

**Let's
Go!**

Embracing the future

Digital Transformation Strategy
2020 - 2025



watford
community
housing

Embracing the future

We are committed to finding solutions that allow us to work effectively and offer more to our residents. This means delivering a great customer experience by making it easy for people to manage their tenancy and engage with us online, as well as empowering our staff with the technology they need to provide excellent services efficiently.

Our digital journey has already begun. We offer a range of online services that make life easier our customers. We have also implemented a number of key improvements to our technological infrastructure, making us more resilient and giving our staff the right resources to help them deliver.

The coronavirus crisis led to a step change in remote working practices for many organisations, including us. It dramatically accelerated the need to mobilise our workforce and we responded quickly – demonstrating our ability to adapt to new ways of working.

But we want to do lots more. Over the next five years we will continue to evolve and embed digital solutions that improve our services, empower our workforce to be more responsive and support the Group's ambitious goals.



Engaging with us should feel effortless and seamless for our customers. We will take a 'digital first' approach, simplifying our channels so that online services become people's preferred option as the most convenient way of getting things done.

Digital first

We will continue to add new functionality to our online offer. Customers will be able to view all of their information in one place and it will be easy to follow the progress of transactions, so people will know what they can expect from us.

Easy online services

We will launch a dedicated smartphone app to give our customers a convenient and easy way to manage their tenancy online.



A first-class repairs service

In line with our Customer Promise commitment to deliver a first-class repairs service, we will make it easier than ever to raise and track repairs online.

Customers will have access to real-time intelligent monitoring of repairs, including the ability to track our operative's van all the way to their front door on the day of the repair.

We'll provide intuitive online repair diagnostics, which make it easy for people to identify and describe the problem to us – helping us to ensure that we can fix it on our first visit. Residents will be able to upload photos and videos so that we can assess the problem remotely and make sure we send the right operative with the parts that are needed to put things right. Customers will also be able to use this functionality to share images when reporting anti-social behaviour to us.

And once a repair is complete, customers will be able to give us feedback immediately through online satisfaction surveys.

By delivering these improvements, we will ensure that 50% of all repairs are booked online by 2025.

Information on hand

We will provide a secure online environment that gives customers easy access to comprehensive information through their online account.

Everything our customers might need to know about their home and their tenancy will be at their fingertips. This will include information about the safety measures within their building, such as fire risk assessments and gas and electrical compliance documentation, as well as records such as their tenancy agreement.

As we are a Community Gateway organisation, many of our customers are also Watford Community Housing members, who can vote on key issues at our annual general meeting (AGM). We'll make it easier for them to vote online and access their membership documents and AGM information packs in a digital format.

We will also develop an online offer for new customers, so that they can begin their digital journey with us straight away. This will allow people to access all the information they need and complete the tenancy sign-up process digitally before they have even moved into their home.



More than ever before, people expect to be able to get in touch with us in a way that suits them. We will develop our digital channels to give customers choices that work for them and make it easier for us to engage with people in our communities.

Customer contact

Giving feedback

We will make it easier than ever for people to tell us how we're performing, through feedback surveys covering a wide range of our services. They will be available in a range of formats to give our customers choice, and our systems will be configured to automatically send the survey after their interaction with us. By making this process smoother, we will aim to receive a 20% response rate to customer contact surveys by 2025.

Remote access

Video conferencing, secure document sharing and instant messaging help us to work more efficiently and offer customers more ways to engage with us. Group Board and committee members already use this technology to participate in virtual meetings, while residents will be able to interact with us and take part in customer events such as annual general meetings without the need to visit our offices – in line with our Customer Experience and Communities Strategies.

Services for the future

By 2025, we will install digital signage in all of our larger blocks. This will allow us to communicate more effectively with our customers by sharing information that is relevant to them and their neighbourhood. At our offices and independent living schemes, we will also introduce digital kiosks and other digital solutions that allow people to make payments, access our online services and engage with us in a convenient way.



By giving our teams the right tools, we can help our staff to work more efficiently and deliver better services for our customers. We will continue to develop and enhance our mobile working solutions so that people can do more, wherever they are.

Smart working

As well as ensuring that we deliver more for customers, making our staff more agile will support the objectives of our People Strategy and help us to reduce our impact on the environment – enabling people to work remotely, cutting the need for travel and promoting flexible working.

Better services

Over the next five years, our focus will be on taking our service to our customers through mobile working solutions. We will empower staff with the technology to engage effectively with our customers at their homes and in their neighbourhoods.

This will include having a digital device that allows them to record their interactions with people, so they are not reliant on paper-based methods and can add information directly to our systems. By 2021, staff who are involved with taking payments will be able to offer secure transactions on the go, making life easier for customers.

Business intelligence

Accurate information is crucial for those making key decisions. We will provide live data and real-time performance monitoring to Group Board and committee members, the executive team, heads of service and other internal and external stakeholders – which will allow them to drive effective business decisions based on the best information available.

The safety, security and resilience of our systems is vital to ensuring we operate efficiently and maintain uninterrupted, high-quality services for our customers. We will continue to take a comprehensive and thorough approach to maintaining a secure and robust infrastructure.

Secure and resilient

Keeping personal information safe

In March 2020 we had a data incident which revealed some weaknesses in the way we operate. We moved quickly to address these, but we will continue to look for opportunities to implement more advanced security solutions and working practices.

Data Loss Prevention Policies will be applied to our systems and multi-factor authentication will be introduced to help ensure robust operating safeguards.

We will audit and adjust our internal controls to ensure an incident of this type does not happen again, giving our customers the reassurance they need to know that we are proactive and responsible, and that their information is in safe hands.

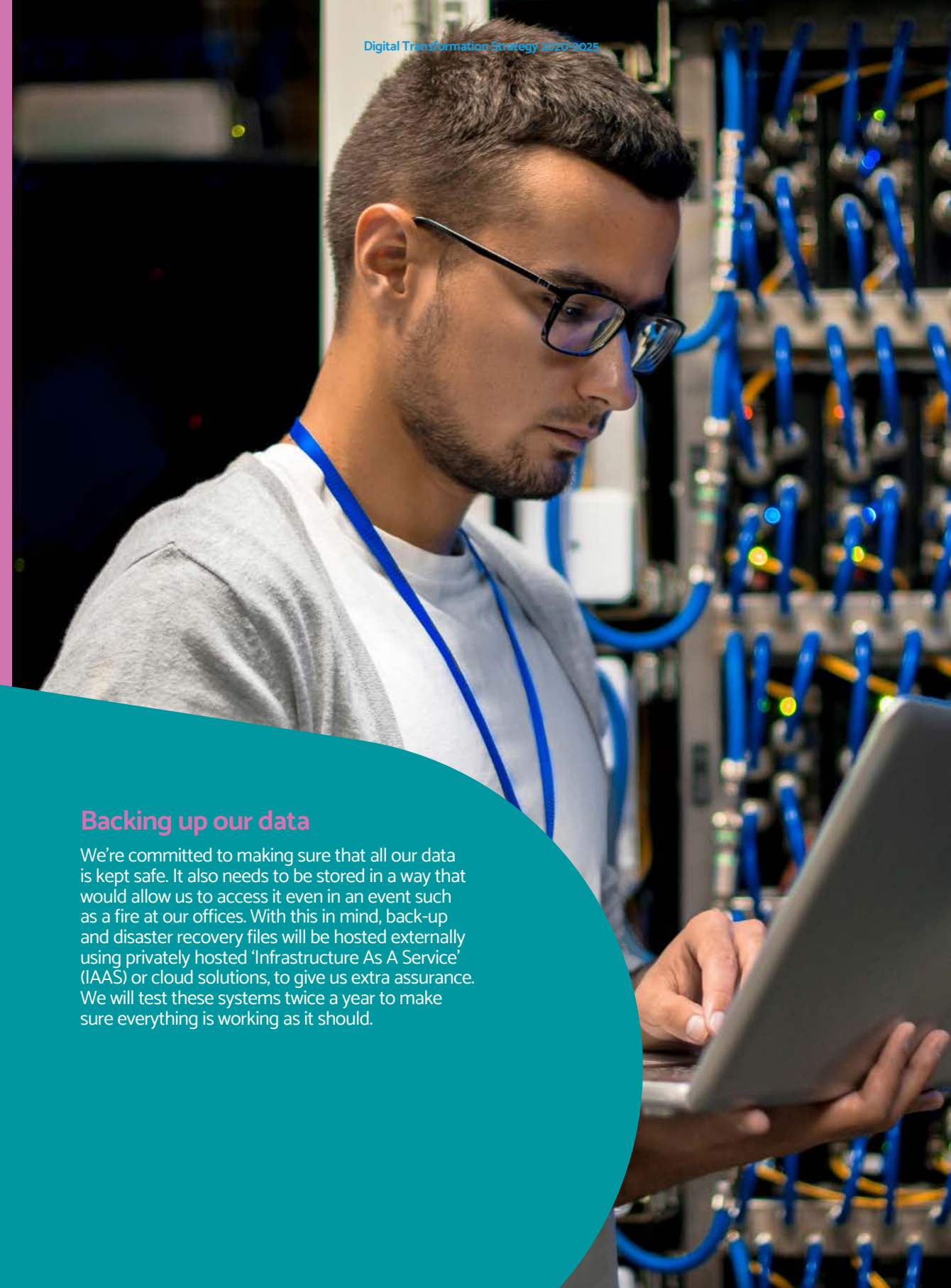
Cyber protection

We take cyber security extremely seriously and use a wide range of methods to protect our systems from attacks. We will maintain our strong cyber protection standards over the next five years and we'll demonstrate this with an independently verified Cyber Essentials Plus accreditation.

We will also carry out external and internal penetration tests annually. These are simulated cyber attacks, which help to identify vulnerabilities that hackers could exploit, ensuring we are maintaining a high level of security and providing a good level of assurance for both customers and the organisation.

Backing up our data

We're committed to making sure that all our data is kept safe. It also needs to be stored in a way that would allow us to access it even in an event such as a fire at our offices. With this in mind, back-up and disaster recovery files will be hosted externally using privately hosted 'Infrastructure As A Service' (IAAS) or cloud solutions, to give us extra assurance. We will test these systems twice a year to make sure everything is working as it should.



Digital solutions will play a key role in the homes we provide. We will embrace technology that allows us to deliver better homes for our customers, in line with our Asset Management and Development Strategies.

Smart homes

Improving our homes

We will embed Building Information Modelling (BIM) to drive improvements in the quality of the homes we build and those we already own, as well as making them easier to manage and maintain.





Proactive management

We will implement Internet Of Things (IOT) technology to enable proactive building management and fault reporting. By 2025, IOT monitoring will be installed in all appropriate new-build properties, including tools such as smart meters, fault detection devices and environment monitoring equipment.

We will also install these technologies in existing homes to improve our service to residents, by proactively monitoring our buildings and automatically testing services in our blocks such as emergency lighting.

Putting customers in control

To make it even easier for people to manage their tenancy with us, we will trial the use of Alexa-style devices in customers' homes to enable voice-assisted account management. This would make it possible for customers to book repairs, check their rent balance and make payments through the voice-activated device.





Let's Go!

Our key goals for 2020-2025

- Take a 'digital first' approach to services and launch a dedicated smartphone app, making it easy for people to manage their tenancy online.
- Make it easier than ever to raise and track repairs online, with access to real-time intelligent monitoring.
- Give customers access to comprehensive information about their home and tenancy in a secure environment through their online account.
- Develop our digital channels to give customers choices that work for them and make it easier for us to engage with people in our communities.
- Continue to develop our mobile working solutions so that our staff can work more efficiently and deliver better services for our customers.
- Maintain a secure and robust technological infrastructure.
- Embrace technology that allows us to deliver better homes for our customers.



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