



Foreword



Leader of the Council Cllr Jas Athwal

It has been inspiring to see how Redbridge residents have come together during this past year to help and support one another during the Covid-19 crisis. Throughout the pandemic, our experience has demonstrated just how important council services and channels are to local people and how vital the work has been to continue to deliver key services under such difficult circumstances.

We have also seen how social media has enabled networks to grow in numbers and support those most vulnerable in our borough. To reflect this we ensured the theme of community, and local people being stronger together ran through everything we did.. As a community, we supported the change locally, especially for local businesses to try to survive in such difficult economic circumstances, for stakeholders to

connect to those who needed help quickly and for families and friends to still socialise virtually, by connecting in new ways.

The Council has also had to work differently. We are responding rapidly to changes in how we work, ensuring that we still make those vital connections and provide support to those who need it the most. However, this new way of working has only highlighted how Redbridge could make further improvements, developing better opportunities to communicate via our current channels. We want to make services easier to access, look at new, innovative ways to use technology, and drive improvements continually based on what you, our residents, tell us. It's important we continue to refresh our approach for our customers and meet your expectations.

Our Digital Strategy builds on these foundations, providing a stepping stone for our communities to come together, stronger and more enabled than ever before. Projects such as the Community Hubs and our Growth Commission are vital in shaping how we connect; developing new and existing communities to help us shape Redbridge for the future.

This strategy outlines our commitment to you, our residents, customers and citizens to improve the way we deliver services now and in the future; to support communities who live and work here.

We want everyone to have access to the Internet and technology: keep residents safe from online scams and fraud; ensure our families and their children have access to technology to support education; foster digital innovation to find better solutions to local problems and ensure whatever your age or background that you benefit from digital opportunities in Redbridge.



Foreword



Cllr Coomb

In Redbridge, we want to make things easier for users and improve their experiences with us. To enable us to do this, we established the 'Customer Voice' in 2019. This initiative established how we could improve services with residents ensuring we listen to their concerns and make sure our channels are accessible to all. At Redbridge, we promise to deliver excellent customer experiences, improved channels based on your feedback and insights, and to continually develop how we and our partners deliver future services.

Some of our residents still prefer some of the more traditional ways of contacting us. Even though residents have not necessarily been able to access our face to face services this past year,

we have tried to provide that same experience with appointments via telephone or online. We are committed to improving customer experiences through all our channels. Using technology can make our contact channels easier and more efficient to use and we can drive improvements to support residents and other users.

Our ambition at Redbridge will be to develop digital skills across our community, supporting residents by improving skills and or education opportunities. We will work closely with our partners, ensuring our residents have the chance to learn new skills and understand growing technology, therefore providing them with better advantages in the job market.

Most of all, we want a borough where digital inclusion is no longer a social issue. Access to the Internet and technology provides our residents with a voice, one where they are connected to their local communities and part of the conversations about shaping what happens in and around where they live.

Having access to digital is not just a nice thing to have but a growing necessity, especially as more public and private sector services go online. Having access to a 'digital borough' would help tackle loneliness and social isolation, enhancing the relationships and the numerous networks we want to be a part of. This ultimately shapes a better future for Redbridge and the wonderful communities that live and work here.



Our Digital and Customer Strategy

In 2017 we asked residents, partners and Members about their hopes for the future of Redbridge. The leading themes to emerge from that process were 'Quality of Life', 'Opportunities' and 'Strong Communities'.

We have developed a Digital and Customer Strategy. Our strategy connects with our culture - enabling change in Redbridge, linking directly to our staff manual, not a fussy set of rules but a manual that innovates staff, enables staff to innovate and challenges them to work differently.

Our strategy sets out our design principles and ambition of what we want to achieve over the coming years, the purpose of digital, people, technology and connecting our communities better. We need to change mindsets internally to ones that engage with our residents, listen and interact with all those valuable networks so we can better serve them. We have developed our digital and customer ambition to engage better and provide good services that work.

Digital has to have a purpose, we recognise digital technology is an internal driver for change. It's our role to keep abreast of emerging technologies, our customer expectations and the data we use to make informed decisions.

Our strategy demonstrates how we embed data in all we do, how we improve our digital customer voice and engage better with digital planning, focusing on how we can achieve better outcomes by working with residents, businesses and the 'start-ups' in our borough.

Our strategy enables us to support digital skills in this part of London, and how ultimately these skills can improve lives and opportunities. We'll be exploring new technology and how this will help residents and communities to grow.

These last months through Covid 19 have been challenging and it has forced every person, every organisation to think differently about how we can communicate and have those conversations digitally. Our behaviours have changed, we have had to interact differently and will continue to do so, but we need to ensure we do not lose sight of our customers and those experiences they should expect from us.

How do we still deliver those important customer interactions with trust and with confidence? How can we make those experiences better for our residents? Our Digital and Customer Strategy will focus on delivering excellent services that will change the way we work.

We want to create services and experiences that can be used by everyone, equally. Digital inclusion isn't just about accessibility, it's about making our services equal to everyone that lives in Redbridge.

Vision

Creating a Digitally Resilient borough focused on providing excellent customer experiences



Context

Internet and digital technologies have transformed and revolutionised the way we live from the way we use our homes, the way we work, bank, shop, access health care and how we socialise. Having access to high speed internet is now often described as the fourth utility and is an important consideration for people and businesses when they decide to move to an area.

Customers want the convenience that technology brings with a personalised, easy to use service. Public services want to create more meaningful connections to better understand how best to serve residents' changing needs and to shape new resident behaviours. Even services

that require some form of human interaction, including social care, can be enhanced by technology and can often help people to live independently for longer or for families to better support their loved ones.

Like other local authorities, Redbridge 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.

We need to build new services and build the confidence and trust of residents, partners and staff.



That means:

- 📍 Focussing relentlessly on users to ensure that new services work for them
- 📍 Focussing in the short term, on technology wherever possible to make improvements that deliver benefits now for our customers and staff
- 📍 Seeing customer engagement as a lever for change, ensuring we are continually using data to deliver improvements by better understanding needs and demand
- 📍 Developing an organisational mindset, skills and capabilities that is able to adopt and adapt to new ways of designing and delivering services

The Council has already stated some clear ambitions for its digital future; our Manual for a Changing Redbridge puts Redbridge in the context of a rapidly changing world which residents should be digitally enabled to access, and the Council is a signatory to the Local Digital Declaration.

- 📍 Together these principles form a strong commitment to:
 - 📍 Make online services an excellent
 - 📍 Consistent customer experience across all channels
 - 📍 Customers only need to tell us once, join up services so we can pro-actively talk with them
 - 📍 Simplify report it, request it, apply for it, book it, pay for it, and search for things themselves
 - 📍 Share information about services and customer insight across the organisation to help improve our services, be honest and tell our story
 - 📍 Digital should be accessible, simple and clear language to reach all audiences
 - 📍 Improve and learn from our customer experience
 - 📍 Continue to recognise that some customers need support to contact us digitally, and improve alternative ways of contacting us for our most vulnerable customers
 - 📍 Support our residents, businesses and staff to provide the best possible experience
 - 📍 Invest in our staff training and create a solid understanding of digital and good customer engagement



Our Strategy

Our Strategy focuses on the expectations of our customers, what platforms they use and how they want to communicate with us.

Our Digital and Engagement Strategy has been shaped by having conversations with our residents, partners and our businesses. We are committed to ensuring that we continually listen, engage and positively react to feedback to improve our services.

It's our priority to engage with all our residents as we grow and integrate new communities over the coming years. These priorities are at the heart of everything we aim to do and already deliver.

- 📍 Keep the borough clean and safe
- 📍 Be a great place to live as a family
- 📍 Tackle the root causes of social challenges
- 📍 Build a brilliant Council

Our Redbridge Growth Commission, will continue to shape our ambitions and ensure that everyone in Redbridge benefits from growth.

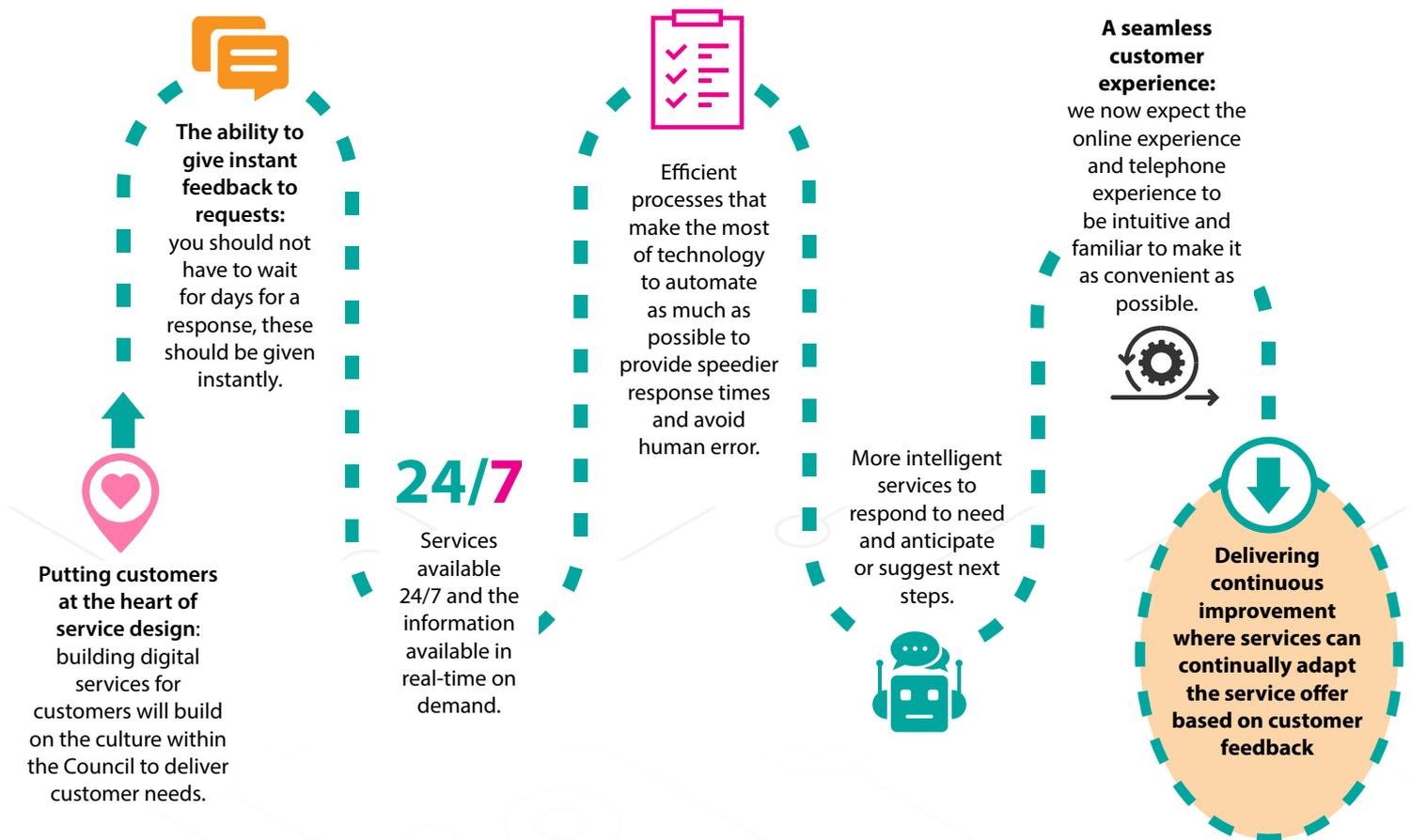


What is Digital and Customer Experience?

Going digital means different things to different people and the definition is constantly evolving. We think of digital primarily as a mindset and way of doing things. We want to use digital capabilities to essentially:



Whatever your definition, becoming digital is essential to ensure Redbridge takes advantage of the opportunities for growth and enables everyone in the Borough to benefit from convenient and personalised services. In a world where our reliance on digital technology has been accelerated our focus is centred on ensuring an excellent Customer experience. This means:





Our Journey so far

Our website was launched in 2016, it was designed and built around the user and we made a commitment to ensure it was accessible too. We worked with the RNIB to audit our website and improve our accessibility offer for the elderly and those with disabilities. Our website has been ranked as one of the best local authority sites in the UK for disabled users.

We introduced the Recite Me function on our web pages providing not only tools for those with visual and hearing difficulties but also translation options. It was important for us to ensure we were able to reach as many audiences as we could especially knowing the diversity in our community.

We created a Business Intelligence Unit to enable us to better understand our information assets and make better use of the data we have. We have been able to use the insights to help shape service design and improve the customer experience. We shared some of the data we use to residents and businesses to tell the 'Story of Redbridge' to give an extensive view of Redbridge. Over 50 dashboard pages are available on our website covering topics such as health, business and public services.

We have equipped our staff with flexible, modern equipment and software, while ensuring the infrastructure is secure from cyber threats. All staff are equipped with mobile devices and the ability to work anywhere, this enabled us to respond quickly when the COVID 19 lock-down came into place and gave us the opportunity to test our infrastructure capability.

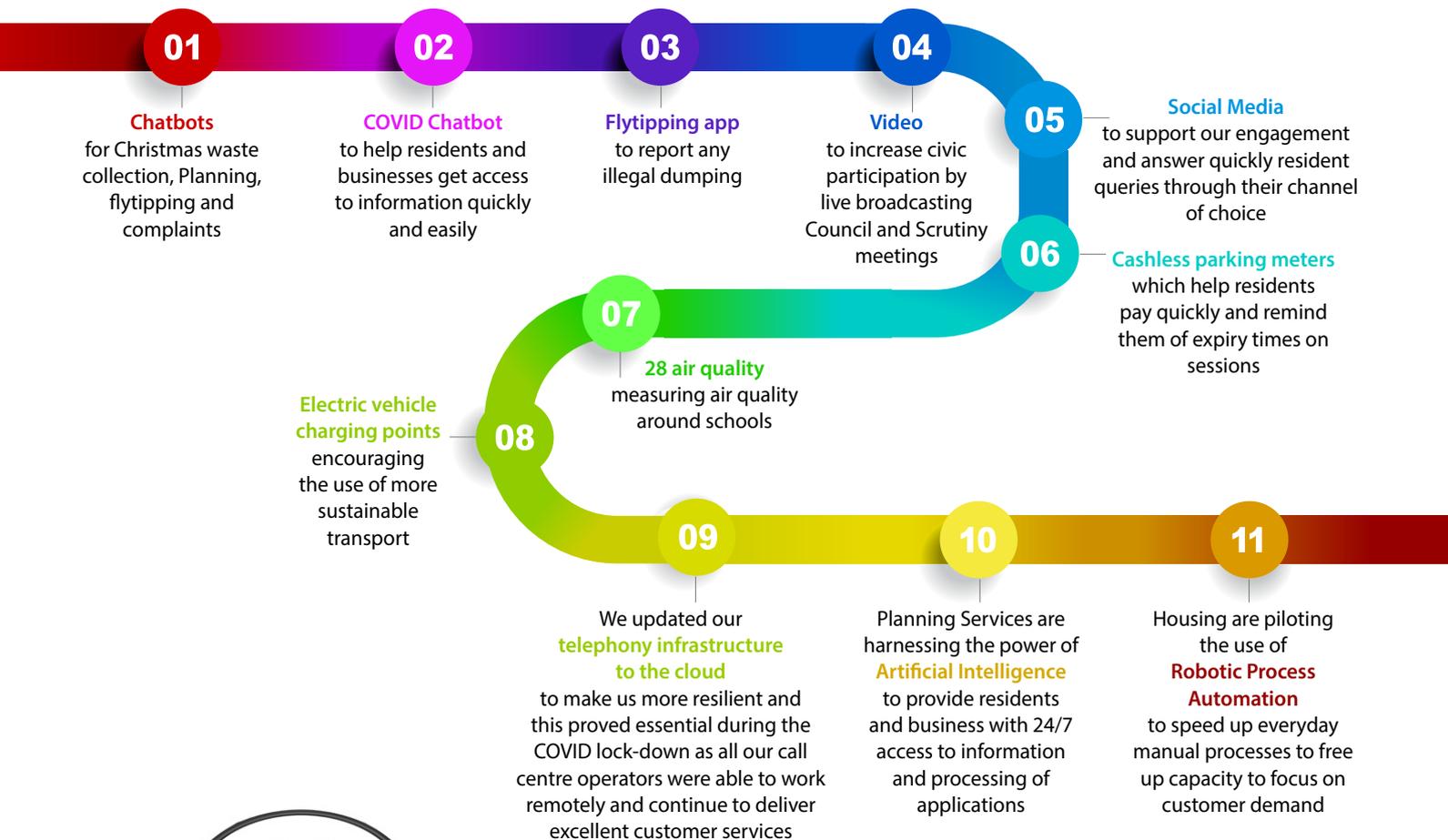
Our digital solutions accelerated during lock-down we have become more agile and flexible in our approaches, responding to changing customer needs. We want to create a new digital front door supporting the more traditional routes of contact. Redbridge will build solutions where all internal systems simultaneously talk to each-other as well as the customer through an 'Omni-channel' experience; connecting services in groups or bubbles relating to individuals or a family.

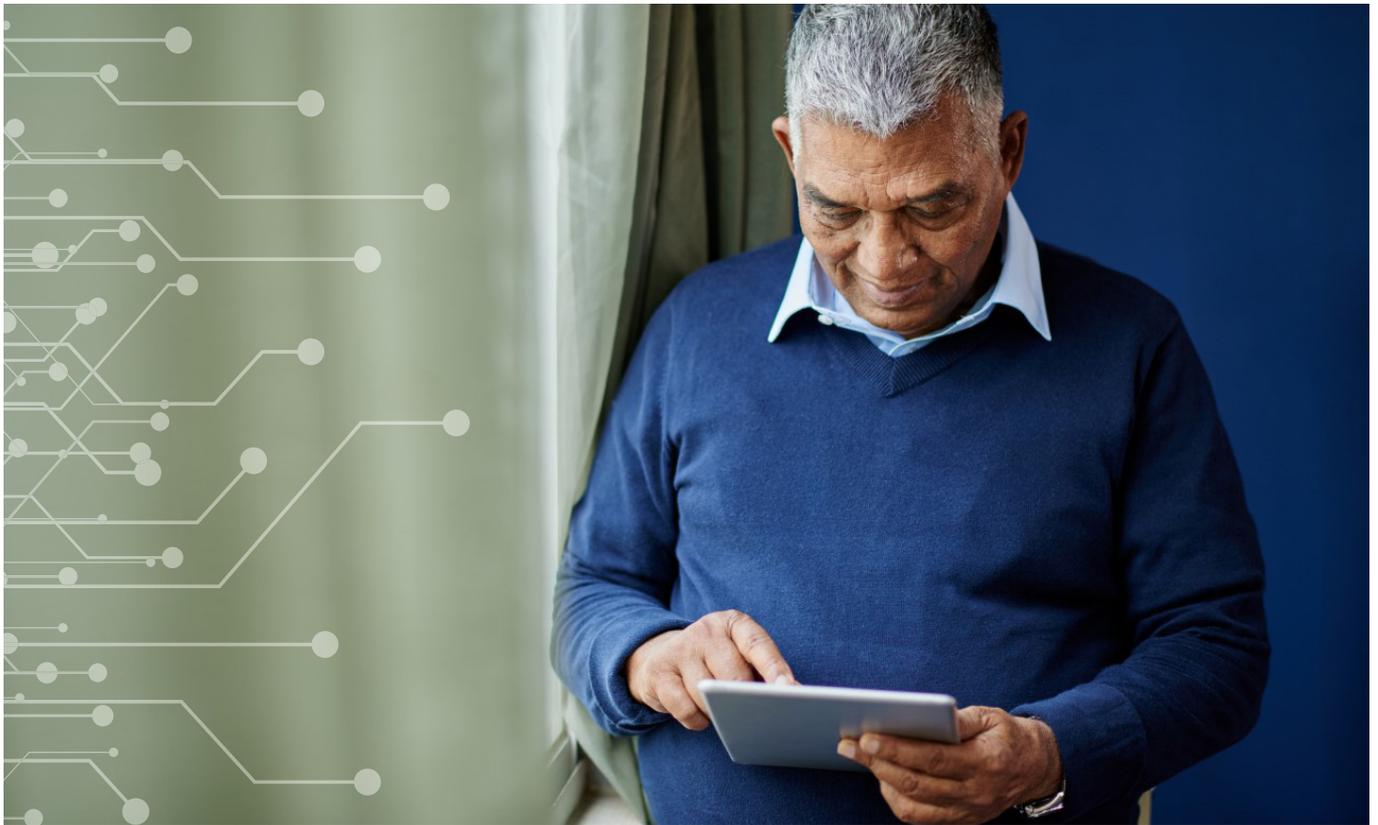
While this Strategy sets an ambitious drive to harness new technologies we have already dipped our toe in the water.

Redbridge has made significant financial savings by making better use of our digital capabilities but we know there is a lot more we can do to drive efficiencies.

We need to exploit the use of digital to make the organisation more efficient, ensuring that we can protect our front-line services and better support our residents.

Digital solutions bring opportunities for reducing manual processes and empowering residents to do more for themselves at a time that suits them.





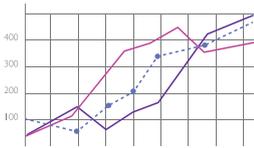
Data and Insight

Our use of data plays an important role in shaping how we understand and deliver services. Redbridge data will be accessible to everyone, as an organisation we will be using it to inform and provide valuable insights that can help us improve our services. We will be transparent by sharing both the good and the bad and look to create deeper connections and social capital with customers and stakeholders.

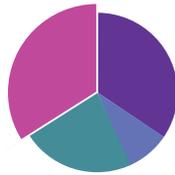
By using our data, we will better understand what generates demand, as well as trends and how customers feel about the services we provide and the organisation more generally. Our data will offer us opportunities to appreciate how customers interact with us across the organisation. This will help us identify what generates contact, potential opportunities to resolve issues and improvements.

Analysing our data allows us to predict demand for certain situations and look to move to a culture where insight is predictive and preventative. Our data will shape what our services should look like and meet our customers' expectations.

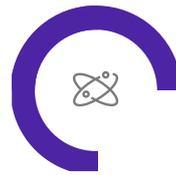
Keeping our customer data safe is a priority. Our Cyber Security Strategy (2020) outlines our commitment to process and handle our customers data in line with data protection legislation. The council is committed to ensuring that personal information is processed lawfully, fairly and transparently; and is relevant, properly protected, accurate and kept up to date.



% of adults who
2020 population
estimate **308,637**



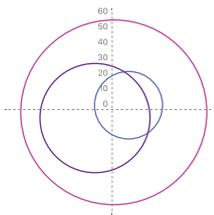
Predicted population
to be **320,280** by 2025



Average age of residents
compared to rest
of London - Redbridge
35.8, London 36.0



741,941 Free wifi
hotspots in London



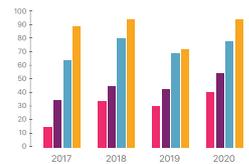
99.9% of households
access to broadband
with internet speeds of at
least 10Mbps compared
with rest of London



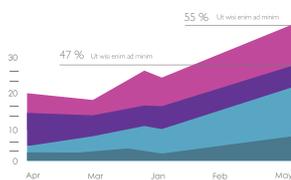
84.6% of households
with access to
Superfast internet
connection



100% of 4G coverage



88.4% of residents
in Redbridge have
used the internet in
the last 3 months (2019)



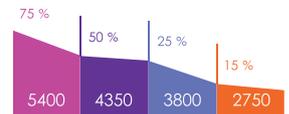
78% of adults in the UK
own a smartphone



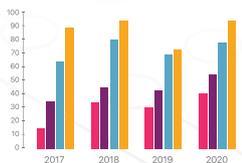
4815 technology
businesses in the
Borough



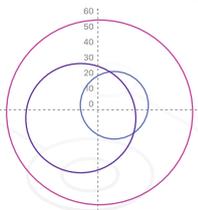
10.3million unique
page views on our
website in 2019



571 services
available online



17553 Twitter followers



2111 members of
COVID Facebook page



246 open data sets
on our website



Opportunities

Digital change is already happening and we need to understand how we can harness these changes to best effect. Digital has become the new front door and the 'new normal' in a time of physical distancing and is an important means for some of our most vulnerable residents to interact with us and each other. Residents expect immediate answers to queries, access to services wherever they are and whenever they find it convenient.

Our ambition is to review our Redbridge 'front door' to make sure that the experience and journey is seamless no matter what channel residents want to use. Redefining the 'front door' will reduce avoidable contact and put residents more in control of how they interact with services.

We will review our systems so we provide a better user experience and use the data we hold to respond and communicate about the services they may need helping with early interventions where possible.

We know that data security is important to our residents and we are committed to processing personal information lawfully, fairly and transparently. Our customers also need to trust the information they access is secure and feel confident submitting information online. Everything we do digitally will be governed by our Cyber Security and Information Governance Strategies that set out how we will maintain public trust and confidence in what we do. Our commitment to the Local Government Declaration means we will follow the Technology Code of Practice making data security and privacy an integral part of how we design services.

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Our ambition is to review our Redbridge 'front door' to make sure that the experience and journey is seamless no matter what channel residents want to use.

Redefining the 'front door' will reduce avoidable contact and put residents more in control of how they interact with services.

We take accessibility very seriously and will make sure that we deliver to accessibility standards and continue to work with our partners, like One Place East, RNIB and Age UK to provide access to services to all.

Create a better user experience and use the data we hold to respond and communicate about the services they may need helping with early interventions where possible.

We have already made a commitment to put our customers at the heart of service design and this Strategy was designed from feedback from our customers and reviewing operational needs.

We know that data security is important to our residents and we are committed to processing personal information lawfully, fairly and transparently.

Our commitment to the Local Government Declaration means we will follow the Technology Code of Practice making data security and privacy an integral part of how we design services.

Our customers also need to trust the information they access is secure and feel confident submitting information online.

Using digital solutions will enable the Council to develop a more flexible and skilled workforce, to integrate services across functional and geographical boundaries and save money.

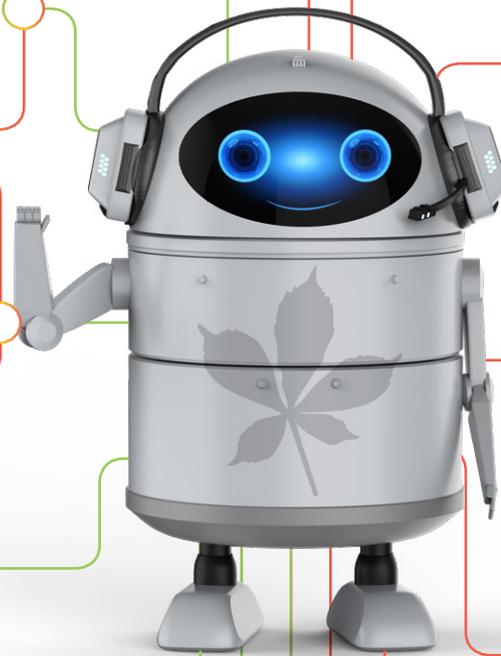
Everything we do digitally will be governed by our Cyber Security and Information Governance Strategies that set out how we will maintain public trust and confidence in what we do.

We will build stronger communities by enabling customers and businesses to be included in the digital economy and digital society.

This Strategy sets the direction of where we want to go and it will develop and change over time as technologies change.

Emerging digital solutions provides us with the opportunity to deliver more efficient services with automation, artificial intelligence, the Internet of Things and for our residents and businesses to drive growth and innovation with 5G capabilities.

Our Digital and Customer Strategy focuses on tackling digital exclusion and enabling residents and businesses to benefit from opportunities new technology provides.





Connecting communities

Building digital communities to connect people with each other has never been so important. Our COVID experience has demonstrated the need to ensure that we play a leading role in connecting our communities. Our website was acknowledged across a number of government organisations as being a leading example of how to use a digital platform to connect communities. Taking a leading role in building a digital community will mean ensuring our key services including Social Care teams are at the forefront of designing a digital web platform that meets and responds to the needs of all our customers.

We will be developing a Digital community and ensuring that our website, as our digital front door, is designed to build resilience, create choice and reduce demand. Our digital front door hub will be supported by a network of physical purpose-built Community Hubs being developed to support the needs of our residents across the borough.





Our Ambition

Delivering excellent Customer Experiences through the development of a digitally enabled Borough through secure, effective and innovative technology solutions

Outcomes

Digitally Resilient Borough

A digitally enabled Borough that has the infrastructure and technological capability to support growth and innovation

Digitally Empowered people

An engaged and skilled digital workforce that provides the expertise necessary to create innovative solutions to meet citizen needs and enables citizens to use the technologies they choose to transact with us

Objectives

Provide the technology, infrastructure and skills to transform your experience of interacting with us and create opportunities for connectivity and digital growth across the Borough

Build a digital culture that puts our residents at the heart of design and make sure no one is left behind, facilitating greater community participation and informed decision making

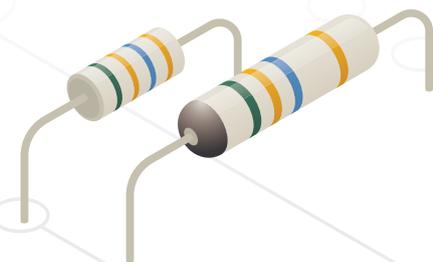
Embrace Digital to improve the Customer Experience

- 📄 We will improve the sharing and learning from customer engagement to better inform service design and encourage services to share design thinking to meet the needs of their customer base
- 📄 Our digital design will be led by customer experience and back office processes that support them will be standardised and automated as much as possible
- 📄 We will make the most of new engagement and collaboration tools to manage information effectively within the organisation and increase staff engagement in customer centric design
- 📄 We will standardise platforms and processes to make the online journey for all applications, bookings, service request and payments familiar
- 📄 Our service design will improve the customer experience by being proactive in our information and messaging
- 📄 Our digital programme will prioritise those projects that deliver most for our customers to engage with us



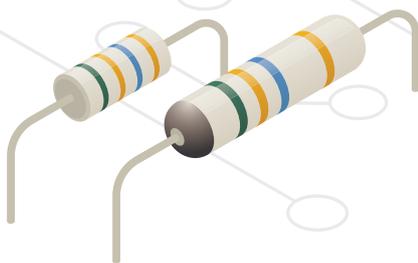
Increase opportunities from Collaboration and Open Data

- Building on the success of the 'Story of Redbridge' we will create and share data and insight that improves our understanding of the Borough and create opportunities for businesses and education establishments to learn and innovate
- We will rationalise and integrate our systems so that we have a single view of the customer
- We will improve the use of data to better understand the needs of customers and iterate digital development to meet those needs. We will use customer engagement as a lever for change and make use of both numbers and your voice and opinions to understand reasons for demand, identify need, resolve failures, pro-actively deliver services and transform the way you do business with us
- We will develop the skills required to ensure that we are getting the best value from our data and enable us to turn it into information, insight and intelligence
- We will recognise investments in open data, open standards, and open software as an investment in the public good by enabling code and tools to benefit the wider community, protecting privacy and data security in accordance with our Cyber Security and Information Governance Strategy while giving people access to their own data
- The rapid pace and complexity of change requires that we leverage our collective knowledge and work across services. Our technology leaders will model desired behaviours, build trust, and seek to eliminate siloed-thinking by promoting cross-service initiatives and the sharing of resources, data, technology and talent to learn and scale digital transformation. In addition, we remain committed to working with partners to meet their technology needs. We will share our journey by openly communicate about our work
- We will share data by default to encourage open innovation and published APIs will be required of our suppliers
- To deliver our ambitions in our Council Strategy we need to develop and support platforms for residents to help each other and co-produce community solutions
- Development of social channels means that residents are increasingly expecting a conversation, rather than just to be informed. We should maximise the opportunity for user involvement to generate content on issues that resonate with them by targeting posts towards topics that invite discussion



Focus on Inclusion, Digital Poverty & resilience

- ▶ We are committed to cultivating a digital culture and creating excitement around digital transformation. We want everyone at all levels of the organisation to feel empowered and motivated by what we are looking to achieve
- ▶ We will maintain strong governance throughout the delivery of digital changes, ensuring all elements of our work are co-ordinated, joined up and follow our design principles
- ▶ Starting with automation assistive tech and artificial intelligence, we will identify a pathfinder project in each Directorate, to demonstrate the art of the possible and help build capacity, skills and momentum within the Council
- ▶ We will exploit the opportunities offered by assistive and new technologies to support residents to remain healthy, safe and independent
- ▶ Our work supporting local businesses will include ways to access the benefits of digital
- ▶ On each of our projects we will carry out an Equalities Impact Assessment [EqIA] to ensure the needs of all service users are protected when making changes to services
- ▶ We will support our residents who want to use digital technologies but need help and support to be confident and safe when transacting with us. We know, especially after COVID, that not being able to access digital platforms can prevent our residents from progressing and increase isolation.
- ▶ We will work with our partners to increase capacity within the community to share learning in new technologies so most users choose to use digital services over alternatives and the vast majority of interactions between residents and the council take the form of online self-service.
- ▶ We will work with local voluntary and community sector organisations to support their digital development and their work with vulnerable
- ▶ We will also use our face to face contact points to support residents to adopt digital platforms.
- ▶ Our staff need the skills and knowledge to support our customers to be digitally confident and we will ensure managers develop their teams to be digitally skilled and confident



Develop the infrastructure and connectivity needed to support our ambitions

- Include digital infrastructure planning in our internal processes as well as Borough infrastructure developments to create opportunity for innovation and growth
- Facilitate access to ultra-fast broadband and wifi across the Borough
- We will enable residents and businesses to tell the Council about poor broadband speeds and mobile coverage – and we will then liaise with suppliers to encourage them to provide fast reliable connections for all
- We will provide free wifi in all Council buildings
- Invest in and exploit the opportunities 5G, wifi and superfast broadband bring to harness the potential of the Internet of Things and SMARTER cities providing better connectivity and the ability to do business on the move as well as supporting sustainable transport and better air quality
- Standardising digital solutions across core business processes will enable us to accelerate scalability and usability. We will review where new digital services are best deployed with a focus on 'digital pragmatism'; 'sweating' current assets as much as possible and always thinking about the practical application of any change.
- Include in our digital design the ability for citizens to transact with us when and where they choose and connect over whichever platforms suits
- Work with partners to create a connected community, with faster broadband, wifi, mobile coverage, shared infrastructure.
- Close working with our partners, businesses and residents to understand local needs and challenges, and to help us identify/develop innovative solutions.
- Explore opportunities to support the development of the high growth digital sector
- We will continually seek to improve the way we deliver services. We will simplify and streamline processes, reduce bureaucracy and innovatively apply technology. We will avoid simply automating ineffective or inefficient business processes and bureaucracy making sure that the vast majority of users can complete online transactions successfully, unaided, first time, and rate them good or excellent
- Empowering our residents, voluntary sector, students and businesses with digital skills and capability will create connected communities who can share their experience and skills to create and deliver local change. We will establish platforms for communities to engage and drive the change they need in a rapidly changing environment



By 2023



All Council building with free wifi



100% fibre coverage for residents and business districts



50% of 5G coverage



100% increase in technology businesses in the Borough



20% reduction in call volumes



80% customer satisfaction rates



20% reduction in complaints



25% Increase as digital as preferred channel



100% of residents having access to online services



10% fewer business systems



Top 5 ranking in Socitm accessibility assessments



100% more data sets we release