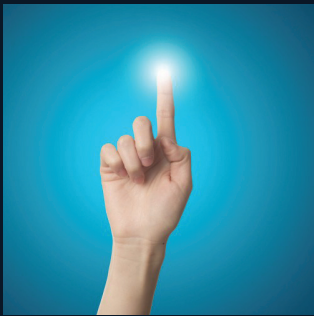
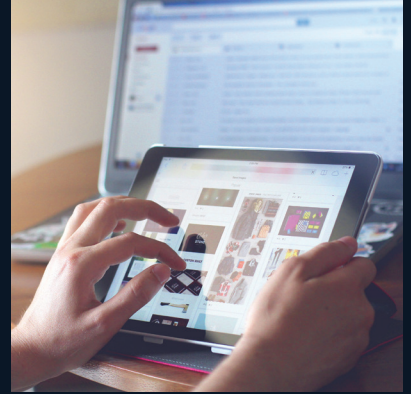


# DIGITAL STRATEGY

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2019-2023



# FOREWORD

Brent is at the forefront of a digital revolution which is transforming how people interact and their expectations for accessing information and services. We launched our first Digital Strategy in 2017. The Strategy set out an ambitious vision for using technology as a catalyst for delivering local priorities and how we, as a council will work with and support local residents, partners and businesses on our journey to becoming a digital borough. The publication of Brent's Digital Strategy was a defining moment. Brent's leadership committed to being a borough that embraces the opportunities presented by digital innovation to improve lives and deliver local priorities more efficiently.



Much progress has been made since; new systems are allowing us to better support residents and are transforming the experience of our tenants and leaseholders; we are developing technical solutions to engage and support some of Brent's most vulnerable residents, young and old, moving forward with Smart City pilots having successfully deployed 21,000 Light Emitting Diode (LED) street lights controlled by a new Central Management System (CMS). These are reducing carbon emissions from street lighting by over 60% and improving the borough's digital infrastructure.

Now we are going to build on the strong foundations that we have put in place. We've updated our Digital Strategy as we enter the next phase in our exciting journey to becoming a truly Digital Council and making Brent a truly Digital Place. This is where the real impact of the transformation we've begun will be felt. As we align how services are accessed to the needs of citizens there will be significant change in the what the organisation looks like and how it delivers services. The end result will be an improved experience when you contact us and better services for residents and businesses in Brent.

Over the next four years, we will also continue to adapt our workforce and other assets to work in an agile way to successfully deliver our priorities. We will build resilient communities through the Brent Hubs model - a prime example of how we want to address the needs of our residents earlier. We will do this, in a joined-up way, grounded in the neighbourhoods where people live.

We have already started to use data more effectively to redesign service models around what users need and allow us to better prevent and respond in ways that were not previously possible. Data will continue to grow in importance. We will work in ways that ensure data is kept safe and citizen's information is protected. We've developed a Data Security Strategy in parallel with the new Digital Strategy to help us do this.

This updated Digital Strategy sets out how, in this ever-developing landscape of technology and innovation, we will embrace these exciting changes and make the most of our new digital infrastructure to ensure that Brent Council is an ambitious leader now and in the future; working smarter and delivering better services for all.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading 'Cllr. A. McLennan'.

Cllr Margaret McLennan  
Deputy Leader, London Borough of Brent



# INTRODUCTION

The digital revolution has touched the lives of people worldwide and has forever transformed the way we live, work and do business. Technology has helped connect people and bring them closer together, improved access to information and services, and created vast opportunity for innovation and businesses growth. But the speed of change has left some of the most vulnerable members of society digitally isolated and has seen many traditional businesses and skill-sets become obsolete.

This pace of change will continue to accelerate, presenting countless more challenges and opportunities. Since the launch of our first Digital Strategy in 2017, Brent has been working to ensure local residents, partners and businesses are able to thrive in the digital future, and play active roles in shaping Brent into a digital borough where technology is used to improve the lives and life chances of everyone.

Brent's ambitions in transforming into a digital borough will be realised through achieving the dual and interdependent aims of becoming a digital place and a digital council:

As a **DIGITAL PLACE** we are building a borough-wide digital infrastructure providing instantaneous connectivity. We are developing a training and education framework that nurtures digital skills and expertise, with clear pathways into high-value contemporary employment. We will have an environment that emboldens a culture of digital entrepreneurship and innovation, attracts new businesses and supports the evolution of existing ones. Crucially it will be a place shaped by the strengths of Brent's local neighbourhoods and destinations, harnessing digital to amplify and promote their unique qualities. Our locality based approach extends to our Digital Programme. This aims to address complex issues that exist at a local level through tailoring approaches to meet local needs and working with communities to make them more engaged, connected and resilient.

As a **DIGITAL COUNCIL** we are enhancing our digital offer in line with modern expectations. Our services and information are becoming more accessible and personalised, helping residents to make better informed choices. We will provide more efficient and value for money services, with leadership that empowers our workforce to use technology to work smarter across traditional structures and in new and existing partnerships. We are helping to connect people with each other and their communities and enabling more residents to have their voices heard in influencing decision making. And with our partners, we are redesigning how we deliver services to allow us to provide resources and support to ensure all residents are digitally included.



# BOROUGH PLAN 2019-2023 BUILDING A BETTER BRENT

Our vision for 2023 is to make Brent a borough of culture, empathy, and shared prosperity. A borough where people from different backgrounds feel at ease with one another, share in cultural opportunities and activities, and value the principles of fairness, equality, good citizenship and respect for people and place. People will feel that they and their children are safe, cared for and able to achieve, and that they receive excellent services when they need them. Brent will be a great place to live and work, where business and enterprise prosper and local people have opportunities to change their lives for the better.

The Borough Plan sets out a transformational approach to community-led services, designed and delivered on a localities basis. This is being put into effect in a number of ways, including Outcome Based Review (OBR) initiatives; the development and expansion of Brent hubs; our stronger communities strategy and community engagement. The council sees an enhanced role for all partners who are able to provide Best Value services; this includes the voluntary and community sector.

The Borough Plan focuses on five themes: Strong foundations; every opportunity to succeed; a future fit for everyone, an economy fit for all; a cleaner, more considerate Brent and a borough where we can all feel safe, secure, happy and healthy. We will harness the opportunities presented by technology to help to deliver this vision and build a better Brent.





# BRENT DIGITAL FACTS

## DIGITAL PLACE

Brent has **335,000** residents today, projected to increase to almost **350,000** by 2023, and over **375,000** by 2030



The number of residents aged **65** and over will increase by **15%** over the lifetime of this digital strategy, and by **41%** by 2030



**89%** of Brent residents said they use the internet, but that means that **1 in 10** residents do NOT



**85%** of Brent residents use a Smart phone to get online



## DIGITAL COUNCIL

There are **77,469** active 'My Account' users



The Brent website gets an average of **368,000** visits each month



There are around **2,500** Brent staff using IT to do their jobs. Brent also provides IT support to another **450** staff working for the Local Government Association.



Brent is part of a Shared ICT Service with Southwark and Lewisham which altogether supports around **10,000** staff



## DIGITAL PLACE

Nationally, councils have lost **63%** of their funding from the government since 2010, and in Brent we have had to save **£164 million**. The council expects to have to save around **£40m** over the life of this digital strategy.



**8%** of residents reported feeling socially isolated. A further **15%** said they don't have enough social contact



Brent's **21,000** Light Emitting Diode (LED) street lights controlled by a new Central Management System (CMS) are reducing carbon emissions from street lighting by over **60%**



## DIGITAL COUNCIL

Brent currently uses over **100** different IT applications



**45%** of residents tell us it was easy to carry out council transactions online. **21%** said it wasn't easy.



A new customer portal will allow residents to request a housing repair in **37** seconds!



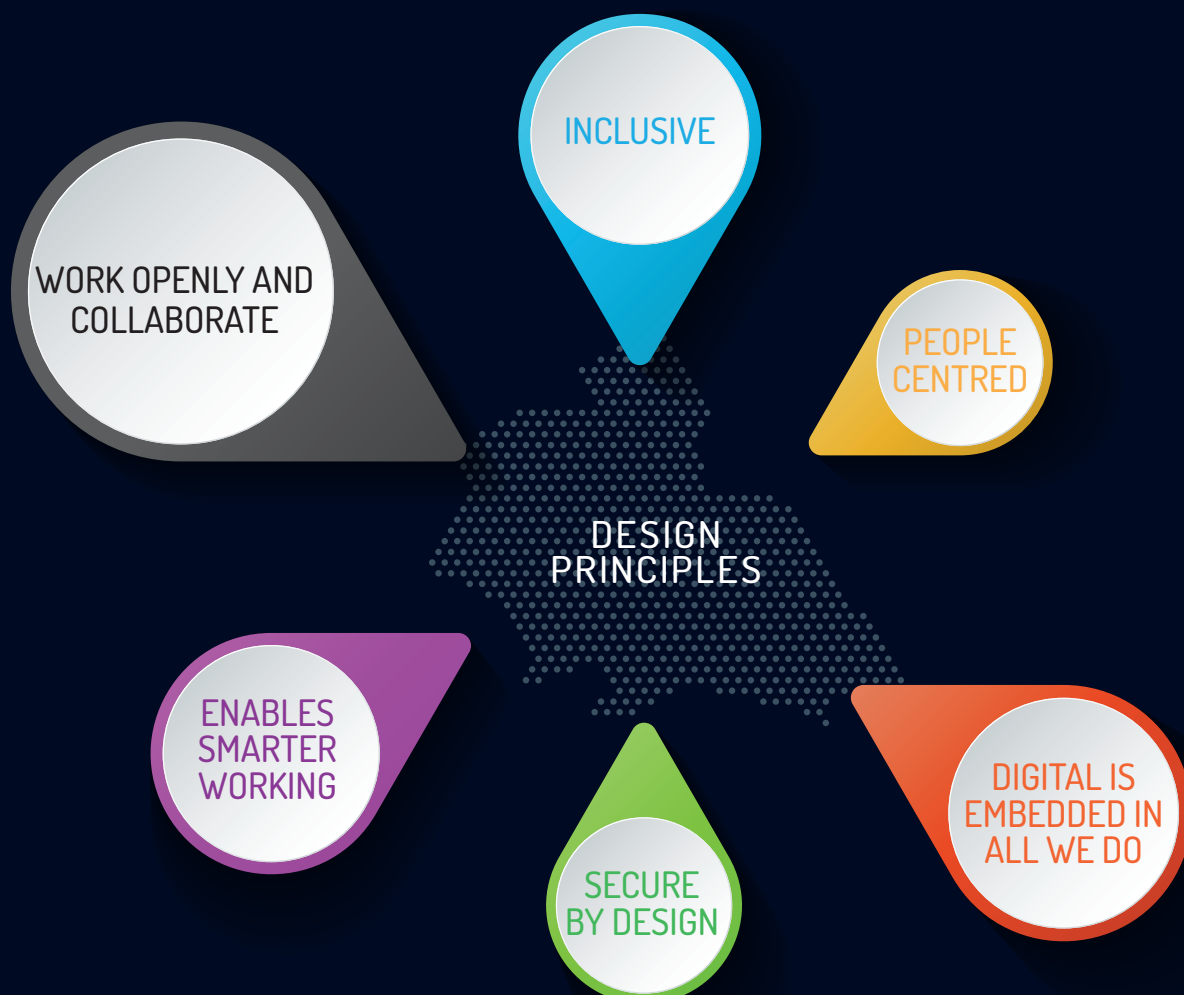


# BRENT'S DIGITAL JOURNEY

Residents and businesses are already benefitting from work to implement Brent's Digital Strategy. Our journey to becoming a Digital Council has seen us implement a new Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system enabling us to improve the service we provide. We have created better ways of providing the information people need, when they need it. From finding out what's going on for young people in the borough using Brent Youth Zone, to understanding what's available to support businesses or being able to check your child's position on a school's waiting list, residents are able to do more online than ever before. The use of robotics has been successfully piloted, performing tasks quickly and accurately, reducing errors and saving staff time.

Our journey to becoming a Digital Place has already brought about improvements in the Borough's digital infrastructure with a greater number of residents having access to full fibre broadband. Residents are getting support to improve their digital skills and get online and we are working with the tech sector to make new employment opportunities available to Brent residents. Our move to place-based working involves a shift in the role of the local authority from service delivery to local leadership, with a focus on coordination, navigation and facilitation. To support this, we will work with the Community and Voluntary Sector to improve their digital infrastructure and skills.

Our Digital Programme is driven by six key design principles



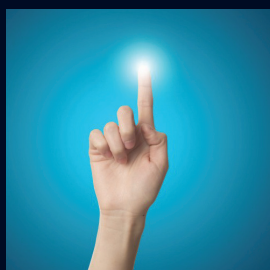
46% of residents think that the council is easy to contact and almost the same percentage think that we're helpful when contacted. Similar percentages of residents find completing transactions and making payments online easy. When it comes to looking for information about services, 41% of residents find it easy. Following a review of our website we've got a good understanding of the type of information people most regularly look for and what makes it easy, or difficult, for them to find it. Providing residents with a quick, easy and consistent experience however they contact us is central to Brent's Digital Strategy.

We will continue to transform the way residents are able to access services, making it quicker and easier. With a more user friendly website customers will be able to quickly and easily find out about and book and pay for services. The new website will be easier to use on Smart phones, so customers can interact with the council whenever and wherever works best for them.

Integrated into the website will be a single customer portal. It will feature an increasing number of services and allow citizens to be registered and authenticated once without needing to re-enter their details. Better integration with back office systems will mean transactions will be quicker and require less staff time whilst giving us a better view of what residents need. We will use Artificial Intelligence (AI) including robotics, to get things done faster and help us make decisions in a consistent and fair way. Residents will be able to seamlessly do everything they need to, in one place in an easy and consistent way.

With more transactions taking place online, Brent is investing in chatbots and other ways of supporting those accessing services this way. Digital assistants will be available for those needing a little bit more help and Brent Hubs able to assist some of our residents who need additional support close to home.

As Brent's online offer grows, customers will be better able to track progress themselves rather than needing to make a phone call. As we get better at making use of our data we will explore opportunities to proactively provide citizens with information tailored to their requirements, for example inviting them to renew services such as green waste collection before their subscription runs out. Machine learning will help us better understand how people interact with us and enable us to continually improve the way we deliver services, meeting the public's expectations and freeing up resources to help those with complex needs.





Below is a summary of the key digital initiatives that have already been delivered and others that we are working on, or will deliver as part of Brent's Digital Strategy.

	Delivered	In progress	Delivery 2020-2023
Building blocks	<p>Established Digital Programme Team</p> <p>Membership of London Office for Technology &amp; Innovation / Local Government Digital Declaration</p>	Enterprise Architecture review	Innovation pilots incl. exploring Angular & Virtual/Augmented Reality
Access	<p>Specific access projects: Brent for Business Portal Brent Youth Zone site</p>	<p>Care Leaver Pathway</p> <p>Slenky employment platform</p> <p>Dynamics portal and Azure B2C</p> <p>New access model including Brent Hubs /Family Hubs</p> <p>New website Content Management System and improvements to website</p> <p>Accessibility standards</p> <p>YOTI/Authentication</p>	<p>Full implementation of the Customer access model</p> <p>Extending the use of powerapps</p> <p>Improving income collection</p> <p>Online forms</p> <p>Foster carer recruitment &amp; retention</p>
Skills	<p>Employment / skills projects Brent Start digital curriculum</p>	<p>Brent Start /Employment &amp; skills projects/Tech sector apprenticeships/ Digital Champions</p> <p>Digital skills for young people e.g. coding clubs</p>	
Digital Place	<p>Supporting the development of campuses</p> <p>Increasing full fibre to the premise coverage in Brent: ODPC/Strategic Investment Pool/Full fibre roll out to Brent's housing stock/5G Connectivity</p>		
Data and Smart devices	<p>Predictive analytics pilot</p>	<p>Drone</p> <p>Internet of Things deployments including Smart Cities, Smart Blocks, ASC devices/Assistive technology</p> <p>Open data</p> <p>Data Lake</p> <p>ASC: improving data sharing with health partners/using technology to address social isolation</p>	
MS Dynamics	<p>Customer Relationship Management</p> <p>HR Talent (performance management, recruitment) and case management</p> <p>Electronic Document Management</p>		
Robotics	<p>Robotics pilot</p> <p>Chatbots pilot</p>	<p>Robotics Process Automation deployment</p> <p>Chatbots deployment</p> <p>Artificial Intelligence / Machine learning projects</p>	

# HEADLINE TARGETS

<b>Access</b>	<p>Brent's new customer access model will deliver £425k savings from 2020/21</p> <p>By 2022/23 there will be a 25% increase in resident satisfaction (since the 2018 Residents Survey)</p> <p>Customers will be able to book, pay and request services seamlessly online by 2022/23 (all payment forms will be developed on MS Dynamics and there will be an integrated booking system)</p> <p>By 2022/23 telephone demand will have decreased by 25% linked to greater availability of digital access</p> <p>By 2022/23 85% of customers will be satisfied with the digital assistance offered</p> <p>3,900 residents will be accessing Brent Hubs on an annual basis</p> <p>75% of enquiries made at Brent Hubs resolved at the point of contact</p> <p>Satisfaction with the website will be improved by end of 2020/21:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• More than 80% of website users can find what they are looking for online as measured by site survey</li><li>• Average bounce rate from visitors below 33%</li><li>• 33% of all site traffic generated from repeat visitors</li></ul> <p>By the end of 2020/21 the website will conform to Web Content Accessibility Guidance (WCAG) standards and will comply with the Web Accessibility Directive</p>
<b>Skills</b>	<p>75% of Brent Hub customers will be more confident in using online services</p> <p>Number of people accessing Brent Start digital curriculum will be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 20/21-524</li><li>• 21/22-576</li><li>• 22/23-634</li></ul>
<b>Connectivity</b>	<p>There will be a year on year increase in FTTP coverage of at least 8%</p>
<b>Data</b>	<p>From 2020/21 there will be a reduction in infrastructure and operational costs from the consolidation of data and analytics tools for services that are added to the Data Lake</p> <p>From 2020/21 the time taken to produce data products will be reduced by 90% for services added to the Data Lake</p> <p>From 2020/21 there will be a 40% improvement in data related productivity due to automation for services added to the Data Lake</p>
<b>Dynamics</b>	<p>20% reduction of re-keying from use of web forms which will start to be moved to Dynamics in 2020/21</p> <p>The number of IT applications will be rationalised by at least 10% by 2022/23</p> <p>Services added to the Dynamics platform will see a decrease in complaints</p>
<b>Robotics</b>	<p>At least £450k savings pa from 2022/23 will be generated from automation of processes</p>



# STRONG FOUNDATIONS

To achieve our goal of improving the satisfaction of residents with the way the council does things, we must continue to utilise new technology, reduce avoidable contact and put residents more in control of services, redefining the “front door” through which residents contact the council. We will take advantage of the increasing pace of change and continue our journey to become a Digital council, but as we do so, we will always ensure those residents who need additional support to access services get it.

Like other local authorities, Brent is facing greater demand for services while receiving significantly less funding from central government. We need to use technology to improve the way we and our partners work and become even more efficient, making every pound count.

Brent residents have already demonstrated an appetite for accessing council services via digital channels including MyAccount, the Cleaner Brent app and an increasing range of services that are requested online. This channel shift has helped to manage demand and deliver considerable savings; we’re also improving the online user experience and minimising back-office interventions in the transaction process. People will only transact online if they feel that their personal information will be kept safe. A new Cyber Security Strategy is being developed in parallel with the Digital Strategy to ensure security considerations are integral to all we do.

## Example: Housing Management

Brent is using the opportunity created by implementing a Customer Relationship Management system to redesign business processes, create a customer comes first culture and provide a compelling digital self-service customer offer supported by a digitised back office.

Housing management was one of the first services to benefit. Previously, 18 different systems were in use. This fragmented architecture gave rise to a fragmented customer experience, with no single views of either residents or properties. Accessing data was time consuming for staff, which in turn meant that it sometimes took us too long to resolve issues for residents and it was difficult to keep them informed of progress.

The CRM has been deployed to support a range of housing management functions and continues to be rolled out. Examples of improvements so far include integrating email in to CRM which allows emails to be tracked to ensure they are dealt with and to allow progress to be easily checked. It also means that we have data on issues raised so can understand what is driving demand. Estate inspection teams now have the information they need via their smart phones out on site. This allows them to respond more quickly and effectively and has eliminated double keying. Using CRM for income collection provides officers with real time information on all arrears for the first time.

As more functions move on to the CRM our data grows richer and staff are able to access a single view of customers, properties, blocks and estates. We aim to completely transform our customers’ experience and deliver faster, better more reliable services, and provide the convenience of a comprehensive and compelling customer portal.

## OUR JOURNEY SO FAR

As a Digital Council, we're making it easier for citizens to interact with us; continually improving our online provision including the personalisation of services through online accounts, supporting people with webchats and chatbots, using better online forms to collect information in a simple way and avoid residents from having to provide it more than once. As our customer access model evolves it is being aligned with new approaches including localities working and the Brent Hubs and family hub models. It will be enabled by the development and implementation of new digital systems, including an improved website and online portal, more integrated back office systems and an enhanced ability to use customer data to drive improvements to services.

As Brent's customer access model develops, seamless support will be provided across all access channels, ensuring everyone can access services. This will include digital assistance (helping residents to use a computer or using it on their behalf if they are unable to do so), and advocacy and support for people with complex needs. We will differentiate the level of support provided, depending on customer need.

The Brent Hubs model is already helping ensure all residents have access to the resources and support they need to confidently access information and services. Brent Hubs provide new ways for residents to connect with local organisations to access information, advice and support. The Hubs provide a space and digital infrastructure that enables Brent and partner organisations to jointly respond to the needs of residents who have complex needs.

Brent Hubs users are also supported in accessing online services and developing their digital skills, helping to build resilience and reduce long term dependency on Brent services. Eight new Family Hubs, providing an enhanced service offer for families with children of all ages, will align with this approach.

The Dynamics CRM system has been developed to facilitate end-to-end management of customer visits. Technology is enabling the council to work within our communities and work more effectively with organisations in the community and voluntary sector. This supports the Borough Plan's goal of moving towards working around localities with an approach which is 'increasingly centred on building the capacity and resilience of communities and helping them play an integral part in service delivery'.

Business processes have been redesigned to be fit for purpose and fit for the future, creating a customer comes first culture. We have laid the foundations for a compelling digital self-service customer offer supported by a digitised back office delivered by building a Microsoft Dynamics platform. This is playing an essential role in raising the quality of our digital offer in line with modern expectations and eliminating unnecessary officer case handling and re-keying. By investing in Dynamics and working alongside developers to facilitate skills transfer to Brent officers, Brent now has the capacity to design and build online services that better meet the needs of our residents.



This is allowing us to:

- Bring together information from multiple systems and spreadsheets into 'single views' of our citizens and our properties, available at the point of service
- Tackle the high dependency on manual processing
- Reduce case handling time and respond to residents more quickly
- Help staff with systems and tools that enable them to become more agile and productive and
- Improve the overall user interface and customer experience through better designed and executed customer journeys.

The MS Dynamics platform is simple to use for both residents (via self-service) and staff, with all the necessary information presented in an intuitive and user friendly way. This is already delivering a step change in customer service delivery, and cost savings through increased productivity, proactive failure demand management (avoidable contact) and channel shift.

Improvements are also underway to a number of key finance systems which will deliver efficiencies. These improvements include the introduction of a new income management system. Effective income management forms a critical part of financial management in Brent as well as forming the foundation of strong income and debt collection. It underpins the council's ability to develop payment strategies that support the Digital Strategy (in particular the ability to offer digital pay it/ book it facilities) and to minimise the need for human intervention when processing and allocating payments.

Technology is also being used to increase participation in civic life. This involves creating modern pathways and more effective methods for residents and other stakeholders to engage with the council, have their voices heard and influence policy and decision making. It includes harnessing social media and emerging digital technologies to reach all of Brent's diverse communities, understanding key issues and providing the skills and forums to jointly develop solutions. To make it easy for residents to have their say on our proposals and plans and help us to decide policies for Brent we've introduced a new online consultation portal. The platform is also more efficient for Brent staff who can now manage all their consultation and engagement activity in one place.

Alongside creating systems to support new ways of working, we have begun to rationalise systems and applications. Reviewing our enterprise architecture is already allowing us to make savings by reducing support and licensing costs. The process is giving us a better understanding of our technology estate which is allowing better use to be made of existing functionality. It is also identifying a pipeline of services to move to the MS Dynamics platform.

We've developed a solution to improve how Brent stores and uses information electronically. Using SharePoint Online as the Electronic Document Management (EDM) solution for Brent has allowed us to further rationalise systems and integrate with our MS Dynamics Platform. This means staff have more information at their fingertips and are better able to help customers.

As we grow increasingly dependent on technology in all aspects of our lives, we need to ensure that digital services are safe, secure and reliable. Brent's Cyber Security Strategy sets out our approach to ensuring the confidentiality, integrity and availability of information. This ranges from making sure new applications are secure by design and compliant with the highest cyber security standards, through to having robust plans for dealing with a cyber attack. Brent is moving to the UK Government's Cyber Essential Plus standard which will mean having systems independently tested. We have thoroughly reviewed processes for GDPR compliance and training on other aspects of information governance is mandatory for all of Brent's staff.

How we work within the council continues to evolve, for example the new Innovation Igloo will be a digital innovation space within the Civic Centre. It will be a space which teams can use to develop ideas for digital innovation and where new and emerging technologies can be demonstrated. The space will provide an environment to engage employees in the opportunities provided by new technologies and to ensure they can keep up to date with our work to become a Digital Council. It also has the potential to be used for engaging external stakeholders, for example through hackathon or user testing activities, and could be used to generate income by offering it to other organisations to book.

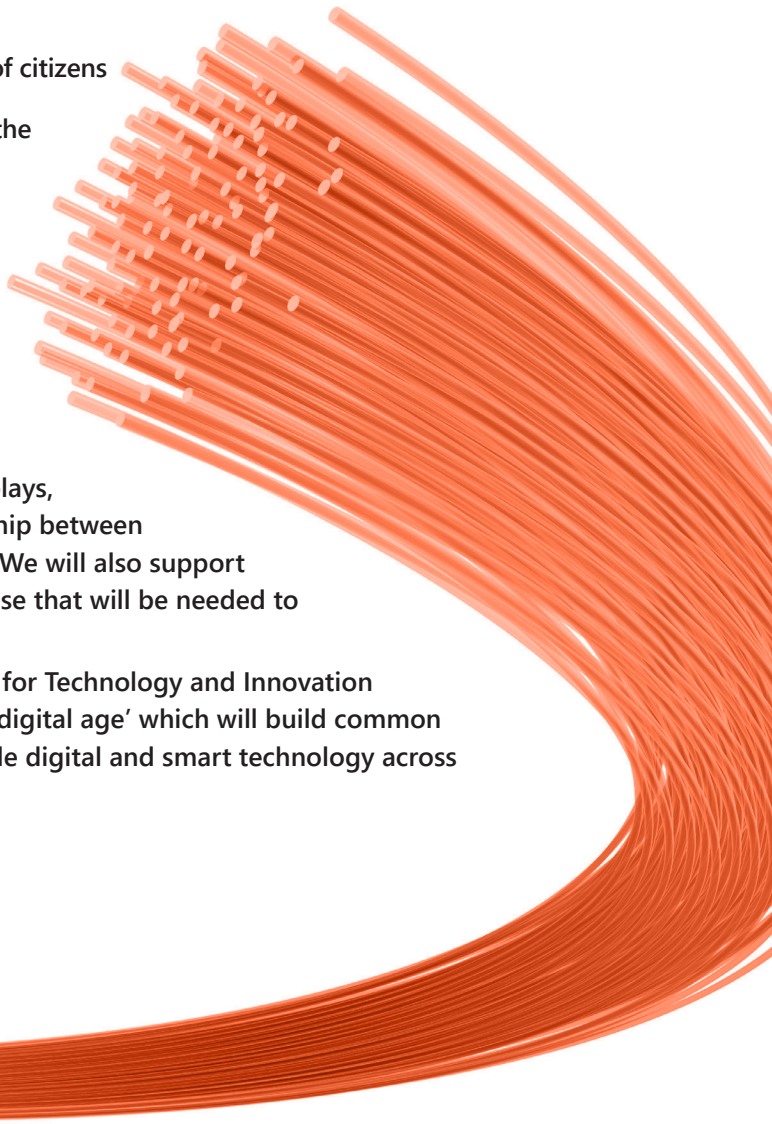
The recent roll out of new IT equipment allows staff to work remotely whilst maintaining secure access to Brent's network. This means staff are able to work from anywhere, including in the community. This allows the best use of space with the Civic Centre and enables income to be generated from renting out our office space to other organisations.

Brent strives to be at the forefront of digital innovation within local government. We are a signatory to the Local Digital Declaration which affirms the collective ambition of local authorities for local public services in the internet age, and our commitments to realising it. It commits us working on a new scale to:

- Design services that best meet the needs of citizens
- Challenge the technology market to offer the flexible tools and services we need
- Protect citizens' privacy and security
- Deliver better value for money.

We continue to work with other local authorities and a wide range of other partners to share good practice and lessons learnt and make the best use of resources. In recognition of the pivotal role it plays, we will develop a long term, sustainable partnership between the council and voluntary and community sector. We will also support the development of its infrastructure and skills base that will be needed to support a Cooperative Council model.

Brent is also a core member of the London Office for Technology and Innovation (LOTI). LOTI is a new city-wide 'institution for the digital age' which will build common capability and opportunity to collaborate and scale digital and smart technology across London's public services.



## THE NEXT STEPS ON THE JOURNEY TO A DIGITAL BOROUGH

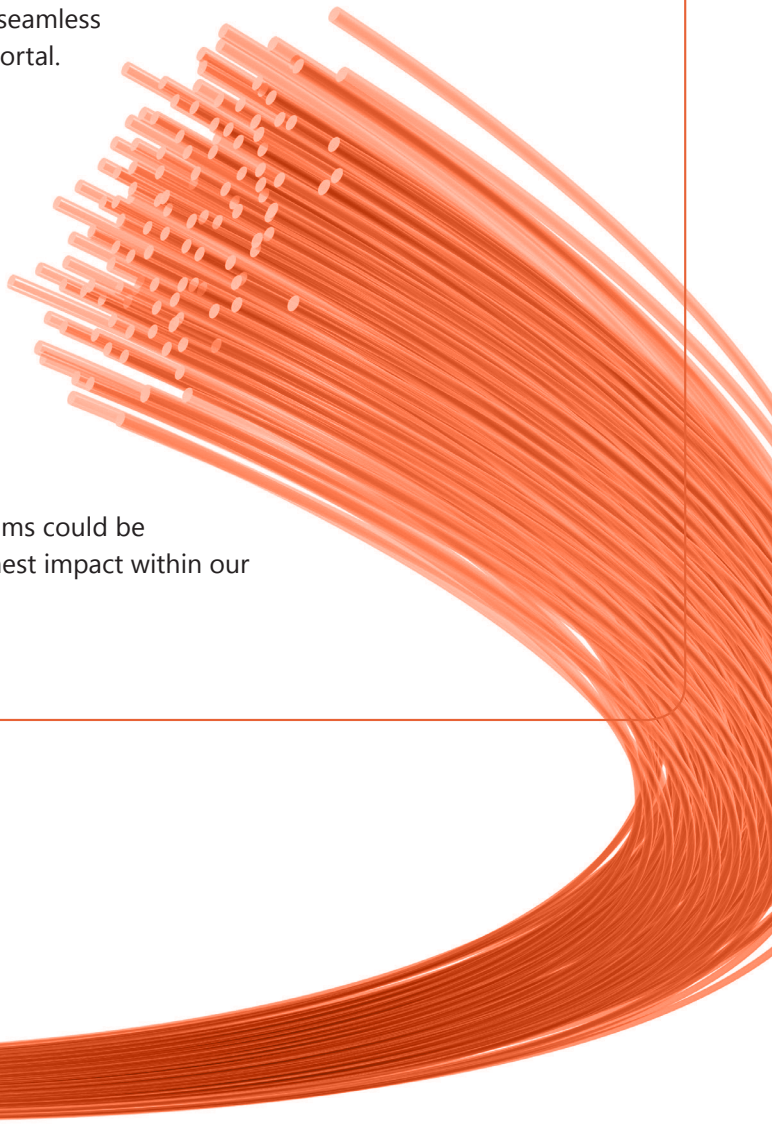
1. Technology will continue to support the development of Brent's new model for customer services, and be used to ensure alignment with new approaches including localities working and the Brent Hubs and family hub models. As localities working is extended, some funding, such as the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL), may be determined locally. CIL funding is used to support some digital initiatives, such as coding clubs for children. We will also use technology to continue to enable closer working with the Community and Voluntary Sector in keeping with the ethos of the Cooperative Council model.
2. We understand that people will only want to interact with us on line if they feel that their data is secure. We will develop a citizen authentication process that allows people to simply and securely prove their identity, keeping personal data secure. We will also set out clear standards around security that all of Brent's systems and applications will comply with. Easier access to better data underpins many aspects of the Digital Strategy. We will continue to improve the quality of the data we use, developing a new Data Quality Strategy, taking advantage of moving to new systems to cleanse and improve data.
3. Putting citizens more in control of the relationship they have with the council by giving them quick and easy access to the information they need is key to Brent's digital approach. To support this, we will develop and launch a new web platform that will:
  - Enable users to self-serve more efficiently, directing them to core services that they can transact with online.
  - Provide a communications channel that informs, educates and inspires residents about the work and impact of the council.
  - Deliver a flexible, open source content management system (CMS) through which council staff can create, maintain and manage the structure and content published across the website.
4. The new website will act as a gateway into the customer portal. Greater access to information and online services will realise organisational efficiency improvements and better outcomes for the service user. With a greater number of customers using the website as their first line of support and more users doing things online, this helps us to realise channel shift benefits in customer services. The implementation of a new CMS will also reduce back-office workload for staff across the organisation.
5. Planners have begun to use fully interactive, 3D models to help understand the implications of planning decisions. We will continue to develop this approach, along with the opportunities presented by Virtual and Augmented Reality, to support the council's work and as a means of engaging the community in making decisions.



6. Further services will be brought onto the MS Dynamics platform and the EDM. We will continue to integrate channels, applications and workflows to enable seamless end-to-end transactions across a wider range of services and maximise the first touch capability of council officers. More effective data sharing and verification methods, both internally and with partners, will improve the customer experience by minimising evidence requirements.
  7. Improvements will be made to core council systems. A new HR case management system and Talent module, providing all of the main HR functions, will be developed on the Dynamics platform. As well as improving functionality, this will allow us to further streamline the number of applications maintained.
  8. Artificial Intelligence (AI) will be used to support faster, more consistent assessments and decisions. This will reduce failure demand and enable more customers to independently complete full transactions and do business with the council at times of their choosing, it might for example assist in determining planning applications for which there are straight forward criteria, or eligibility for council services.
  9. Robotic Process Automation (RPA) is the use of software (robots) to automate rules based, mundane, repetitive computer based tasks. The software accesses business systems through the human interface and mimics how a human would process the work, automating processes where possible and removes the need for manual human intervention. We will implement RPA to increase staff capacity, enabling them to deal with meaningful and complex interactions with residents making better use of the talent and skills within our workforce. Automated transactions will be completed on time, eliminating risk of errors, improving quality resulting in increased customer satisfaction.
  10. A chatbot is an artificial intelligence (AI) software that can mimic a conversation (or a chat) with a user in natural language through messaging applications, websites, mobile apps or through the telephone. People are now spending more time on messaging apps and social media. These are the platforms of the future, and Chatbots will be how their users access all sorts of services reducing the need for human intervention. We will use chatbots where they provide a way of giving customers the information they need quickly.
  11. Through Brent's Commissioning and Procurement Board, we will make provision in contracts, or when commissioning services, to ensure those delivering services on the council's behalf work with us to deploy technology where it will deliver benefits for residents. We will work with the Community and Voluntary sector to strengthen its position to deliver services.
  12. Reducing budgets and uncertain new models of funding mean local authorities need to be intelligent in using their limited income raising powers to help subsidise core services. Digital provides many exciting
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opportunities for developing new revenue streams, maximising existing ones and enabling cashable savings. The Digital Strategy will help make every pound count by:

- Monetising our infrastructure through a range of digital commercial opportunities.
- Pursuing and implementing new service provision partnerships. This includes shared new shared service arrangements where digital will enable traditional services to be joined up or delivered remotely, and capitalising where private sector businesses and other organisations will pay for Brent expertise. For example, we will create our own Centre of Excellence with in-house developers working on CRM, Chatbots, and Robotic Process Automation which will reduce costs and increase the potential to generate income.
- Will we continue to sell services. For example, we will use our drone to generate income and investigate the potential for trading assistive devices for people who self-fund their social care.
- Continuing to rationalise the Brent application estate and progress further rationalisation opportunities. Significant efficiency and cashable savings will be made through reducing support and licencing costs by consolidating and streamlining applications both internally and in partnerships.
- A 'Book it / Pay it' strategy will be developed to encourage more payments through seamless transactions via a secure residents' portal. Using a Data Lake we will have more accurate information on debt and be better placed to recover debt.
- Building on our strong position to access innovation funding. This includes horizon scanning across areas including entrepreneurship, digital infrastructure, investment start-ups, digital enablement, data protection and smart cities/communities, and understanding how the various streams could be implemented and joined-up for highest impact within our digital vision.



# EVERY OPPORTUNITY TO SUCCEED

From digitally excluded and vulnerable residents to computing graduates and tech entrepreneurs; we've been working to ensure the right information, services and conditions are in place for all stakeholders to confidently interact with the digital council and thrive in the digital place.

We want all of Brent's residents and businesses to be well placed to take advantage of the opportunities offered by new technology. For some that might mean being able to log on to their resident account to check progress with a housing repair they've requested at a time that suits them, for others it might mean landing a dream job in the tech sector. We recognise that people's needs vary. As we get better at gathering and making use of data we will tailor services, and how people access them according to their needs and preferences.

## Example: Improving digital skills

The digital revolution has long since displaced many mid-skill level jobs that were characterised by routine, repetitive tasks. Basic IT skills are now a requirement for most employment opportunities and, as digital technologies advance and become further imbedded across all industries, computerisation is forecast to replace nearly half of today's jobs over the next two decades.

In terms of digital inclusion, Brent residents compare well with the majority of other London Boroughs but there remain pockets of exclusion in some of our most deprived areas. Brent also has a significantly higher proportion of workers in the least skilled jobs bracket - 24% compared to 14% in London as a whole – making it more vulnerable to the next wave of digital displacement.

To address these concerns we are working in partnership with local organisations, businesses and all levels of education, to develop a collaborative system that creates the right skills, opportunities and pathways to support local people in accessing contemporary employment in the rapidly changing landscape.



## OUR JOURNEY SO FAR

Ensuring full digital literacy across the borough is essential to providing everyone with the opportunity to achieve. We also need to ensure low skilled workers whose jobs are at greater risk of being displaced by new technology are able to develop their digital skills to enable them to take advantage of new employment opportunities.

Brent Start launched a new digital skills programme in September 2018, and so far has supported 300 residents in courses including digital literacy and use of email and the internet, critical skills for job searching, applying for benefits and using accessing services online, and more broadly in day to day life. This includes the use of virtual reality, augmented reality and a 'Wonder Wall' to create an immersive learning environment that can provide different experiences for learners, including placing them in real life situations such as shopping, at work, or to experience other destinations around the world.

In recognition of these achievements, Brent Start has been shortlisted for a Connected Britain award for innovation in digital skills.

We want to help create an agile, highly skilled and digitally included future workforce. As well as enabling residents to secure employment, this will make Brent a great place for tech companies to locate. We're making sure Brent has a future proof digital infrastructure that will support existing businesses to grow and attract new enterprises, and jobs, to the borough.

We've built new partnerships, working with broadband providers to create training and employment opportunities for Brent residents. So far, over 30 Brent residents have been newly recruited to support Hyperoptic's fibre broadband roll out.

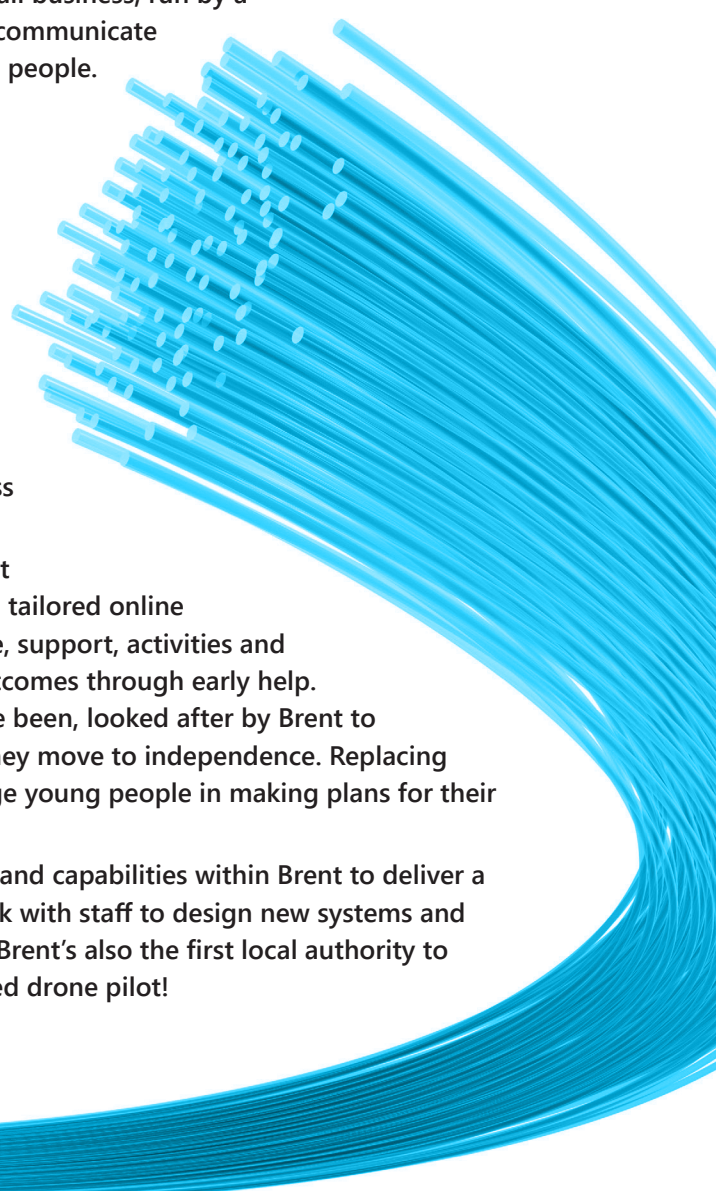
Brent now has a Hub page on Slenky, a Brent based small business, run by a residents of Brent. The Slenky platform is used to help communicate employment, skills and training opportunities to young people.

Forming a network of Hub pages, opportunities from a range of partners are pooled on one website that is accessible for young people.

Lots of young people use technology instinctively and it has an important role in helping us give all of Brent's young people the opportunity to succeed. We're working with tech companies to deliver Tech Camps aimed at providing a pathway into work for young people. Over 450 have attended so far. The Hackathons they've been involved in as part of the Camps have produced really interesting ideas to address some of Brent's challenges.

Young people in Brent are helping to co-design and test solutions that work for them. The Brent Youth Zone is a tailored online solution aimed at connecting young people with advice, support, activities and opportunities in the local area; delivering improved outcomes through early help. We're also working with young people who are, or have been, looked after by Brent to design and develop new ways of supporting them as they move to independence. Replacing paper based forms and using technology to help engage young people in making plans for their own futures.

Just as crucially, we have been developing the capacity and capabilities within Brent to deliver a challenging and innovative digital programme. We work with staff to design new systems and provide the training they need to use them effectively. Brent's also the first local authority to employ a Drone Apprentice; she'll become a fully trained drone pilot!



## THE NEXT STEPS ON THE JOURNEY TO A DIGITAL BOROUGH

1. Brent Start will continue to deliver and develop its innovative digital skills curriculum.
2. In 2020, Brent will be the London Borough of Culture so we will explore further Tech Camps around the creative and tech industries.
3. As we're rolling out fibre connectivity to Brent's housing stock we will work with providers to offer residents the opportunity to develop their digital skills through training. We will continue to work with providers to create more employment and apprenticeship opportunities for Brent residents and seek partnerships with other companies in the tech sector to widen the range of apprenticeships available.
4. We will connect community spaces to create more places across the borough with high speed connections which are accessible to residents. We will expand the Brent Hubs model and develop a network of eight new Family Hubs. As well as providing an alternative way of accessing services in the community, the Hubs will provide a new way for residents to get support in gaining digital skills.
5. As we move to becoming a Cooperative Council and implement of our approach to locality-based working, we will work with the Community and Voluntary Sector to strengthen its infrastructure and build digital skills.
6. The University of Football Business continues to grow and is planning to develop new state of the art facilities in Wembley Park near to the national stadium. The College of North West London is also seeking to create a new campus. Brent is a key partner in the One Public Estate project around Northwick Park Hospital, which also includes the University of Westminster. We will support and encourage the development of campus' in the Borough.
7. We will continue to work with Looked After young people and use technology to improve the support and guidance we and others provide as they move to independence.
8. As we deploy better systems to support our work within the council, we will create opportunities for Brent's staff to develop their digital skills. We will continue to offer apprenticeships and we will also develop in house skills to become a Centre of Excellence in the deployment of Robotic Process Automation and Chatbots. We will also increase in house capabilities around MS Dynamics development.

# A FUTURE FIT FOR EVERYONE, AN ECONOMY FIT FOR ALL

Regenerating the borough, with thousands of new homes, hundreds of new jobs, and much-needed growth in our tax base, not to mention hundreds of millions of pounds spent in the local and regional economy feature strongly in the Borough Plan. We will improve Brent's digital infrastructure to enable our local neighbourhoods to grow as dynamic and attractive destinations in which to live, work and do business. This will mean improving broadband speeds across the borough so that they are fit for purpose, now and in the future, and working with the market to ensure Brent benefits from the roll out of new 5G networks.

To make sure Brent's a great place to do good work, we will continue to develop an offer that helps existing businesses prosper in the digital place and makes Brent a desirable location for new and established businesses from across the digital spectrum, growing our business rates base and providing new employment opportunities.

## Example: The West London Digital Investment Programme

The West London Digital Programme proposes an extension of the high-speed fibre network to large areas of west London covering seven local authorities, including Brent. It will target areas affected by persistently slow internet speeds – so called 'not spots' that are also located in growth and regeneration areas.

A number of public buildings in Brent will benefit from new gigabit capable broadband connections. This will not only help improve the services delivered from those buildings, but the new high-speed fibre "spine" and the associated new street cabinets installed as a result will enable private sector providers to, for the first time, viably and competitively connect near-by business and residential properties to the network. This will have a transformative effect on internet speeds in the areas affected.

The programme will also support lower-cost, interventions, such as street works, that result in otherwise unviable commercial investments by fibre providers becoming viable.



## OUR JOURNEY SO FAR

By 2039 Brent's population is forecast to increase by 20% and exceed 400,000 people. With more people using more complex online devices for watching High Definition TV, gaming, making video calls, doing business and to access educational opportunities, we are going to need faster and more robust broadband connections.

The good news is that Brent's digital infrastructure is already improving; when the first Digital Strategy was launched, less than 4% of Brent had access to Full Fibre To The Premise (FTTP) broadband. This type of broadband provides far faster connection speeds and much greater capacity than traditional broadband services. This means that internet speeds won't slow down, or buffer, during peak times. It's also much faster to upload material, which businesses have told us is particularly important to them. We've reduced the barriers to providers wanting to invest in Brent's digital infrastructure. Now nearly 20% of premises in Brent have access to FTTP broadband. It's good progress, but we will continue to secure great connectivity for the whole of the Borough.

We've been working with providers and developing plans to invest in infrastructure that will ensure more residents and businesses get access to fast, stable broadband more quickly. We've already started to roll out fibre broadband to Brent's housing stock so residents have access to full fibre broadband at affordable prices. We've also been successful in securing funding to connect some community buildings to ensure everyone can benefit and help to improve the public services delivered from those buildings. All of this will make it more viable for providers to invest in building new networks across the borough, allowing more residents and businesses to do more online, faster.

Good connectivity is an important factor in attracting new businesses to invest in the borough and in helping existing businesses to grow. To further support businesses, a new website for businesses was launched in 2018 to bring together information for businesses such as on workspace, workforce skills and recruitment, business support, and council services, all in one location.

## THE NEXT STEPS ON THE JOURNEY TO A DIGITAL BOROUGH

1. To futureproof Brent's digital infrastructure, we will:
  - Continue to work with providers to support them in investing in Brent's digital infrastructure and increase the number of properties able to access Full Fibre To The Premise Broadband services at an affordable cost.
  - Secure Gigabit capable connections for key community buildings to allow everyone to benefit from access to fast, stable broadband.
  - Work with businesses to demonstrate demand for full fibre broadband and address barriers to business activity, including 'not spots' and slow speeds.

- Work with Mobile Network Operators to ensure Brent benefits from the roll out of 5G networks.
  - Embed digital requirements within our planning and regeneration strategies, including in Brent's key planning framework, the Local Plan and the Inclusive Growth Strategy.
2. We will ensure local Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) have the support they need to thrive in the digital place. Approximately three quarters of Brent's current businesses are SMEs, with many having no online presence. We will continue to work with these businesses to understand their digital needs and how opportunities in online trading, marketing and digital efficiencies could benefit them. Working with partners in education and the private sector we will develop a support framework to ensure local SMEs can access the suite of digital skills their business needs to compete and succeed in the changing world.



# A CLEANER, MORE CONSIDERATE BRENT

The environment is a major factor in the quality of life for our residents, who have identified clean streets, parks and trees, and collection of waste and recycling, as three of the top five priorities that they value the most in Brent. However, in common with much of London, the quality of our air is not as good as it could, or should be. 'Smart' technology has a role to play in making Brent a cleaner place to be.

## Example: Smart Cities

Brent is celebrated for its cultural diversity and unique town centres and neighbourhoods. From iconic Wembley, to vibrant Harlesden and trendy Kilburn, no two places are the same and each is characterised by different institutions, businesses, communities and priorities.

Using data sensors on street furniture and new Internet of Things infrastructure we will capture and communicate information in real-time to develop shared insight and faster responses to local priorities such as sports and entertainment events, traffic, parking, footfall, waste management and lighting.

This technology will enable more interaction between people and the places they live and work. We will expand our open data platform to increase their stake in the community through new ways of connecting with, influencing and improving the environment.



## OUR JOURNEY SO FAR

Brent aims to become a 'smart borough'. This means using digital devices to coordinate and manage our assets through increased connectivity and sharing of data and information. To achieve this, we have launched an open data platform. We are developing a targeted and joined-up approach to developing a smart grid of connectivity across the borough. This model will enable the council, residents, partners and businesses contribute to, access and use data to develop pro-active solutions to social issues including planning, transport, energy, health and community safety, as well as opening up unlimited new commercial opportunities as a test bed for developers.

We've converted 21,000 street lights to Light Emitting Diode (LED) technology; and have fully implemented a new Central Management System (CMS). The CMS creates the ability to manage the output of individual street lighting lanterns borough-wide - Brent's first Smart Cities application deployed at scale.

The LED and CMS programme is saving the borough £950,000 a year on energy costs, the highest saving achieved from LED street lighting in any of London's 32 boroughs. It also addresses the climate emergency by reducing carbon emissions from street lighting by over 60%. What's more, having a network of street lights connected to the CMS creates an infrastructure for other Smart Cities applications.

We've been identifying some of the environmental challenges 'Smart City' technology could help address. Priorities include: Air quality and traffic congestion; Providing information on parking provision and improving waste management. As a first step, sensors have been incorporated in plans to implement a Low Emissions Zone so we can track air quality and see if the measures taken result in a sustained reduction in air pollutants.

Gaining a better understanding of how people move around busy town centres is also useful in helping to target how the environment could be improved in these areas. We've piloted the use of Mobile Network Data to show us how town centres are used, including how people travel to and from them.

## THE NEXT STEPS ON THE JOURNEY TO A DIGITAL BOROUGH

1. Based on the priorities identified for Smart City technology we will work with the market to identify devices to pilot in Brent, focusing particularly on some of our town centres. We will test how well the devices assist in improving air quality, congestion and parking problems and the management of waste.
2. Building on the pilot on use of Mobile Network Data, Brent has partnered with the London Borough of Southwark to develop a proof of concept around making better use of data to understand the impact of road closures and works. The new project will explore what can be achieved by aggregating anonymised population movement data from mobile operators and other data sources into a visual and spatial model. The aim is to learn more about how people move around and how we can better visualise that information so it can be used by range of services and residents.

3. We will design and build a data lake which will pull in data and insights into single platform to better inform decisions, predict trends and help manage demand. This will incorporate a 'workbench'; a rapid development environment for design, simulation, construction and testing of complete Internet of Things solutions.
4. We will develop and expand Brent's open data platform to give the community, academics and businesses access to information, empowering them to shape solutions which will improve the environment in Brent.
5. Using our housing stock's improved internet connections, we will trial Internet of Things devices to see how they can help us take a proactive approach to maintenance and improved energy efficiency.



# A BOROUGH WHERE WE CAN ALL FEEL SAFE, SECURE, HAPPY AND HEALTHY

It is vital for the council to support our most vulnerable residents – safeguarding children and young people and helping vulnerable adults to be independent at home. We must also use technology to help residents avoid and tackle health issues and manage health conditions in a safe, more convenient way.

Making better use of data and sharing it securely with our partners in the health sector will allow us to better tailor solutions to the needs of residents. It will also help to identify those who might benefit from early interventions to prevent problems becoming more serious over time.

Crime is falling in Brent and technology, such as our new digital CCTV network is helping to prevent crime and anti-social behaviour, as well as reducing the fear of crime.

## Example: Adult Social Care

Adult social care is the single largest expenditure for Brent Council. In the context of an aging population continuing to drive demand, an innovative approach is needed to sustain a high quality relational service within projected budgets.

To address this challenge digital will enable earlier intervention through new analytics tools that collate data from across the council and health partners; identifying those at risk and supporting coordinated, targeted assistance before their need becomes severe. Digital solutions and apps will help residents to manage their own conditions and allow them to choose how, when and with whom they share their health history; promoting more personalised and efficient services system-wide. Most importantly, digital will be key in connecting people with friends, family, volunteers and neighbourhood-based support, creating more resilient communities and local networks that reduce dependency on council services and offer a safe alternative to residential care.



## OUR JOURNEY SO FAR

Giving staff and partners access to high quality data enables them to make better decisions about the support and services they provide to residents with complex needs. Brent has developed a successful prototype which provided professionals access to data held in different places to give them a more holistic view of the lives of vulnerable young people. This approach supports professionals in identifying who might benefit from early intervention to prevent more serious problems arising in the longer term.

Given the rising cost of adult social care for all local authorities and health services, we are collaborating with our partners to create a better understanding of the key drivers of cost based on linked data. This will help inform strategic commissioning decisions; making sure the right services are available at the right cost. Working with the North West London 'Whole Systems Integrated Care' programme team, an initial version of a whole system dashboard for Brent has been developed to make this essential information more easily available.

Improving systems and data is also helping get patients back home from hospital more quickly. Giving staff access to key performance information helps them tackle issues as they arise which should reduce unnecessary delays in discharging patients.

We are also developing new aligned pathways between GP networks and social isolation support to reduce duplication and improve outcomes for people with social needs, and reduce unnecessary GP attendances. Once implemented, information will be shared between services to reduce duplication and maximise the impact of interventions.

Brent is part of a North West London-wide scheme to make better use of NHSMail to ensure homes have timely and secure access to key information from NHS partners. Work is also in progress with a number of large care providers to align systems. This will support the delivery of a care plan that can be viewed by all the healthcare professional teams involved in the patient's care twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week enabling better care.

Brent's switch to wireless CCTV system allows for a more cost-efficient and flexible CCTV network, and enables the easy relocation of high definition cameras to crime hotspot areas as required, without the need to hard-wire a camera in. The upgrade has been recognised by the Home Office's Surveillance Camera Commissioner with Brent becoming one of only a handful of boroughs in London to be audited and certificated for following the Surveillance Camera Code of Practice.

## THE NEXT STEPS ON THE JOURNEY TO A DIGITAL BOROUGH

1. We will continue to design more effective and preventative service models using advanced data analytics and business intelligence. As part of developing a Data Lake for Brent we will develop fully operational data products to help professionals make decisions around early intervention and support for vulnerable residents.

2. We will work with the Old Oak and Park Royal Development Corporation to improve the digital infrastructure on the Park Royal industrial estate. This will be used for improved CCTV and Internet of Things applications. It will also address a significant connectivity 'not spot' in the borough providing fibre connection opportunities for around 1,100 SMEs. This will make it easier for existing businesses to operate and to attract new businesses to the area and help to future proof the industrial estate.
3. Internet of Things technologies will be trialled to see how they can support people to live more independently in their own homes. Smart systems comprise of a number of small wireless battery powered sensors which can be used to monitor movement, temperature, door opening/closing and the use of electric sockets. Sensors can track movement in different rooms, know when a door/window or cupboard has been opened, or even show when an electric kettle has been switched on. By creating a set of rules or typical patterns we can analyse sensor data and recognise if people are deviating away from their normal routine which may indicate they need assistance.
4. Brent's Adult Social Care team will develop an assistive technology strategy, which will include a plan to develop integrated systems for capturing and reporting live information to service leads and family members, and enabling clear access to reports for commissioners.
5. A 'whole system' care home performance dashboard will be developed to track key performance information and inform support and commissioning.
6. The use of technology to speed up assessments for some adult social care will be investigated. As well as giving faster decisions to residents, technology provides the opportunity to ensure more consistent decision-making.
7. Brent has been chosen as the London Borough of Culture for 2020, beating 21 other boroughs with a proposal recognised by the Mayor of London as "visionary", and receiving £1.35 million to stage a year-long programme which will put culture and the arts at the heart of Brent's future. We will use digital to create some truly memorable events.

# Governance arrangements

Delivery of this digital strategy is overseen by the Brent Customer and Digital Board and championed by the Deputy Leader of the Council. The Brent Digital Board is chaired by the Strategic Director of Customer and Digital Services – the digital lead for the Council Management Team.

The Board drives and supports the ambitious programme of change and is responsible for:

1. Identifying, prioritising and coordinating digital work packages;
2. Acting as the gateway that formally assesses and approves digital work packages;
3. Aligning and deploying resources, skills and expertise for most effective delivery of digital work packages;
4. Ensuring membership of the board is representative and has the appropriate skills and authority;
5. Supporting the Senior Information Risk Owner (SIRO) in fostering a culture that values, protects and uses information for the benefit of its citizens.

With so many different elements to the Digital Programme a consistent technical architecture is essential. While it's recognised that different services have different requirements, there does need to be a corporate approach to the systems and applications that support our work. The Technical Design Authority (TDA), chaired by the Operational Director of Safeguarding, Performance and Strategy (CYP), has been established to make decisions regarding technical implementations for projects. The TDA makes decisions and provides guidance and support where projects will impact on more than one project or service, or when a new idea is being tested.





# Key principles

We recognise that the scale of transformation outlined in this strategy represents an unprecedented culture shift for the council, residents, partners and businesses. It will change the relationship between the council and stakeholders and have far reaching influence over future service models, the customer experience and the role of the council and its workforce. To support this sustained programme of change, delivery of this digital strategy is underpinned by the following key principles:

1. We will ensure that our services are accessible to everyone. We will develop guidance on digital inclusion setting out the accessibility standards new technology needs to comply with and to help services plan the provision for residents with complex needs as access arrangements change.
2. Services will be people centred. We will work with residents, partners and businesses to co-design and co-deliver transformation, ensuring that Brent's evolution as a digital borough is shaped by the energy, ideas and requirements of local people and key stakeholders.
3. We will embed our digital vision within our policies and strategies including HR, Planning, Regeneration, Employment and Skills and ICT. We will also reflect it in our engagement with the community and models of working with the Community and Voluntary Sector.
4. We will deliver robust information security measures to protect resident and stakeholder data from misuse and cyber threats, and we will safeguard their privacy through increasingly secure and modern information governance and data sharing arrangements both internally and with partners.
5. We will invest in our workforce to ensure they have the resources and agile skills they need to innovate, collaborate and excel in the digital workplace and work smarter. This will include imbedding a culture of change across the organisation, moving away from a traditional 'service and department' approach to working in flexible, multi-disciplinary teams that use methodology aligned with the Local Government Digital Service Standard to iterate continuous service improvements in response to user needs.
6. We will work openly and actively collaborate with other organisations, including with the Community and Voluntary Sector, to develop innovative solutions and share learning and good practice.

