

Project code: 8372

Project name: Digital Impact - London Borough Hounslow

Contact: Amy Burns, Hounslow Council

Category: Digital Impact

Category type: LGC Awards Categories

Project title: Digital Impact - London Borough Hounslow

- These awards primarily cover achievement and performance in the calendar year 2020 and the first two months of 2021, and entries should have a particular focus on that period. However, judges will take into account work that began before that period, as well as achievement and performance since that period.
- The awards will reflect the fact that Covid-19 and the response to it have posed an unprecedented challenge to local government. Judges' decisions should reflect attributes such as performance, resilience, compassion and adaptability in the face of the pandemic alongside achievement, innovation and vision. However, entries which are primarily not about the council's pandemic response should be treated equally to those that are.
- You only have to submit a single statement explaining why you should win (up to 1,000 words).
- Please also provide a 100-word summary of your entry. Please use this as an opportunity to make a pitch to our judges about what makes your work innovative and bold.
- Please use the questions in the bullet points below as a guide and break up your submission accordingly. Some may be more applicable than others for your entry.
- Please specify which private sector partners do you work with (if any).
- While you have the option of providing supporting material, we urge you to do this sparingly, and only if you feel further evidence is required to back-up your entry. The critical information should however be included in the main part of your entry.

If you require any help with your entries contact: **Rafael Younes** on **020 3953 2115**, email Rafael.Younes@emap.com or **Jae Taylor** on **020 3953 2117**, email Jae.Taylor@emap.com

Submissions should focus on:

- A description of your digital vision;
- An account of how you have embedded the use of technology across the authority;
- An assessment of how this technology has helped achieve your organisational vision and has improved outcomes, for instance in several priority services or across your place as a whole;
- A detailed explanation of how collaborators were involved in the transformation process
- A description of how the role of digital in creating real impact was realised across the authority and enabled your organisation's vision or strategy.

Award entries will be judged upon:

- First and foremost, evidence that digital has created a tangible business change to facilitate improved outcomes, for instance for service users, staff, a directorate in the council and your place as a whole;
- Evidence senior managers have a clear understanding of the role digital plays in the future delivery of their services and the function of their directorate as well as the future of council which is well-articulated and understood across the organisation;
- The level of innovation and ambition in using technology to reform ways of working across a range of services;
- Evidence of how digital was used to drive reforms and initiatives;
- Examples where your technology agenda can be linked to improved outcomes for service users,

staff and better collaboration between stakeholders.

Please tell us in no more than 1,000 words why you should win

Your answer here:

We began 2020 as one of the fastest growing economies in the country and entered 2021 heading into a third national lockdown. Unemployment in the borough was at the highest it has been in more than a generation. The long-term impact on the borough, its residents, and its businesses is uncertain.

And yet, for all that, the last twelve months also saw hope. As we spent more time locally, people got to know their local area better. Neighbours supported neighbours. Little acts of kindness flourished. At moments of crisis, we saw the best of the borough and each other.

Our relationship with local people has fundamentally shifted. We have worked more closely, deeply, and effectively with partners from across the public, private and voluntary and community sectors, than ever before. We can see the value and impact of connectedness with and within our communities.

At the start of 2020, we co-designed and started to deliver an ambitious Digital Strategy which was agreed by Cabinet on the eve of the first lockdown. The mission of the Digital Strategy was to create connected and inclusive communities, and the pandemic highlighted the importance of this. It enabled us to accelerate many of our activities and we needed to change the way that we work and deliver services almost overnight.

Central to connecting our communities during the pandemic was a Community Hub service which was established almost overnight – a new cloud-based contact centre specifically set up for our most vulnerable people to ensure they had the support they needed while they shielded and isolated.

As well as introducing new technology (the easy part!), this was the introduction of an entirely new service and way of working. It involved staff that were redeployed from front-line services, as well as partners across the public, private, community and voluntary sector. It was designed in close collaboration with the recipients of the service, as well as the people delivering it; ensuring that it provided exactly what was needed. It required a new approach to data sharing and cross-organisation and multi-agency working.

The Community Hub acted as both a triage for additional services and direct support through local knowledge and personal advice. It supported 213k shielding residents, making more than 42k calls. It also supported more than 12k non-shielding, yet vulnerable residents, providing financial advice and medical support, and helped with emotional wellbeing and practical tasks such as shopping. In total 10k food parcels were delivered, with over 800 being delivered every week at the peak.

And it's had a lasting impact.

The pandemic taught us that we work best when we work together – residents, businesses, and partners in the voluntary, community and public sector joined us in supporting our most vulnerable people.

Connected people feel part of a community; they look out for each other and have a sense of belonging.

We've seen how technology can help bring people together and how services are more effective when they're designed collaboratively.

The Community Hub has now evolved into our Community Solutions model which is aiming to be more preventative in our approach. It continues to be delivered by us alongside our voluntary sector, local charities and public sector partners. We'll continue to develop it as a service for all our communities and it will always be a collaboration.

Our transformation programme, One Hounslow, is taking a single, coordinated and outcome-focused approach to reshape our services and ways of working, ensuring that services are people-centred, decisions are powered by data and insight, and we work in partnership by default. The whole organisation is signed up to the commitment that digital is how we do business. By enabling and empowering people to interact with us online, we can focus our resources on supporting the digitally excluded and reducing the digital divide.

We continue to embrace collaboration and partnership working alongside an embedded commitment to digital. Through our Integrated Care Partnership, comprising local health and social care providers, and voluntary sector organisations, we have enabled residents to attend doctors' appointments online; increasing the accessibility, availability and convenience of GP services. Conscious that some people don't have access to technology in their homes, we're also installing a dedicated Push Dr pod in our main Council building in the heart of Hounslow.

Other steps made to reduce the digital divide include delivering 750 devices to local schools, including 150 4G internet devices. We worked with Ealing and Hounslow voluntary sectors to train and support 100 digital champions in the borough to improve our communities' digital capabilities. We worked with the third sector to secure and provide residents and schools with 200 recycled devices, with a further 900 for distribution this year.

We ran a digital festival throughout November to increase skills with colleagues and the community. With a focus on mental health and wellness, we worked with partners and businesses, delivering 62 sessions.

Working with colleagues in the West London Alliance, we've signed our first master wayleave agreements, allowing broadband providers to install fast internet connections into some of Hounslow's social housing. The agreements mean that this will lead to the supply of free high-quality fibre internet connections to some of our most vulnerable residents. It also provides further social value around apprentices and internet connections for community centres.

To sum up, digital has always been important in the delivery of our services, but 2020 changed our organisation's relationship with it. We developed a better understanding of the reliance that we and our communities have on digital, and we're now embracing its potential to enable us to reimagine the way we interact with people, how we deliver services, how we support our residents, and how we work with local organisations.

Digital is no longer a separate programme of work, delivered in isolation. It's an essential ingredient in everything we do - critical to the transformation of Hounslow as a borough, a place and an organisation. We cannot support our communities without connecting with them, understanding their needs and designing the right kinds of services. We cannot provide the right services without the underpinning processes and technologies.

100 word summary*

100 word summary:

Our mission is to use digital services to create connected and inclusive communities. This isn't digital or change for the sake of it; this is creating the conditions for a borough-wide transformation by adopting an innovative, council-wide, outcome-focused approach to reshape our services and ways of working.

Since the start of 2020, our digital transformation has evolved. We have harnessed the challenges of the pandemic to accelerate our digital growth and bring better, more inclusive digital services, to every corner of our borough.

What private sector partners do you work with (if any):

*** If you are a private sector organisation Please provide contact details of the local authority that you are in partnership with. You will need to obtain prior consent from the local authority contact to pass on their details for GDPR compliance.**

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