Southwark Council Technology & Digital Strategy 2024 – 2026

Southwark Council

Foreword

Our priority is to improve the services and opportunities we offer to the people of Southwark. Digital needs to be at the front and centre of how we achieve this.

Continually improving how we manage our technology and digital services is crucial if we are to respond to local needs, operate with reduced budgets, and keep up with changes in the technology world.

The Technology and Digital Strategy provides a clear plan for how we can build responsive Digital Services that meets the requirements of our residents.

Together with Southwark 2030 and the Council plan, this strategy will help us to create a Well-Run Council to support our staff in accessing modern workplace technology and providing the skills to enable them to deliver services as efficiently as possible. Ensuring that our services remain focused on user requirements and that we make the required investment in technology to keep our services accessible and secure.

We are continually working to understand the digital accessibility needs of residents in Southwark. Our overall vision follows the Greater London Authority (GLA)'s Digital Access Mission which is for **"Every Southwark resident to have access to a fast and stable internet connection, a device and the skills needed to participate in society and the digital economy by 2025".**

The Technology and Digital Strategy 2024-26 sets out our ambitions for Southwark and is underpinned by our Technology and Digital Pillars.

As more of our residents move online, others still need support and we will ensure they are not left behind by providing digital hubs and support in libraries and voluntary organisations.

The plans underpinning this strategy will ensure residents are at the centre of what we do.

We will continue to work collaboratively with our cross-sector partners including academia, charities and grassroots organisations. This is central to our work in supporting our residents.

Councillor Stephanie Cryan

Cabinet Member for Communities, Democracy & Finance

Introduction - Clive Palfreyman

As the Strategic Director of Finance and Governance, I am pleased to articulate our vision to create an inclusive technology and digital strategy that reflects our commitment to enhancing the lives of our residents and our dedication to harnessing technology to address the evolving needs of our diverse population.

The Technology and Digital Strategy's ambition is to ensure that Southwark is recognised as one of the leading digital boroughs in London. A borough that delivers a digitally inclusive society by developing the digital infrastructure and services that enable its residents, communities and businesses to thrive.

Technology will continue to play an essential enabling role in supporting the future aims of both the borough and the council. By providing the necessary tools, skills, and infrastructure, we envision a Southwark where every resident can actively engage in the digital landscape and benefit from the positive impacts of technology.

At the heart of our strategy is a commitment to collaboration. We recognise the power of partnerships and engagement with our local community, businesses, and public services.

By fostering these collaborations, we seek to co-create innovative solutions that address the unique challenges and opportunities within Southwark. Through this collective effort, we aim to build a digital ecosystem that truly serves the needs of our residents.

Transparency and accountability are paramount in our approach. As we embark on this transformative journey, we will keep our stakeholders informed about our progress, challenges, and successes.

We invite open dialogue and feedback, understanding that community engagement is an invaluable resource in shaping the digital future of Southwark.

Clive Palfreyman
Strategic Director of Finance

Our Vision

Our Vision

Our vision is that Southwark will become recognised as one of the best connected and leading digital boroughs in London. Being a Borough that is digitally inclusive where no-one is left offline.

A digital Southwark where our residents can access excellent digitally enabled services, supported by staff with access to modern work-place technology, and to build a connected and collaborative borough for all.

A borough that is truly digital, where our residents enjoy access to the best digitally enhanced services.

Our staff will have the latest workplace technology at their fingertips to support this. We believe that we can be the borough that fosters collaboration, ensuring that no one is left out of the digital future.

High Street

- EV charging points
- Home deliveries via drones
- Air quality sensors to measure pollution levels
- Virtual and smart retail experiences
- 5G small cells on lamp posts
- Real time local information boards
- Parking solutions
- Automated street lighting
- Digital community boards
- Immersive cultural & educational experiences using AR & VR
- Digital street furniture offering free wifi
- Fast & sustainable connectivity in (spaces and buildings) for digital entertainment
- Traffic flow and vehicle counting
- Footfall sensors
- Driverless cars for fleet deliveries

Our overall vision follows the Greater London Authority (GLA)'s Digital Access Mission which is for:

Every Southwark resident to have access to a fast and stable internet connection, a device and the skills needed to participate in society and the digital economy by 2025

How the vision will be achieved

Technology and Digital Services have already built capability in the council to deliver this vision by:

- Implementing the 5 digital delivery pillars which sets out how Southwark will structure programmes of work which will deliver the key aims of the vision.

- Reviewing our applications estate to re-use technology, create interoperability, working with the agile methodology, safely retire legacy systems, challenging the technology market for flexible tools, and ensuring better value for money.

- As a founding member of the London Office of Technology and Innovation, we aim to foster collaboration with other Boroughs and technology innovators.

- Working with our Shared Technology provider and partners to review service delivery and develop a future roadmap of technology improvements

- Harnessing the power of data by investment in a modern data platform to drive informed decision-making, enhance operational efficiency, and facilitate innovation, ensuring a data-driven approach across all facets of our organisation.

- Establishing a robust governance framework for projects and programmes, implementing project management tools to ensure effective oversight and strategic alignment.

- Development of the Digital Together Network to champion digital initiatives across the organisation and provide training and support to colleagues.

Southwark's Digital Journey

Southwark's Digital Journey

Our refreshed Technology and Digital Strategy will align with the ambitions for what we want Southwark to look like in 2030. They are:

Southwark is a borough that is fair, equal and for everyone. Our shared ambition is to create a future where…

We are committed to enhancing residents' satisfaction with council services by providing increased opportunities for them to actively shape and influence service delivery to better align with their needs. Central to this effort is the invaluable input from residents guiding us. Our focus to replace our website and MySouthwark resident account with the aim to facilitate a more positive online experience for residents and businesses through streamlined processes and improved access to information, advice and guidance.

In order to enhance our efficiency and capacity it is essential to promote digital channels but to offer residents the flexibility to choose the service access method that best suits their preferences. This approach allows us to allocate additional support to those who require it most, particularly through our network of community Hubs and Libraries.

For Southwark to become a digital-first Borough, we are reviewing the services we deliver, and how we interact with our residents. To deliver this we have developed Technology and Digital Pillars, which set out what we want to achieve.

What has been achieved since the last strategy.

Improving resident experiences

- Residents using the MySouthwark resident account has increased by 136,000 residents since 2021 and now has a total of 236,000 residents who are choosing digital first to engage with the council.

- Services which have been improved include Fix My Street, an online tool for reporting and viewing local street repair issues, further developments have also been made to pest control and online waste reporting. For example, being able to schedule Christmas tree collections.

- Following engagement with our residents the website has had a refreshed design to make technological advancements to the interface and content has been edited to meet accessibility standards.

- A replacement website programme has been launched to replace the underlying Content Management System to improve the residents experience and allow the use of new technology such as personalisation, chat bots and better integration with council systems.

- We introduced a Housing solutions chat bot to create a new channel for residents to transact with the council. This technology will be used where appropriate across Resident services.

Southwark's Digital Journey continued

- As part of the leisure insourcing project we implemented a new payment systems, leisure management systems including the resident's app and web portal to improve the take up of leisure services as part of our public health agenda.

Supporting our staff

- A programme of work was established corporately to enable the council to use operational data to enable early intervention and predict future council services, by allowing better visibility of needs and demand.

- The development of the Modern Data Platform has enabled better use of data across our departments. There are now 15 data sources from across the council uploaded to the data lake, including datasets for Supporting Families (Childrens), Building Safety, Public Health and Planning with a future programme in development.

- We have delivered on existing and future legislative requirements placed on the council in relation to data integration and maturity in Children's Services.

- Working with our Microsoft delivery partner, Hitachi, we have trained 150 members of staff to enable the organisation to deliver 144 Power BI dashboards from 949 datasets with 924 user reports. There are now 900 active users of Power BI.

- To improve the user experience of system we have utilised the Microsoft Power Platform in the following areas: Planning applications, housing applications and supporting families dashboards. We have created a Centre of Excellence based around Microsoft Power Platform technologies and plan to use this technology in other services.

- We have implemented Microsoft Dynamics 365 technology to improve case management across front line services and to implement chatbot technology in housing repairs and for the Homes for Ukraine scheme. A longer term strategy is to create a single view of the resident and key systems such as NEC for housing will be improved using this technology.

- Wi-fi and networking infrastructure has been updated in Tooley Street with other keys sites being completed as part of the new strategy 2024 – 2026. This is to enable the workforce to benefit from the latest technology to enhance the experience of working from office locations on wireless devices.

- We successfully insourced Leisure services from an external provider including implementation of new network, infrastructure and hardware across 8 leisure centres.

- We supported the opening of the new Una

Southwark's Digital Journey continued

Marson Library, Kingswood Library and refurbished Peckham Library. We replaced 180 PCs across 12 libraries and upgraded the infrastructure across all of the public libraries.

- 63 meeting rooms across the Southwark office estate have been updated with Hybrid Microsoft Teams Technology. There is an ongoing programme of work to include Queens Road and other sites.

- The implementation of Microsoft collaboration tools including optimising the use of Microsoft Teams and SharePoint for seamless communication, file sharing, and collaboration for all users.

- We have implemented security desktop features and compliance measures provided by F5 VPN, for threat protection, and security compliance.

- Introduction of Microsoft Intune compliance application, to manage and secure mobile devices enabling Bring Your Own Device for all employees including Front Line Workers.

- We have developed a Business Partnering Function to create a collaborative relationship between Technology and Digital Services (TDS) and service areas within Southwark. Business partnering ensures that TDS initiatives are closely aligned with the overall business strategy and objectives.

Making Southwark one of the best-connected boroughs in London and developing emerging technology.

- 45,670 properties have access to gigabit connectivity through our wayleave agreement programmes with Community Fibre and Hyperoptic.

- 113 community buildings have been provided with a free gigabit broadband connection.

- 58 small cells have been installed to improve
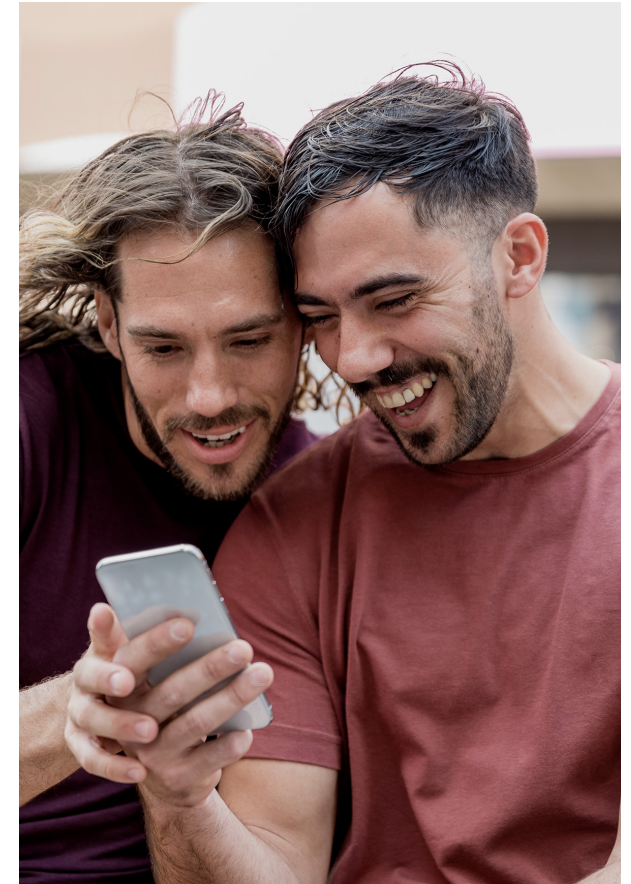
Southwark's Digital Journey continued

the mobile network capacity across the borough particularly focusing on high footfall areas such as London Bridge, Borough Market, Tate Museum and areas of poor connectivity.

Tackling digital exclusion and ensuring our residents have the right tools, skills and technology.

- We are part of the GLA digital inclusion taskforce across the London Boroughs to ensure the provision of broadband is incorporated into policy, procurement, social value and planning.

- 1670 sim cards were distributed to residents as part of the Good Things Foundation National Databank.

- 1440 residents have received support with their digital skills this year.

- Working with our partners, Virgin Media and AgilityNet, to support elderly residents with digital skills including courses at sheltered housing units and the Healthy Living and Learning Centre in Bermondsey.

- Supporting 15 community organisations across the borough with digital skills and connectivity, via upskilling staff to become Digital Champions and providing connectivity grants.

- Supporting technology students from London South Bank University with experience and hands-on learning from internships and coding projects supported by our partner, Docklands Settlements.

- Working with organisations, community groups, charities and academia to share best practice and increase cross sector participation.
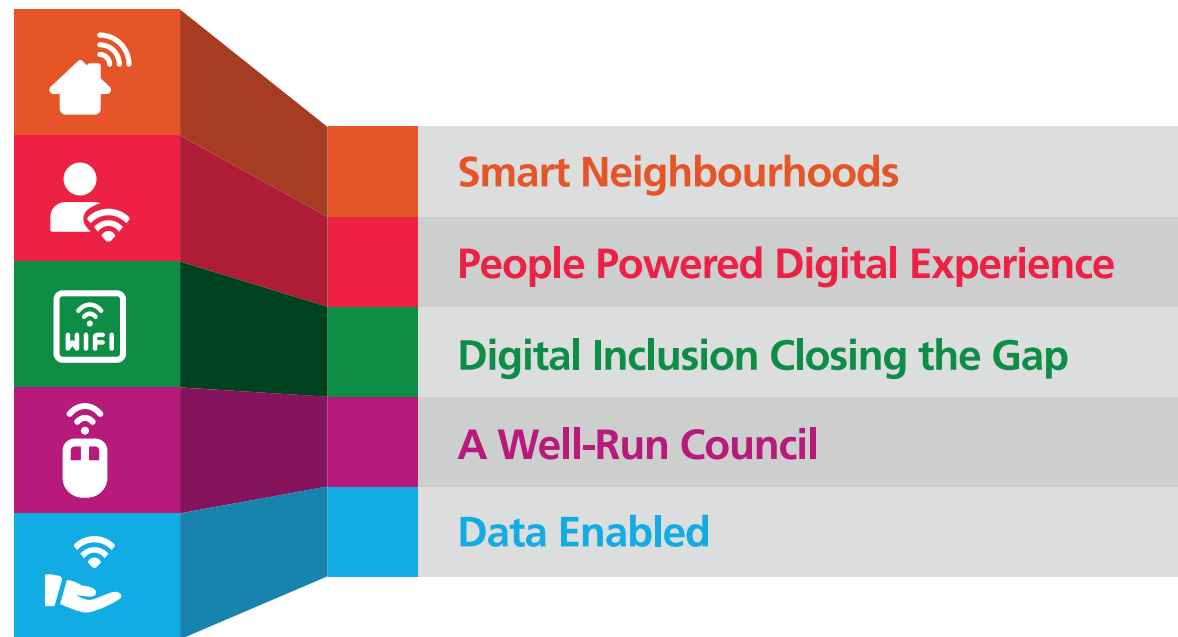
Introducing the 5 pillars

- **Smart Neighbourhoods**: We are committed to making Southwark one of the best-connected boroughs in London by using emerging technology. We aim to understand how technology can be used to empower our residents, businesses, and staff to become digital-first and innovating using IoT and Smart City Technologies to help monitor and improve our borough environment. We will work with partners and learn from best practice.

- **People Powered Digital Experience:** Our aim is to improve user experience, by reviewing how we deliver services to allow residents who choose to self-serve to have a seamless digital interaction with us. We want to create a single front door for Southwark residents with a single sign on experience where possible.

- **Digital Inclusion Closing the Gap:** We are tackling digital exclusion and ensuring our residents have the tools, skills, and technology they need. We are providing fast, reliable internet availability throughout the Borough, and the skills to enable our residents to use digital technologies.

- **A Well-Run Council:** We are establishing a centralised hub for Technology and Digital within our organisation to assist our staff in utilising modern workplace technology and acquiring the necessary skills to enhance service delivery efficiency. This will help us be more responsive to resident needs and provide the organisation with additional capacity to serve the residents of Southwark better. This involves a commitment to aligning our services with

user requirements, making essential investments in technology to ensure accessibility and security. By fostering a digital culture and embracing innovative work methodologies, we aim to meet the evolving needs of our residents while empowering our staff to adapt to new ways of working.

- **Data Enabled:** Prioritising the utilisation of data and insights for understanding the requirements of our communities and establishing a single resident view is a priority. We are building appropriate governance structures to facilitate the internal sharing of data and insights within the organisation, as well as with external partners, fostering collaborative efforts aimed at enhancing the quality of residents' lives. This includes the provision of tools to enhance the effective management of service areas. Additionally, we are in the process of developing open data initiatives on our website to promote the transparency and sharing of information. By utilising and harnessing the data we hold, we can better understand the needs of our residents and provide them with better services.

Smart Neighbourhoods

People Powered Digital Experience

Digital Inclusion Closing the Gap

A Well-Run Council

Data Enabled

The 5 pillars - exploring the detail:

Pillar 1 - Smart Neighbourhoods

We are committed to making Southwark one of the best-connected boroughs in London by using emerging technology. We aim to understand how technology can be used to empower our residents, businesses, and staff to become digital-first and innovating using IoT, Smart City Technologies to help monitor and improve our borough environment. We will work with partners and learn from best practice.

- **Connected Borough**

We want to become one of the most digitally enabled boroughs in London. This ambition is not just about embracing the latest technology or infrastructure; it's about bridging the digital divide, ensuring that every resident, business, and staff member can harness the benefits of our digital-first approach. This means faster, more reliable internet connections, accessible technology hubs, and programmes that enable digital literacy. Our staff will also be equipped with the tools and skills they need to provide efficient and innovative services to those we serve.

- **IoT: The Building Blocks of a Smart Southwark**

We have started our IoT journey. We will continue to deploy a network of interconnected devices and sensors to gather real-time data on a range of services, from housing conditions, transportation, public safety, environmental conditions and healthcare whilst working with partners. This wealth of data will enable us to make informed decisions, reduce operational costs, and respond proactively to community needs.

- **Collaborating for Success**

Southwark recognises that we can achieve more by working together. We will forge partnerships with the private sector, local universities, and neighbouring boroughs as well as LOTI. These partnerships will enable the exchange of knowledge, resources, and innovative ideas. Through collaboration, we will overcome challenges and accelerate innovation through funded trials and pilots.

- **Learning from Global Best Practices**

We are committed to learn from the world's most digitally innovative organisations. We will actively study and adapt successful implementations of smart technologies from around the world, working in partnership and learning from others. This approach ensures that we remain at the forefront of technological advancement, consistently providing our residents with the most cutting-edge solutions.

Smart Neighbourhoods - What we will deliver

- **Connected Borough**

  - Providing subsidies or incentives for residents to adopt smart home devices that contribute to the overall smart infrastructure.

  - Continue to facilitate the rollout of 4G and 5G masts across the borough to improve mobile connectivity.

  - Expanding connectivity across the borough.

  - Analyse the broadband not-spots across the borough and work with internet service providers to improve connectivity in those areas.

- **IoT: The Building Blocks of a Smart Southwark**

  - Deploying IoT sensors to monitor air quality, noise levels, and other environmental factors.

  - Using data from these sensors to implement targeted measures to improve conditions for residents.

  - Implementing smart infrastructure solutions, such as connected street lighting that adjusts based on real-time data, optimising energy usage and enhancing safety.

- **Collaborating for Success**

  - Collaborating with technology companies for the deployment of smart infrastructure.

  - Establishing partnerships with educational institutions to promote research and development in the field of emerging technologies. This includes promoting the free connectivity pilot for residents in the borough.

  - Supporting the London Plan Digital Connectivity Infrastructure Guidance Consultation as part of the GLAs plans to improve digital connectivity across London.

- **Learning from Global Best Practices**

  - Working with technology partners to understand global best practices in the implementation and innovation of Smart technologies.

The 5 pillars - exploring the detail:

Pillar 2 - People Powered Digital Experience

Southwark's commitment to the future extends beyond infrastructure and technology; it centres on our residents. Our technology and digital strategy emphasises empowering residents, enhancing their experiences, and providing the means for self-service with seamless, efficient digital interactions. We aim to create a single front door into our organisation, utilising a blend of digital channels, community hubs, and a responsive contact centre, all designed to cater to the unique needs and preferences of our residents.

People Powered Digital Experience - what we will deliver.

- Conducting a thorough redesign of the website, prioritising user-friendly navigation, clear information architecture, responsive design and replacing the current platform to optimise adoption of new technology.

- Developing mobile responsive My Southwark that allows residents to access and manage services conveniently from their smartphones, ensuring a seamless and user-friendly experience.

- Implementing online self-service portals for common services, enabling residents to submit applications, track requests, and access information independently.

- Introducing a single sign in account system that allows residents to access multiple services with a single set of credentials, streamlining the user experience.

- Establishing channels for residents to report issues in the Borough and provide feedback on digital services, ensuring continuous improvement based on user experiences and preferences.

- Implementing virtual assistants or chatbots on the website to provide real-time assistance, answer frequently asked questions, and guide users through online processes.

- Ensuring that digital platforms adhere to accessibility standards, providing features such as text-to-speech, high contrast, and other accommodations for users with different needs.

- Conducting user journey mapping exercises to understand and optimise service design.

The 5 pillars - exploring the detail:

Pillar 3 - Digital Inclusion: Closing the Gap

Southwark's technology and digital strategy is committed to leaving no one behind in the digital age. Our focus is aimed at addressing the digital divide, ensuring that all our residents have access to the tools, skills, and technology. We are dedicated to providing equitable access to fast, reliable internet throughout the Borough and empowering our residents with the essential digital skills to navigate the digital landscape.

This will be achieved via the channels below:

- **Connectivity:** Southwark Council have committed to ensuring more residents benefit from the digital revolution by providing free and affordable broadband on council estates. Affordability has become a reoccurring issue concerning access to broadband. Citizens Advice found that 1 in 6 broadband customers struggled to pay their bill between March 2020 and January 2021. Affordable broadband is essential to ensuring Southwark residents can access council services, employment opportunities, education, and living connected lives.

- **Devices:** Digital poverty plays a key part of digital exclusion as many residents are unable to afford devices that allow them to connect to the internet.

Providing access to smart phones, tablets, laptops, or computers is an essential part of achieving the goals of the strategy overall. An Ofcom survey from Jan–March 2020 found that 9% of households containing children did not have home access to a laptop, desktop PC or tablet.

- **Digital Skills:** As part of our digital journey, it is important to provide support for those that are not able to use the internet. The Lloyds 2021 Essential Digital Skills Report estimates that one-fifth of the UK population lacks essential digital skills for life. This includes the ability to connect a device to WiFi, and open an internet browser, to access websites. This aspect focuses on residents in the borough that are digitally excluded, lack basic digital skills and the work we will do to support them.

The Council's workforce and digital skills will be crucial in our ability to respond to new challenges and support residents. Developing digital training platforms to upskill employees in the latest technologies and tools relevant to their roles. This will form part of our Well-Run Council pillar.

A digitally inclusive society relies having the right skills to be able to take forward the necessary work. It is predicted that 75% of jobs will require advanced digital skills by 2030. Current research shows 82% of advertised openings requires some level of digital skills. This channel focuses on the promotion of jobs and training for our residents, helping to ensure nobody is left behind.

Digital Inclusion: Closing the gap - what we will deliver

Connectivity

- Collaborating with internet service providers to introduce affordable and discounted internet plans for low-income residents, ensuring widespread access to fast and reliable internet.

- Continue to establish public Wi-Fi hotspots in community spaces, parks, and public buildings, offering free internet access to residents without reliable connectivity at home.

- Provision of a full-fibre connectivity grant to support community centres with poor connectivity.

- Support 500 residents with free connectivity.

- Continue to support residents with the broadband router lending scheme available at libraries.

Devices

- Implementing device lending programs that provide residents with access to smartphones, tablets, or laptops to bridge the digital divide and ensure equal opportunities for participation.

- Providing 80 TRAs with laptops and bespoke digital inclusion support.

- Continuously update and circulate relevant donation schemes available to Southwark residents.

- Supporting the London National Databank to repurpose our disused devices and distribute to residents in need.

Digital Skills

- Establishing community centres or hubs equipped with digital training facilities to enhance technological literacy among residents.

- Implementing programmes to bridge the digital divide, ensuring that all residents have access to and benefit from digital technologies.

- Establishing digital mentorship programs where tech-savvy community members or volunteers assist others in developing digital skills through one-on-one or group sessions.

- Conducting awareness campaigns to promote the importance of digital inclusion, dispelling myths, and encouraging residents to actively participate in digital initiatives – this includes attendance at the Cost-of-Living roadshow events and other community focused events across the borough.

- Working with technology partner, Infosys to launch a new digital inclusion platform for residents and SMEs to improve their digital skills by Q4 24/25.

Digital Inclusion: Closing the gap - what we will deliver

- Updating the Southwark Essential Digital Skills assessment tool to assess local needs and to improve understanding.

- Updating the Southwark digital skills provision map with updated support and designing a more user-friendly page which residents can access the right support and partners can refer residents to the provisions that match their need.

- Continue to deliver face to face digital inclusion sessions for residents across the borough.

- Continue to support our resident digital champions with bespoke workshops and resources to support the upskilling of resident's digital skills.

- The launch of a new digital inclusion platform for residents and SMEs to improve their digital skills by Q4 24/25.

- Developing a drop in at Southwark Resource Centre to develop support for disabled residents and residents with mental health issues.

- Developing a drop in with Bells Gardens to offer specific support with council services.

- Adhering to WCAG (Web Content Accessibility Guidelines) standards to ensure digital content is perceivable, operable, and understandable for all users.

- Incorporating features such as alternative text for images and sufficient colour contrast to enhance accessibility.

- Ensuring compatibility with assistive technologies such as screen readers, voice recognition software, and magnification tool.

- Providing clear instructions and intuitive navigation to facilitate ease of use for individuals with disabilities.

Innovation

- Encouraging innovation by organising hackathons or workshops.

- Membership on the London Digital Exclusion Taskforce to support digital inclusion initiatives across London.

- Supporting local organisations with funding bids for digital inclusion activities.

The 5 pillars - exploring the detail:

Pillar 4 - A Well Run Council

We are establishing a centralised hub for Technology and Digital within our organisation to assist our staff in utilising modern workplace technology and acquiring the necessary skills to enhance service delivery efficiency. This involves a commitment to aligning our services with user requirements, making essential investments in technology to ensure accessibility and security. By fostering a digital culture and embracing innovative work methodologies, we aim to meet the evolving needs of our residents while empowering our staff to adapt to new ways of working.

Empowering Staff with Modern Workplace Technology

Southwark is committed to making investments in modern workplace technology that empowers our employees. Implementing digital collaboration tools, integrated Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system, internal chatbot support, AI based automation to replace manual tasks, collaborative SharePoint hubs to enhance improved communication, to provide our staff with the necessary means to excel in their responsibilities and to serve our residents more effectively.

Digital Workplace Skills

We are actively developing training programmes and resources to promote digital literacy and professional growth. Our staff will have the opportunity to acquire the skills and knowledge needed to deliver services with the utmost efficiency while staying up to date with technological advancements.

We have collaborated with Microsoft to provide more than 20,000 hours of digital training to council staff, fostering the development of new skills to enhance service delivery including Power BI, Teams, and Microsoft 365.

User-Centric Services

Our services are designed with our users at the core. We actively engage in resident workshops, user research, and the application of user centred design principles to create services that are intuitive, accessible, and responsive to the needs of our residents.

Technology and Security

To ensure reliable and secure services, Southwark is dedicated to making the necessary investments in technology. This includes not only infrastructure but also robust cyber security measures.

We understand the importance of safeguarding sensitive data and the need to maintain the trust of our residents. We are committed to taking all necessary precautions to ensure data security and accessibility.

Digital Culture

We are aiming to build a digital culture where innovation and new ways of working are embraced. Southwark is creating an environment where our staff can seamlessly transition to digital practices,

A Well Run Council

collaborate more effectively, and responsive to the evolving needs of our residents. This cultural shift is pivotal to ensuring that our council remains agile and responsive to the challenges of the modern era.

Digital Together (DiTo) champions within Southwark Council serve as integral catalysts for the effective adoption and utilisation of digital tools and systems among internal staff. These champions play a pivotal role in driving the council's technology and digital strategy by promoting awareness, facilitating training sessions, and providing ongoing support to colleagues. They act as key advocates, ensuring that staff members are well-versed in utilising new technologies, enhancing overall digital literacy, and fostering a culture of innovation within the organisation.

By actively engaging with their peers, addressing concerns, and sharing best practices, technology champions contribute significantly to the successful implementation of digital initiatives, ultimately supporting the council's broader mission and operational efficiency.

A Well-Run Council - what we will deliver

Digital Workplace Skills

- Developing digital training platforms to upskill employees in the latest technologies and tools relevant to their roles, fostering continuous professional development.

- Establishing collaborative SharePoint intranet hubs to enhance internal communication, knowledge sharing, and project collaboration among different departments and teams.

Modern Workplace Technology and Security

- We will undertake a Digital Maturity Assessment for the organisation to establish a baseline for areas of improvement and provide assurances on the strategy.

- Re-Implementing an integrated ERP system to streamline internal processes, unify data management, and enhance overall operational efficiency.

- We will create inter-operability between systems to support consistency across council services.

- The number of IT applications will be reduced by at least 10%.

- Implementing internal chatbot technology to provide quick support and answers to common queries, improving the efficiency of internal helpdesk services.

- Introducing AI based automation to reduce manual tasks, optimise resource allocation, and expedite decision-making processes within the organisation.

- Implementing robust cybersecurity measures, including regular training, multi-factor authentication, and advanced threat detection systems, to safeguard internal systems and data.

- We plan to enhance our utilisation of Microsoft Dynamics, integrating channels, applications, and workflows to facilitate seamless end-to-end transactions across a broader spectrum of services. This initiative aims to maximise the first-touch capability of council officers.

A Well Run Council continued

- We will continue our journey to deploy Microsoft 365 throughout the council to promote collaborative work among colleagues. This includes utilising features like simultaneous real-time editing access to files, enabling multiple colleagues to work on the same document concurrently. Additionally, it will provide flexible, secure access on any device at any time, instilling confidence in employees as compliance rules are automatically managed.

- We are implementing voice recognition in our contact centre, leveraging Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning to connect residents with the appropriate service during their initial point of contact.

- The Southwark Council's cloud programme has achieved 60% migration from on-premise infrastructure. This strategic move to the cloud is part of the council's commitment to leveraging advanced technologies for enhanced operational efficiency, service delivery. improving scalability and ability to adapt to evolving technology.

Digital Culture

- We will continue to build the DiTo champion network (currently 110 champions) to 200 to represent all of the services across the council including depots and front-line workers.

The 5 pillars - exploring the detail:

Pillar 5 - Data Enabled - Understanding the Needs of Our Communities

Our 5 pillars will enable us to experiment with data, to understand how our residents live and work in the Borough. We will work with partners to try to connect and share our data and to use operational data to enable early intervention, prevention and to predict how we shape future council services to best serve our residents.

A Single View of the Resident

In our digital transformation journey, we aim to create a unified perspective of our residents, ensuring we provide them with consistent, coherent services. A single view of the resident allows us to break down silos and better serve residents, as we will be equipped to understand their interactions and history with our services comprehensively. This enables us to offer more personalised, efficient, and effective support.

Data Governance for Collaboration

Collaboration is at the heart of our strategy. We recognise that data has the most potential when it is shared and used in collaboration. We are committed to developing robust governance frameworks that

facilitate the secure and responsible sharing of data and insights within our organisation and with our trusted partners. These governance structures will help us harness the opportunity of data our stakeholders to better serve our communities.

Empowering the Organisation

We have invested in the Microsoft Modern Data Platform and Power BI to enable our staff and service areas to make data-driven decisions. The Modern Data Platform is designed to support Southwark in collecting, storing, processing, and analysing data effectively with Power BI enabling users to visualize and share insights from their data. It provides a suite of tools for connecting to various data sources, transforming data, creating interactive reports and dashboards, and sharing them with others.

Data Enabled - what we will deliver. Understanding the Needs of Our Communities

- Create a Data Strategy to provide a framework to enable increasing sophistication of analytics it should provide insight to:

  - Run business as usual

  - Support business change

  - Predictive and prescriptive analytics

- Continue to work in partnership with relevant agencies and partners to extend data sharing where applicable and adds value to the organisation.

Data Enabled

- To continue to embed data analytics tools in decision-making processes, as part of the Centre of Excellence, we will deliver a further 100 Power BI training courses.

- Creation of a publicly available data portal to expand the accessibility of data to provide open source data for partners.

A Single View of the Resident

- Implementing a centralised data platform integrated with council systems, such as, IoT devices, Case Management Systems and Resident Relationship Management.

Data Governance for Collaboration

- Establishing a comprehensive data governance framework to ensure data quality, security, ownership and compliance with relevant regulations.

- Utilising Data Governance routes to implement training programs and initiatives to enhance data literacy among staff. To promote advances in data quality and understanding of the role of data in their respective roles.

- Strengthening data security measures, including encryption, access controls, and regular audits, to safeguard sensitive information and maintain residents' trust.

- Conducting privacy impact assessments to ensure that data collection and sharing practices align with privacy regulations and respect residents' rights.

- Develop a data operating model, roles and skills to support advancing data maturity levels.

- Creation of a new Data Dictionary to capture, manage and make transparent the data objects that are essential to service delivery.

Empowering the Organisation

- Building on the success of the Modern Data Platform to conduct further scoping workshops to create a plan of data ingestion and dashboards.

- Supporting key programmes, such as ERP Replacement, to baseline the current data position and create plans for data enhancement, archiving and migration to establish a new normal of quality and complete data in key systems.

Artificial Intelligence

As part of our technology and digital strategy, Southwark is embracing Artificial Intelligence (AI), Generative AI, and Robotic Process Automation (RPA) to enhance efficiency, improve resident experiences, and streamline operations. Whilst doing this, ethics and data security remain paramount considerations.

AI for Enhanced Service Delivery

By leveraging AI algorithms, the council aims to analyse vast amounts of data to identify trends, predict demand, and personalise services for residents. For instance, AI-powered chatbots can provide instant responses to queries, freeing up human resources for more complex tasks while ensuring round-the-clock accessibility.

AI driven analytics can be used to enable the council to make data-informed decisions, leading to resource optimisation and cost savings. AI algorithms offer insights that empower the council to allocate resources efficiently and proactively address community needs.

Generative AI: Fostering Creativity and Innovation

As part of Well-Run Council, Generative AI has the potential of transforming operations and service delivery. One significant application lies in content generation, where AI algorithms can produce reports, memos, and other administrative documents swiftly and accurately. By automating repetitive analytical tasks, Generative AI enables faster and more informed decision-making processes, ultimately leading to more effective governance and service provision.

Southwark Council understands the potential benefits of generative AI tools, such as Chat GPT and Microsoft Co-Pilot. We will look to explore these safely through the development of guidance for staff and series of pilot projects that will analyse the benefits and risks of wider rollout and usage.

RPA: Streamlining Operations with Efficiency

Robotic Process Automation (RPA) is a priority to streamline administrative processes and enhance operational efficiency. By automating repetitive tasks such as data entry, invoice processing, and form submissions, RPA releases staff from routine duties, allowing them to focus on value-added activities that require human judgment and creativity.

Furthermore, RPA ensures accuracy and consistency in data processing, mitigating the risk of human error. However, Southwark Council remains mindful of the ethical implications of automation, particularly concerning potential job displacement. To address these concerns, the council is committed to upskilling and reskilling its workforce, ensuring that employees are equipped with the skills needed to thrive in an increasingly automated environment.

Ethics and Data Security: Upholding Resident Trust

As Southwark Council embraces AI, Generative AI, and RPA, it remains committed to upholding the highest ethical standards and safeguarding resident data. The council prioritises transparency and accountability in its use of AI, ensuring that algorithms are fair, unbiased, and free from discrimination. Additionally, robust data security measures are implemented to protect sensitive information and mitigate the risk of cyber threats.

By embracing these technologies while upholding ethical principles and ensuring data security, the council aims to deliver efficient services to its residents while building trust and fostering inclusive growth in the community.

Cyber Security

In a world of electronic information, the protection of our data is becoming ever more important. We exist in a culture powered by interconnecting data, constantly evolving and allowing us to make better decisions.

This makes it even more critical for us to put in controls around how we use, store and process our data and for us to follow the guidance from the experts and to ensure that our systems are appropriately hardened and locked down to keep the attackers out and our systems continuously working well.

Cyber incidents are on the rise, especially within public sector. We know that the ramifications are serious and widespread, from personal to economic. Protection and remediation are service disrupting and of significant financial expense. The impact on people affected by their stolen information can be disturbing and life altering in some cases.

The Cyber Security strategy outlines the focus we shall be adopting for our councils and residents. It is imperative that we put the right controls in place to protect and react to cyber threats going forward. We have a strong relationship with National Cyber Security Centre and other private cyber agencies which we will harness to help us to protect the data of our residents.

We want to continue to use the benefits of technology to improve the lives of local people. This strategy will safeguard us all. It will build confidence in the way we operate and deliver our services and keep us at the forefront of the digital revolution.

Cyber Security - what we will deliver.

The Southwark Council's cyber security initiative encompasses several key projects designed to enhance the organisation's resilience against cyber threats. Working with our Shared Technology Service Partner and professional third-party subject matter experts we will deliver the following:

- **Security Awareness Training Programme:** Further development of a cyber security training programme for staff to educate them on best practices, recognising phishing attempts, and understanding their role in maintaining a secure digital environment.

- **Endpoint Protection Enhancement:** To strengthen endpoint security measures by deploying advanced antivirus solutions, intrusion detection systems, and endpoint detection and response (EDR) tools to safeguard individual devices and endpoints.

- **Network Security Upgrades:** Upgrade and fortify the council's network infrastructure with robust firewalls, intrusion prevention systems, and regular security audits to identify and address vulnerabilities in the network architecture.

- **Incident Response and Management:** Developing and refining an incident response plan to effectively and promptly address any cybersecurity incidents, including a designated response team, communication protocols, and continuous improvement based on lessons learned.

- **Regular Vulnerability Assessments:** Conducting routine vulnerability assessments and penetration testing to proactively identify and remediate potential weaknesses in the council's IT infrastructure.

- **Data Encryption Measures**: Implementing robust encryption protocols for sensitive data both in transit and at rest, ensuring that confidential information is secure.

Cyber Security continued

- **Supply Chain Security:** Strengthening cyber security measures throughout the supply chain by working closely with third-party vendors and contractors to ensure that their systems meet the council's security standards.

- **Security Governance and Compliance:** Establishing a comprehensive cyber security governance framework to ensure compliance with relevant regulations and standards while continuously monitoring and adapting to emerging cyber security threats.

- **Cyber security Awareness Campaigns:** Conducting ongoing awareness campaigns to keep staff informed about the latest cyber security threats, promoting a culture of vigilance, and encouraging reporting of any suspicious activities.

The Power of Partnerships

Key to becoming a truly inclusive digital borough, is a strong partnership and collaboration between the council, local businesses, technology providers and organisations from the public, private, community and academic sectors.

This collaborative approach will enable new innovative opportunities that maximise the use of digital technologies, and the skills and capabilities of our residents and local businesses. This will allow our residents and staff to develop the right skills, and be provided with the right opportunities.

For example, we have strong collaboration partnerships with the broadband providers, **Community Fibre** and **Hyperoptic**, who are working with us to deliver better broadband, and digital skills across the Borough. We are also working with **Microsoft, Hitachi** and **Infosys** to connect our data and use technology to solve community challenges through Hackathons.

Southwark Council is also a member of **Socitm**, a professional network for leaders delivering innovation and modernisation of public services.

We have signed the **Local Digital Declaration**, a shared ambition for better local public services. We pledge to design services that best meet the needs of residents, to challenge the technology market to offer the flexible tools and services we need. To protect residents privacy and security and deliver better value for money.

Continuing and growing these partnerships across London and wider will be essential to deliver this report and associated action plans. This includes working closely with our voluntary sector, community groups, charities and academia.

LOTI and the GLA Partnership

We are working closely with LOTI and the GLA on their Digital Access for All mission.

GLA/ LOTI Digital Inclusion Innovations Programme

To deliver the GLA's ambition for Every Londoner to have access to good connectivity, basic digital skills and the device or support they need to be online by 2025, the GLA are working in partnership with LOTI on the Digital Inclusion Innovation Programme. This is a £1.36million programme to tackle digital exclusion.

In addition to the Digital Exclusion Mapping Project, the first phase of the project also consists of the following:

- Encourage and help London's public sector organisations to upcycle their retired devices to benefit digitally excluded Londoners.

- Address the specific needs of digitally excluded individuals and families living in temporary accommodation.

- Supporting Dementia Carers and finding digitally enabled ways to support the carers of people living with dementia.

Links to other strategies

The Technology and Digital Strategy outlines opportunities for cross-sector collaboration and need to leverage our relationships with partners both within and outside the council.

As such, it takes both internal and external strategies, policies, and programmes into account.

This will ensure we are not working in isolation, and we are all working towards the same objectives.

EXTERNAL

UK Digital Strategy

The UK Digital Strategy outlines its ambitions in creating a digital economy, which is resilient to change and fit for the future. Comprising of seven pillars, it focuses on building a world-leading digital economy that works for everyone including:

- Ensuring that we continue to tackle the root causes of digital exclusion, and that everyone can increase their digital capability to make the most of the digital world.
- Developing the full range of digital skills that individuals and companies across the country need in an increasingly digital economy, and supporting people to up-skill, and re-skill throughout their working lives.

- Strong collaboration between the public, private, and third sector to tackle the digital skills gap in a co-ordinated and coherent way. To ensure the sum is greater than the parts, and everyone, everywhere has better access to the training they want.

GLA Digital Access Mission

The GLA has an ambition for Every Londoner to have access to good connectivity, basic digital skills and the device or support they need to be online by 2025.

To facilitate this, the GLA are working in partnership with LOTI on the Digital Inclusion Innovation Programme, a £1.36million programme to tackle digital exclusion.

INTERNAL

Digital Skills Delivery Plan

The Local Economy Team are leading on the Digital Skills action plan and leading the 'Southwark Essential Digital Skills Group'. This is an informal partnership of local organisations that have an interest in working together to improve outcomes for Southwark residents who lack essential digital skills.

- Objective 1: A shared understanding of need and demand for essential digital skills in Southwark
- Objective 2: Collectively deliver sufficient, accessible provision that responds to learner needs.
- Objective 3: A collaborative approach to innovation.

Links to other strategies continued

Climate Change Strategy & Action Plan

The climate emergency affects us all, and the Southwark Council action plan outlines how we will contribute to ending global warming, whilst delivering new green jobs. We recognise that digital can be an enabler for reducing our carbon footprint and waste such as the reduction of travel and the use of printed documents as we move to hybrid working.

Under the 'Reduce unnecessary journeys theme', staff will be supported to choose appropriate locations prior to, after or between meeting residents to carry out work rather than travelling back to an office location if it is not necessary.

It will use the Digital Infrastructure Strategy to facilitate the provision of widespread Wi-Fi and high-speed internet, to less well-connected areas across the borough to facilitate agile/teleworking.

As part of the digital inclusion report and action plan, we are also committed to recycling and redistributing disused devices to reduce waste in the borough and will work closely with LOTI to deliver this.

Southwark Stands Together

Southwark Stands Together (SST) is a borough wide initiative, in response to the killing of George Floyd, the injustice and racism experienced by Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities, and to the inequalities exposed by COVID-19.

Two of the themes focuses on education and communities and it is vital that when we reach out to these communities, we are not excluding those that may not be online. Part of this ambitions in this report is to work closely with the SST Programme Lead, to ensure digitally excluded residents are engaged with as part of the Southwark Stands Together engagement.

Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2022-2027

As a borough we are committed to providing additional support to residents that have the poorest outcomes, focusing our efforts on our most disadvantaged neighbourhoods and communities. Our call to action for the borough and partners is to unite to tackle inequalities wherever they may be.

Our five priorities outline how we want to build on the progress we have made as a partnership and address the challenges that our residents continue to face.

Drive 1: A whole-family approach to giving children the best start in life.

Drive 2: Healthy employment and good health for working age adults across the health and wellbeing economy.

Drive 3: Early identification and support to stay well.

Drive 4: Strong and connected communities.

Drive 5: Integration of Health and Social Care.

Glossary of Terms

1. Agile Methodology:
   - A flexible approach to project management, emphasising collaboration and adaptability.

2. Broadband Not-Spot:
   - An area with limited or no access to high-speed broadband internet.

3. Chatbot:
   - A computer programme designed to simulate conversation with human users, often used for customer support or information retrieval.

4. Content Management System (CMS):
   - A software application that allows users to create, edit, and manage digital content on a website.

5. Dataset:
   - A collection of related and organised information or data.

6. Data Lake:
   - A centralised repository that allows the storage of vast amounts of raw data in its native format.

7. Data Source:
   - The origin or location from which data is collected.

8. Digital Platform:
   - An integrated set of technologies and tools that form the foundation for digital services.

9. Gigabit Connectivity:
   - Internet connectivity with speeds of one gigabit per second or more.

10. Information Architecture:
   - The structural design of shared information environments, facilitating usability and findability.

11. Interoperability:
   - The ability of different systems or software to communicate and exchange data effectively.

12. IoT (Internet of Things):
   - The network of interconnected devices embedded with sensors, software, and other technologies, enabling them to collect and exchange data.

13. Legacy Systems:
   - Outdated computer systems, software, or technology that is still in use due to its historical significance.

14. LoTi (London Office of Technology and Innovation):
   - LOTI is London local government's innovation team. The help London borough councils to use innovation, data and technology to be high performing organisations, improve services and tackle London's biggest challenges together.

15. Microsoft Power BI:
   - A business analytics tool by Microsoft that provides interactive visualisations and business intelligence capabilities.

16. Microsoft Power Platform:
   - A suite of Microsoft products, including Power BI, Power Apps, and Power Automate, for creating custom business solutions.

17. Mobile Network Small Cells:
   - Compact cellular base stations used to enhance mobile network coverage and capacity in specific areas.

18. Modern Data Platform:
   - A contemporary and integrated system for managing and utilizing diverse data sources.

19. Smart Technologies:
   - Technologies designed to improve efficiency, connectivity, and functionality in various aspects of urban living.

20. Smart Home Devices:
   - Internet-connected devices designed to enhance the automation and control of home functions.

21. VPN (Virtual Private Network):
   - A secure network connection that allows users to access and transmit data over the internet as if they were directly connected to a private network.

22. Website Responsive Design:
   - Designing websites to ensure optimal viewing and interaction across a range of devices and screen sizes.

23. Wi-Fi:
   - A technology that allows electronic devices to connect to the internet wirelessly.

24. Wi-Fi Hot Spot:
   - A location where wireless internet access is provided, typically using Wi-Fi technology.

Southwark
Council