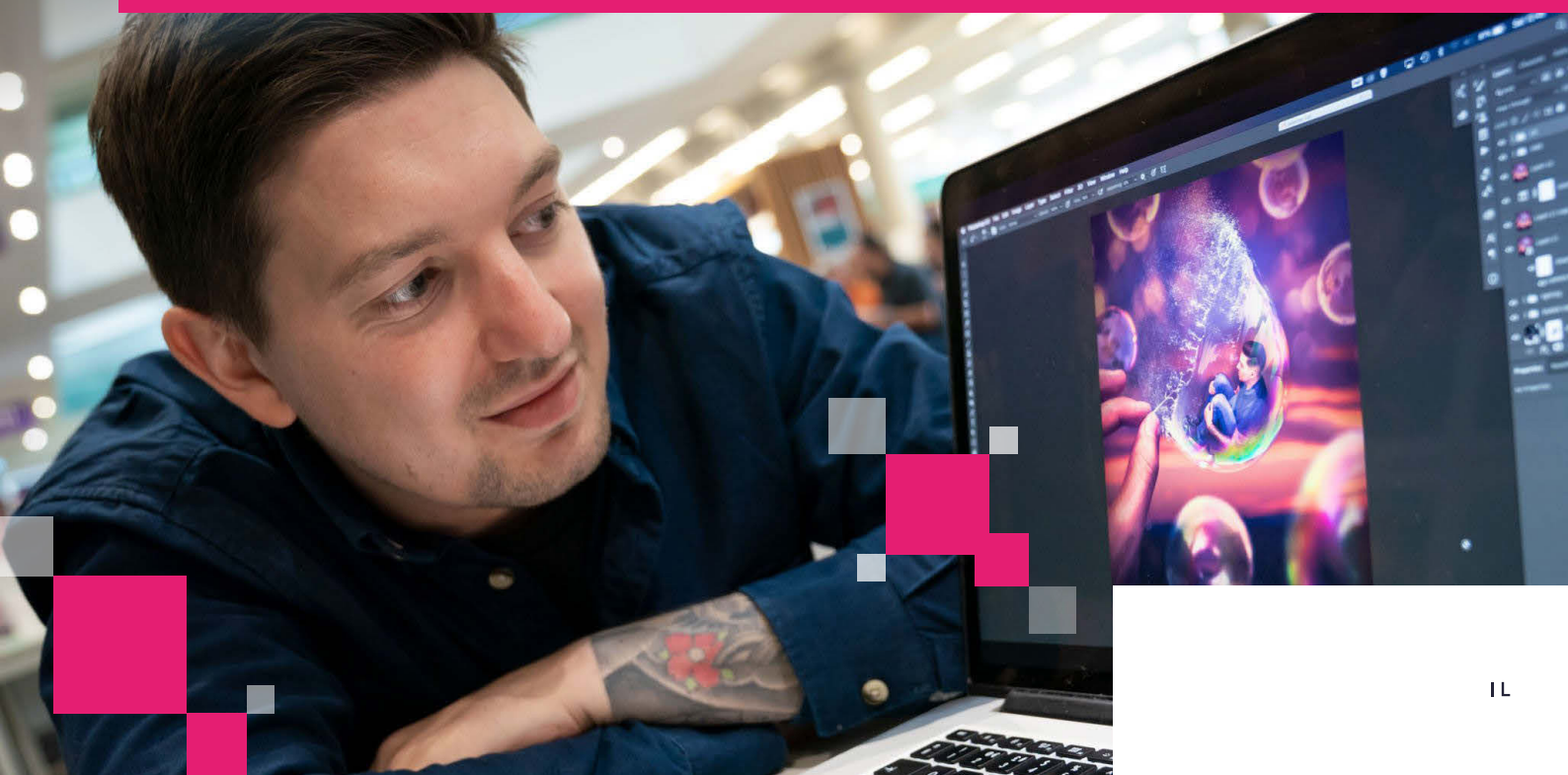




Digital Experience Strategy 2022-2025



An aerial night photograph of Rochdale, showing the town's lights and surrounding green hills. A semi-transparent digital grid pattern is overlaid on the right side of the image, extending from the top header down to the bottom footer.

Our priorities: digital people and places

The future growth of our borough relies on making more and better use of the opportunities that digital innovation and transformation provides. A digital place is one that utilises new technologies and systems. Digital people are able to take advantage of those new technologies and better their lives.

Introduction

Councillor Neil Emmott

Leader, Rochdale Borough Council

We want everyone to have a positive digital experience. The council is committed to creating a digital infrastructure that will provide fast and responsive public services across our borough, keep communities connected and promote digital security. We aim to improve the digital skills of our citizens, increase digital awareness and digital access and support businesses and employment in the digital sector. The Covid-19 pandemic has led to a surge in the use of digital technologies and has created potential for new ways of work and life. We will build on those opportunities, improving our place and people's lives through digital transformation.



Kerry Bertram

Rochdale strategic locality lead, Action Together

There is a gap that exists between individuals, households, businesses and geographic areas at different socio-economic levels with regard to their opportunities to access information and communication technologies (ICT) and using the internet for a variety of activities. This 'digital divide' contributes to the inequality of access to goods and services available through technology, for example computers and the internet provide users with improved education, which can lead to higher wages. Those without access are at a disadvantage. The voluntary, community, faith and social enterprise sector (VCFSE) is committed to helping close the digital divide that exists across our borough.

Doctor Chris Duffy

chair of Heywood, Middleton and Rochdale
Clinical Commissioning Group

Transforming health and care through technology has the potential to deliver better outcomes for patients and citizens. We will empower people to make healthy choices by enabling digital access to health and care information and we will support independent living through digital products and services. We will use systems, technology and processes to deliver seamless care across all health and care settings, offering a mix of online, telephone and face to face access. We will also analyse data to better inform policy, preventions and treatments and build public trust and confidence in how health services look after and use patient information.



Digital challenges and drivers for change

Rising demand on public services



26% of adults in Rochdale don't have all five basic digital skills



1 in 3 local businesses don't have a website

Need to reduce the cost of delivering services

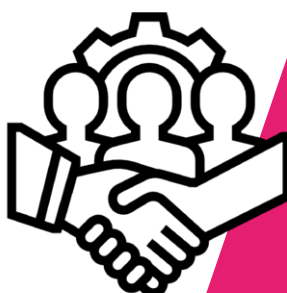


17.4% of adults in Rochdale have not been online

Digital sector is growing at pace

Covid-19 has inspired health innovation and remote working

Rise in cyber crime



Digital employers are constrained by a lack of local skills and talent

Digital exclusion, data poverty and the digital divide

A significant proportion of the population is digitally excluded because they lack internet access and/or have low levels of digital skills.

Some of the reasons for digital exclusion are age, low income, disabilities, learning difficulties, ethnic origin, location, culture and language.

As services start to move online more and more, significant numbers of people might miss out because they can't or don't have the motivation to engage in this new digital world.

Digital exclusion is not new, but the pandemic has highlighted that it is a growing problem.

Vital services such as education, welfare, health and work are now online. Digital transformation is taking place because it enables services to be delivered more efficiently, at less cost, with less effort and in a joined up way. It is also thought that digital optimises the customer experience because people can access services in ways that suit them and how they live.

However those that cannot use or access digital will be less able to obtain digital information, shop online, participate democratically, or learn skills and offer skills. Those who cannot access enough data for their needs are data poor and living in data poverty.

We recognise that people that are digitally excluded are likely to be disproportionately heavy users of public services.

For example those seeking help with benefits are unlikely to have access to a computer because they can't afford it, yet they need to make a claim online.

Our digital experience strategy is about focusing on people first.

Understanding the reasons why they are excluded from technology and putting in place interventions to enhance digital inclusion and close the digital divide.



Our vision:

improve our place and
people's lives through
digital transformation

Digital people

Digital places



Digital
inclusion



Digital
skills



Digital
infrastructure



Digital
security



Digital health
and social care



Digital
interaction



Digital
public services



Digital business
and employment

Digital inclusion



We want everyone to have a positive digital experience. Citizens will have the opportunity to access technology and the basic skills to use it. They will feel confident and safe in using online services and motivated to use digital to manage their lives.

Digital will benefit their health and wellbeing, education, employment, social interaction and communication. Nobody will be excluded from our digital journey, support will be provided where citizens have specific needs or digital isn't the appropriate solution.

Rochdale's digital journey

Digital Inclusion: future outcomes

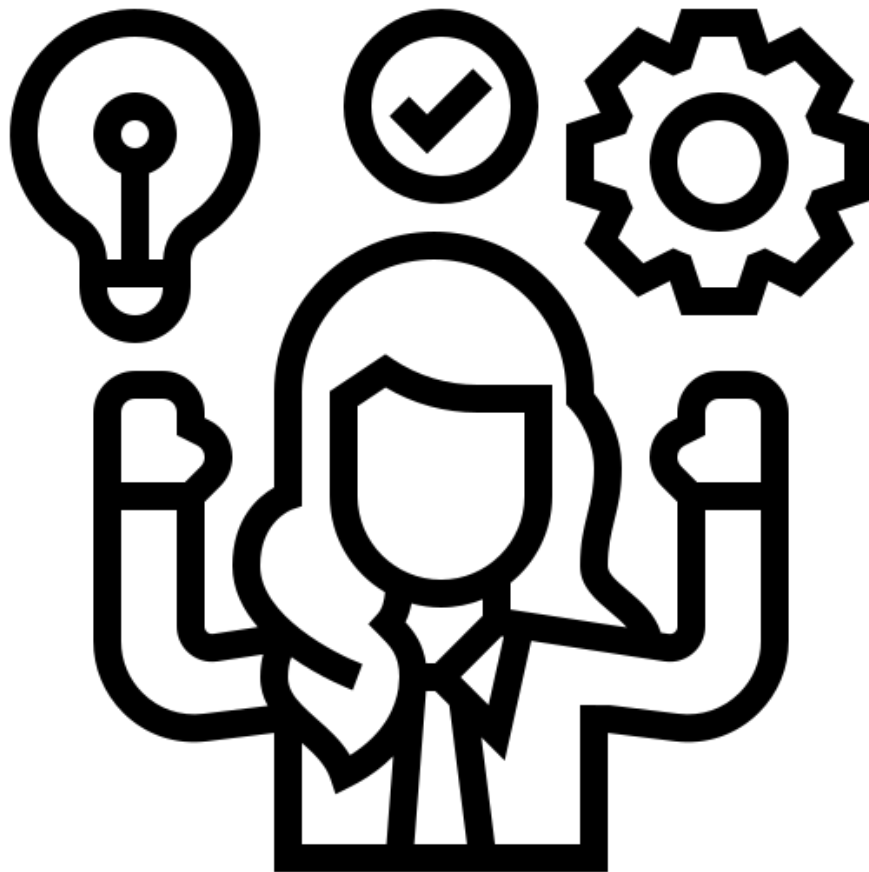
- Everyone has the opportunity to use digital equipment and technology to access the internet and get online.
- People with additional needs will be supported to engage with technology and access digital activity irrespective of their needs.
- Buildings across the borough will be used as digital hubs to enable people to access equipment, training and support to engage.
- Everyone knows how to be safe online, report abuse, and access support.
- Everyone is motivated to get online because they understand how it could be relevant and helpful and they are confident in using digital to meet their needs, manage their lives and reap the time and cost benefits of online services.
- Digital will complement other forms of customer access where transactions still require human interaction.
- More young people with digital equipment and connectivity to support home learning.

Digital inclusion: achievements and progress

- Our libraries are now digital hubs with 262 computers and free Wifi across all 16 and self scanning in 3. There's space for people to use their own laptops.
- DigiTech library established in partnership with VCS and the council to enable citizens to borrow digital equipment. Currently 40 tablets and laptops and a new batch of Chrome Books available.
- College Bank/Falinge residents to be offered free internet access via a "Mesh Network" by the end of 2021.
- Public access to NHS guest wi-fi at all NHS sites.
- Free Wi-Fi for the public at the Better Together centre will be available in late 2021.
- All Cared For Children have been given laptops to enable online learning to continue through Covid-19.
- Our Care Leaver offer includes internet access up to age 25 for those in education, training and employment. All care leavers attending university are supported to purchase a laptop for their studies. 22 laptops from the Department of Education were allocated to care leavers to support them into education, training and employment.

Rochdale's digital journey

Digital skills



We want to encourage all age groups to develop basic digital skills to support them in getting online. We want to inspire people to pursue careers in the digital sector, undertaking learning at school or retraining to enhance their job prospects and to help us address digital skills shortages.

Rochdale's digital journey

Digital skills: future outcomes

- People have all 5 basic digital skills (communicating, handling information & content, transacting, problem solving, being safe and legal online)
- More people directed and supported into digital careers via the school curriculum and college offer; and by having access to equipment and education to develop a range of skills.
- Residents helping others to develop their digital skills and access online services (in a learner led approach)
- Local employers retraining and reskilling their workforces in digital skills and capabilities.



Digital skills: achievements and progress

- Digital training sessions available in local libraries, at least one session per week with an average attendance of 15 people – general skills, family history sessions, coding etc. The library doorstep service assists with digital coaching.
- Digital champions are delivering informal digital training in community settings throughout the borough.
- Google digital garage bus visited the borough offering free workshops and face-to-face coaching.
- Heritage Hackers supporting the DigiTech library to fix/update donated digital equipment which can then be “gifted” to residents. Residents will also be taught to fix / update these devices.
- Crescent Radio and Employment Links Partnership delivering digital skills programme. Deepish Community Centre providing digital skills support within the local community with a plan to improve English and maths skills as a progression pathway.

Rochdale's digital journey

Digital health and social care



We want to transform and enhance health and social care through technology. We will use digital processes, equipment and data to enable seamless delivery of health, social care and education services and to support people in monitoring and managing their own health and wellbeing. We will also enable people to maximise their full potential and gain independence. We will also use digital to advance health policy, preventions and treatments, leading to better outcomes and better quality of life for everyone.

Rochdale's digital journey

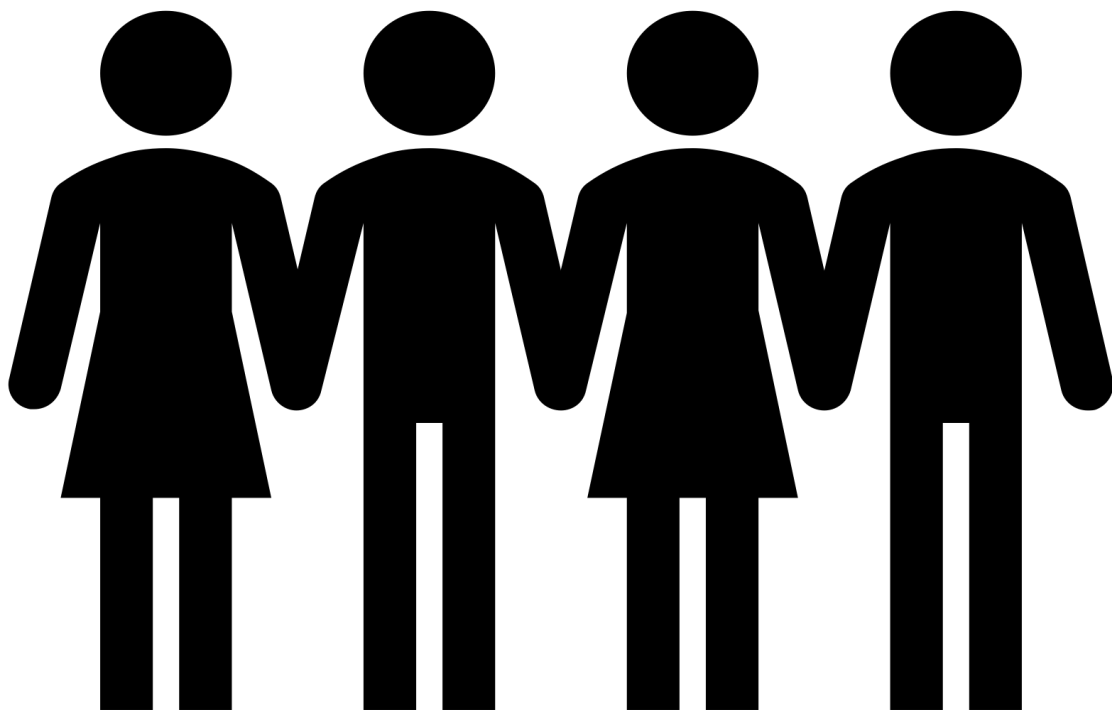
Digital health and social care: future outcomes

- More people practicing self care, and enabled to live where they choose to, by accessing health and social care services online and through digital applications.
 - People getting the right care, first time because health records, plans and preferences are integrated across all services and can be accessed in real time
 - Less administration for healthcare professionals and more efficient services for service users through digital bookings, referrals and prescribing systems; to ensure people only tell their story once and support effective transition at all points.
 - More people using assistive technologies and remote monitoring for tracking wellbeing, rehabilitation and independent living. More people using digital information to make informed choices.
 - Data tools being used to support health research, clinical trials and identifying people at greatest risk
- 

Digital health and social care: achievements and progress

- Greater Manchester Care Record (GMCR) implemented across health and care services to store adult patient/resident data in one place, improving data accessibility for GP's, district nurses, social workers etc.; Data analysis functions added to improved understanding of population health.
- Laptops and software provided to all GP practices to enable remote consultations with patients through video and smart messaging; online triaging introduced to enable accessibility to GP services via digital.
- Over the last 12 months the CCG and Adult Care has been trialling the ORCHA application which helps people to maintain independence in their own home
- Supporting care home residents by providing tablet computers for video calls and systems to support interactions with health care teams.

Digital interaction

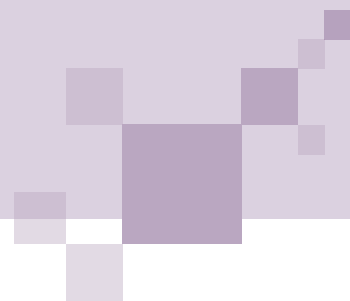


We want to ensure that everyone in the borough, whatever their age, needs, location or situation can use digital technology to interact and share with others, participate in civic and community life, stay informed, communicate and engage in learning, support and cultural activities and experiences.

Rochdale's digital journey

Digital Interaction: future outcomes

- Communities using digital platforms to engage with one another, access support and mobilise action in their local area.
- People accessing information about local services from online directories.
- People utilising digital tools to give feedback or to take part in consultation to support service or policy development and decision making processes.
- People engaging with culture, heritage and arts through online experiences.
- People kept informed, feel involved and able to connect through digital communications.

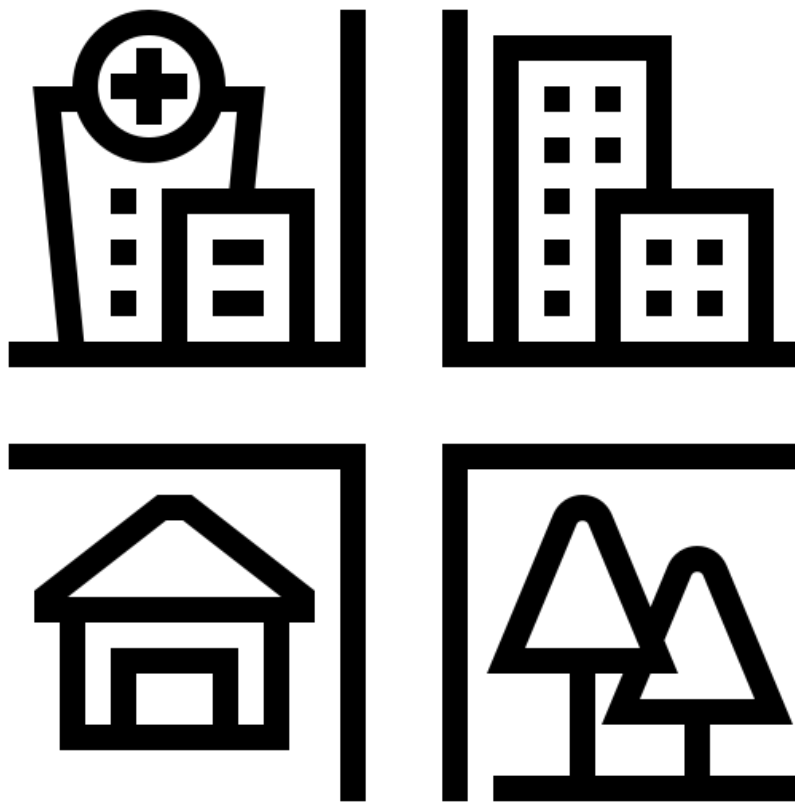


Digital Interaction: achievements and progress

- Council's website consistently ranked in the Top 10 of public sector websites. On average council social media posts reach over 352,000 people per month.
- 'Get Rochdale Working' Facebook page has 10,000+ followers.
- Four successful digital festivals. In 2019-20 businesses had a presence and there were over 650 visitors.
- Increase in digital meetings – 250 businesses attend the RDA's regular business breakfast meeting.
- Over 3,500 residents are signed up to the council's electronic communication platform.
- Dippy Dinosaur exhibition was delivered online during Covid-19. 4,324 hits on the virtual tour page, with 520 page views for the Dippy at home activities. Around 400 children took part in Zoom online activities.
- Digital kiosks will be implemented in libraries to enable people to use digital in a private setting.

Rochdale's digital journey

Digital infrastructure



We want all areas of the borough to have increased and reliable mobile coverage and faster broadband connectivity to meet the increasing demands for digital access and use across homes, businesses, public services and transport networks.

Rochdale's digital journey

Digital Infrastructure: future outcomes

- Digital systems across our public transport networks to support smarter travel.
 - Using data platforms to gather intelligence about user experiences to inform planning and development of services that meet local needs.
 - Improving availability and reliability of broadband and mobile access through 5G and full fibre.
 - Improving accessibility through free Wi-Fi in town centres and public buildings.
 - All council buildings will function as IT hubs.
 - Expanding mobile working systems to enable integrated partnership working.
- 

Digital Infrastructure: achievements so far

- Rates of full fibre connectivity, which can deliver speeds up to 300Mbps, are significantly higher in Rochdale (8.3%) than the UK average (6.3%). The borough is ranked number 1 for wireless telecoms activities across Greater Manchester (GM).
- 99 sites hosting council services are benefitting from the GM full fibre project and have higher speed connectivity (up from 2% to 25%). All 6 integrated health and social care teams will benefit from the full fibre project.
- Rochdale has been invited to be an early adopter of the GM One Network which will provide council and health and care staff the ability to log into one network to better support integrated working.

Digital security



We want citizens and businesses to be safe when using digital services and understand how to protect themselves, their networks and data against cyber crime and other risks. We will ensure that public sector systems that hold public data are secure and private so that people have absolute confidence in what's happening to their information.

Rochdale's digital journey

Digital Security: future outcomes

- People are aware of internet harms so that they can protect themselves from cyber crime.
- Storage, sharing and access to public data is secure and private.
- Local businesses are taking protective measures against threats to their networks and devices.
- Local businesses abiding by Best Practice Security Standards.
- The council and local businesses have cyber essential plus accreditation.

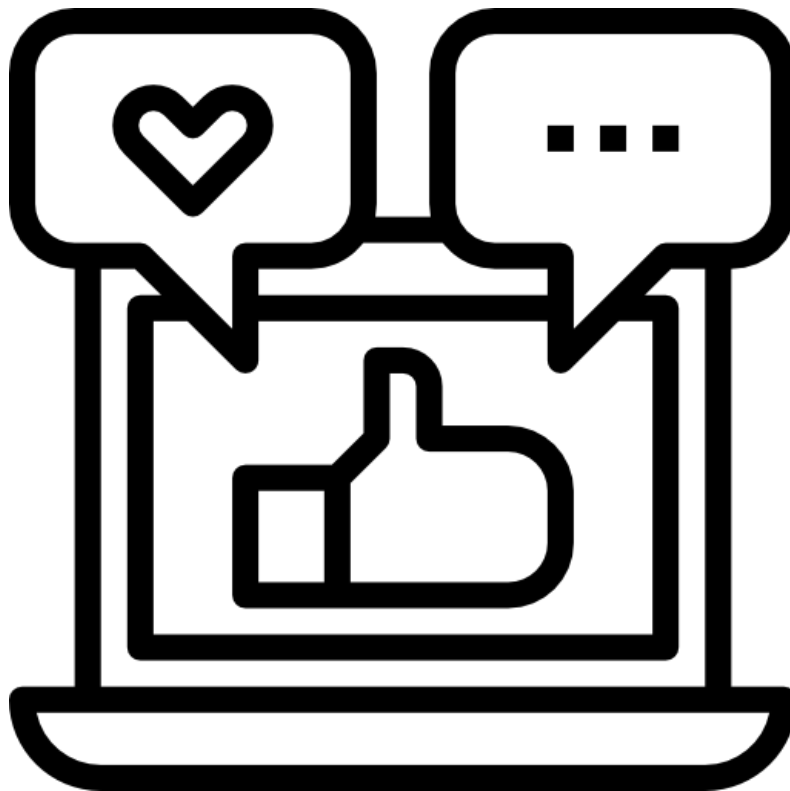


Digital Security: achievements

- The council is Public Service Network accredited
- The council has Payment Card Industry Data Security Standard accreditation to act as a bureau for processing online payments securely.
- The council has Cyber Essentials plus accreditation.
- The council has a dedicated ICT Security Manager to maintain our systems, particularly those that store public data, to ensure personal details are kept safe.
- CCG IT services are ISO27001 and Cybersecurity Essentials Plus certified.

Rochdale's digital journey

Digital public services



We want to lead by example in maximising the use of innovative technology to improve services. We will make processes more efficient, and ensure our staff have the tools and skills to enable them to work smarter.

Rochdale's digital journey

Digital public services: future outcomes

- Public sector workforces are flexible, forward thinking, have core digital skills and frontline workers able to help citizens develop their own skills.
- Digital good help embedded across public services to ensure those at risk of being excluded are supported to use digital in a positive way.
- Internal processes digitized and automated to improve speed and accuracy of common tasks, technology used to enable remote working and people self serving through digital platforms.
- Machine learning being used to provide data insights to support decision making.

Digital public services: achievements and progress

- Over 80 council services supported by electronic-forms to enable residents to report, request and pay online. Over 44,000 registered users for MyAccount. Revenues and Benefits service almost fully digital, meaning processes from beginning to end are supported by digital solutions.
- Walk-in enquiries down by 75%. Call handling times reduced by over 10,000 minutes per month and call costs reduced to £4.30 per call. Customer satisfaction at 98%.
- During the pandemic the number of active users of library eBook and Audiobook services increased by 45%. We are implementing out of hours access in branches and Wifi printing.
- 2,475 laptops and 1658 mobile phones provided to council staff and conferencing tools such as MS Teams deployed across Council and CCG to enable remote working. Cloud first approach adopted for applications and software to support business continuity.

Digital business and employment



We want the borough to be an attractive place for digital businesses, offering high speed connectivity, local digital talent and a range of support. We will encourage and support businesses of all types and sizes to digitise their business and make the most of the opportunities that this brings. We will encourage interest in science, technology, engineering and mathematics subjects (STEM) to facilitate careers in the digital sector.

Rochdale's digital journey

Digital business and employment: **future outcomes**

- More digital businesses relocating, starting up or expanding in the borough, creating employment opportunities.
 - Digital enterprise at the heart of community wealth and social value to help grow the local economy.
 - More investment and funding for digital initiatives in the borough.
 - Businesses receiving advice and support about revolutionising their operations and processes through use of digital technologies.
 - Under represented groups progressing in STEM so that businesses have access to a diverse pool of local digital talent.
- 

Digital business and employment: **achievements and progress**

- There are many business in Rochdale that are connected into the digital services offered by the Business Growth Hub including digital and creative Tech – 33 firms and Digital Innovation – 93 firms.
- Rochdale is home to Zen Internet, a digital start up that is now one of the Sunday Times 100 best companies to work for.
- Rochdale saw a 168% increase in digital start ups between 2016 and 2018 (from 91 to 244).
- GM Fire Service Museum – offering co-worker space for small businesses in Rochdale.

Rochdale's digital journey

Delivering the digital strategy will require engagement and collaboration from various partners across multiple areas of work. The key stakeholders we will partner with include:

Public sector

Rochdale Borough Council
NHS partners
Public sector partners
GM Combined Authority

Housing

Registered providers
Private rented landlords

Schools and colleges

Schools
Nurseries
Academies
Colleges

Voluntary Sector

Action Together
Community Groups
Social Enterprises
Interfaith and Faith Groups

Industry and commercial

Rochdale Development Agency
Growth Company
Local Business / Industry
/ Co-operatives
Commissioned Services

Culture

Your Trust
Rochdale Culture Network

Pioneering digital:

Our ways of working

Start with user needs

We will talk to users to understand their diverse needs and lived experience so that the right services can be provided now and in the future. We will keep that conversation going.

Think broader

We will develop and build platforms, systems and tools that can be used by other organisations and partners.

Design with data

We will use analytics to drive design, build and testing processes for any digital initiatives that are implemented.

Make it simple

We will ensure services are easy and simple for citizens to use of any digital skill level. They will initially be built on a small scale to allow for user testing and refining once they are live.

Understand the customer journey

We will design services to fit with people's lifestyles and how they want to experience digital.

Make it for everyone

We will ensure services are inclusive and will help those who find using our services the hardest to get the support they need. We will think about those people from the start.

Focus on results

We will deliver digital services that enhance a persons life or life chances.

Be open

We will share ideas, learning, success and failures to support ongoing digital innovation and transformation.