- We will work to improve the digital skills of our residents, in partnership with voluntary and community organisations to support device gifting, building of digital skills and digital buddy initiatives.
- We will collaborate with volunteer sector organisations and schools to equip the next generation of Hackney residents and businesses with essential digital skills, ensuring they have every opportunity to succeed.

Theme 4: A data informed organisation



Our ambition

We will cultivate a data culture across every layer of the organisation where everyone understands the value of data to help us make better decisions, do more with less and proactively support our residents. Staff understand that creating, maintaining and using data is part of everyone's job. They have access to high quality data that they need to work effectively, and the skills needed to use it to maximise its positive impact on services and outcomes. We will be open and transparent about how we use data and our residents and businesses will trust us to use their data ethically and responsibly.



Our commitments

- We will ensure that our data is fit for purpose by improving data lifecycle management so that we understand what data we have, who 'owns it', and that we are able to manage and share it appropriately across the organisation.
- We will ensure that our people have the knowledge, tools and community collaboration to make use of our data and insight.
- Our staff, residents and businesses will trust us to use their data ethically and responsibly.
- We will establish a Data Ethics Board to guide the ethical and responsible use of data and ensure that we minimise bias and discrimination.
- We will join up data safely and responsibly to develop a comprehensive

view of our residents, enabling us to provide holistic support at first point of contact.

- We will incorporate data and insight into the Council's governance processes so that decisions are always made using the best possible evidence.
- We will explore the use of AI safely through the development of guidance for staff and a series of pilot projects that will analyse the benefits and risks of wider rollout and usage.
- We will support our residents to remain independent and to prevent them needing support from the council, by utilising modern digital aids and technologies.

Theme 5: A digital place



Our ambition

Hackney will become a digital borough where the Council, our businesses and wider public services offer the best opportunities for digital access for our residents. Our residents, staff and local businesses benefit from high speed internet and know they can work anywhere in the borough easily, without network blackspots disrupting their plans. We will cultivate networks across the capital and with central government to make the most of investment opportunities that could improve accessibility in Hackney.



Our commitments

- We will work with broadband and mobile telephony providers to improve connectivity across the borough, particularly on our estates.
- We will analyse the broadband not-spots across the borough and work with internet service providers to improve connectivity in those areas.
- We will work to deliver better wifi availability in our town centres.
- We'll introduce smart infrastructure solutions e.g. connected street lighting that adjusts based on real time data.

Our plans for delivering this work will be set out in an annual action plan.

Conditions for success

We believe the only way to achieve the progress we're looking for in how we manage and harness our data, is to begin taking small steps towards it.

In order to successfully deliver our digital strategy we need:

- A focus on delivery - this means breaking down the work we need to deliver the strategy into small units of manageable work that will allow us to test, iterate and improve. We won't get it right every time but we'll start small and be willing to fail fast in order to learn what might work at scale.
- Recognition that we will need to invest to release the benefits of transforming our digital services - this work is the foundation of freeing up officer time and potentially lead to cashable savings but we will likely need to invest in our technology and capability to have any chance of realising these.
- Investment in continuous skill enhancement - To fully harness the potential of our data and technology investments, we need to commit to continuously upgrading our staff's technical skills.
- A shared commitment to delivery - to achieve the change we need to see, will require close partnership working across all departments of the Council and a shared sense of responsibility for transforming our services and close working with the voluntary and community sector across the borough.



“There is a wealth of tech opportunity in and around Hackney - but not everyone can see themselves in it.”

