Southwark Council

Digital Infrastructure Strategy

2017 - 2020

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1.1   Key messages

Access to fast, reliable internet connectivity is no longer a luxury; it is a basic necessity for residents, local businesses and public services. Whilst parts of Southwark have good access, there are many areas that do not: high profile 'not spots' such as the Rotherhithe and Surrey Docks wards, as well as other gaps across the borough. This creates an inequality across communities that the council must and will address.

Emerging technology also means that connectivity to ultrafast broadband, fast wireless and mobile connectivity (including, after 2020, 5G), are essential foundations for economic growth and prosperity. It helps to establish the borough as a digital place and destination for investment, jobs and new housing and business infrastructure.

This strategy therefore has an essential role to play in aligning with the current, key strategies of the council, such as the Economic Well Being and Digital Strategy, the Fairer Future principles and promises and existing policy guidance for planning and regeneration, whilst directing funding and levies, such as the Community Infrastructure Levy, into building a better digital infrastructure.

1.2   Key actions

The key actions set out in this strategy are as follows:

- Creating and resourcing a programme of priority projects that deliver short term and major improvements to the borough's digital infrastructure over the next few years;

- Enabling commercial investment in fibre and wireless broadband, and other mobile services, through market engagement, better wayleave access and strategic use of council owned assets to deliver rapid improvements to key 'not spots';

- Pursuing central government funding opportunities, such as the Challenge Fund of the Local Full Fibre Networks (LFFN) programme, to use the council's assets to extend coverage across the borough;

- Supporting innovative solutions, such as smart benches, that enhance free public Wi-Fi in community locations;

- Revising council policies so that they enable and incentivise developers and commercial investors to build and deploy new, faster digital infrastructure;

- Helping residents and local businesses to acquire the basic digital skills, access and motivations they need to embrace digital technology, including the council's rapidly expanding online service provisions.

1.3   Implementing this strategy

This strategy sets out key projects and activities up to 2020 (when the strategy will be reviewed) which are necessary in order for the council to achieve tangible benefits for residents and local businesses, to tackle digital exclusion and affordability issues and to align with Southwark's economic growth and prosperity ambitions.

2   Introduction

2.1   Purpose

This Digital Infrastructure Strategy for Southwark Council sets out the context, challenges and intended actions to improve the access, speed and affordability of broadband fibre, wireless and other related mobile digital technologies to residents, communities and businesses across the borough.

The key benefits of a Digital Infrastructure Strategy are that it will identify key development priorities and help harmonise and coordinate existing and planned initiatives across the council to deliver maximum impact and benefit to residents and local businesses. This strategy should also aid the council in formulating its overall approach, accessing funding and implementing a successful Digital Infrastructure Programme.

To achieve these ambitions, this strategy proposes the creation of a programme team and a series of key strategic actions. The programme will involve the design and delivery of a series of short and medium term projects and activities that will enable digital infrastructure improvements across the borough to enhance the local economy, support digital inclusion and help Southwark to become a more attractive destination for the expanding digital economy.

2.2   Our commitment to a better digital infrastructure

Southwark Council is committed to being a digitally inclusive borough and has made promises through its Fairer Future principles to bring superfast broadband to Southwark, and in particular to areas with poor broadband speeds such as the wards of Rotherhithe, Surrey Docks and other 'not spots' (areas of low connectivity and broadband speed).

The council will support digital infrastructure technologies such as superfast fibre, ultrafast fibre to the premises (FTTP), 4G and 5G wireless technology, as well as other built and virtual assets, in order to provide all residents and local businesses with what is now a key utility in daily life: fast, reliable internet connectivity. These solutions will support the council's broader aims of promoting economic prosperity throughout the borough and using technology to help its communities, for instance through improved community engagement and more efficient dissemination of public information.

Ultimately, a better digital infrastructure forms a key part of the council's Fairer Future promise to build to a strong local economy for everyone, by ensuring that all residents, businesses and visitors have access to the digital tools they need to work and live. Access to good internet connections and other digital technologies is no longer a luxury; it is a necessity for individuals, businesses and the council alike.

2.3   Scope and strategic context

This document is a component of the wider Digital Strategy for Southwark Council, and specifically focuses on the investment and technology required to support:

- **Our residents** – improving access to, and the speed of, broadband, especially in areas that do not meet the Universal Service Obligation (USO) set by the government in the Digital Economy Act 2016;
- **Our businesses** – especially SMEs, to benefit from similar digital infrastructure access and speeds to support start-up, growth and expansion within the local economy;
- **The borough** – making Southwark more 'open for business' and attractive to the market and investors as a digital destination and a thriving 'digital place'.

2.4 Alignment with other council strategies and plans

Creating a better digital infrastructure across the borough aligns with the council's core strategies and plans to stimulate growth and prosperity in Southwark, including:

Council Plan 2014-2018 – this strategy supports key commitments to residents and communities as quoted below:

"Become a leading digital borough, transforming how we serve and enhancing the lives of people in our community so that no one is left behind"

"We will make it easier for residents and businesses on the move to access more services via the web and smartphone"

Digital Strategy - Digital infrastructure is a key component of the council's Digital Strategy. Alongside the themes of 'Digital Council' and Digital Place', 'Digital Infrastructure' helps create a thorough and comprehensive digital strategy for the borough. The existing Digital Strategy places an emphasis on both digital inclusion and the need to attract digital business to Southwark through establishing superfast broadband throughout the borough and marketing Southwark as the ideal location for digital businesses.

Economic Wellbeing Strategy 2017-2022 – digital infrastructure is an important prerequisite for the success of large-scale borough developments, such as in the Old Kent Road and Canada Water, as it facilitates the creation of modern, lifestyle-friendly digital destinations, which in turn supports growth in housing and economic prosperity.

New Southwark Plan –includes the need to ensure new planning applications encompass future-proof digital connectivity (i.e. FTTP) to new developments, and superfast speeds (i.e. 24Mbps) at a minimum. Furthermore, this policy document encourages developers to provide FTTP, or equivalent, connections to existing, poorly serviced properties in the vicinity new developments, where there is an identified connectivity gap, and to explore opportunities for installing wireless telecommunications aerials on top of new developments.

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) – this new levy offers the opportunity to invest not only in physical infrastructure but also in digital infrastructure, opening up new capital investment option to support improved connectivity.

2.5 Summary of key strategic actions

The following actions have been identified for Southwark's Digital Infrastructure Strategy, and are set out in the body of this document:

Key Strategy Actions
1. The council will enable a full fibre programme for the Rotherhithe and Surrey Docks wards, as part of the nationwide Local Full Fibre Networks programme.
2. The council will enable fibre broadband providers in the borough to upgrade fibre connections from fibre to the cabinet (FTTC) to FTTP.
3. The New Southwark Plan will prioritise the importance of fibre broadband connections, or equivalent, in new and existing developments.
4. The council will work actively with wireless providers to support commercial investment in the wards of Rotherhithe, Surrey Docks and other 'not spots', to provide alternative broadband options and enhanced mobile provision.
5. The council will signal its openness to approaches from IT developers who wish to trial new technologies, initially undertaking a pilot and if successful, moving to a full commercial partnership to install small cell technology.
6. The council will coordinate a programmed approach to the utilisation of public realm assets in order to extend Wi-Fi provision, building upon initiatives to date.
7. The council will develop a proactive wayleave strategy that promotes commercial investment in the wards of Rotherhithe, Surrey Docks and other 'not spots'.
8. To support this new wayleave strategy, the council will provide dedicated resource to facilitate a rapid wayleave application and support process.
9. The council will target digital inclusion and digital skills improvement as a key activity to improve levels of digital take-up across the borough, with a particular focus on social housing tenants.
10. The council will revise key policies, including planning, highways and those governing public realm assets, to ensure that they provide incentives to stimulate market investment in broadband and network connectivity.
11. The council will establish a Digital Infrastructure Steering Committee to oversee delivery of this new strategy.
12. The council will establish a Digital Infrastructure Programme to implement this new strategy.
13. This strategy will fully scope priority projects into a comprehensive programme delivery plan.
14. The council will invest in internal and specialist external resources to accelerate programme delivery.
15. This strategy will monitor and actively pursue alternative funding mechanisms to support wider digital infrastructure roll out.

3 Southwark's digital infrastructure: progress to date

Creating a modern digital infrastructure that takes advantage of emerging technologies and which ensures that no-one gets left behind is a challenge for all local authorities at present. Southwark also has additional challenges in addressing large 'not-spots' such as the Rotherhithe and Surrey Docks wards, as well as other gaps across the borough where connectivity is insufficient.

This strategy therefore looks to build on progress to date but also sets out steps to meet key challenges and accelerate Southwark's digital infrastructure development.

We have made some good progress in tackling infrastructure challenges and introducing new technologies to support communities and business, as detailed below.

3.1 Current provision

The current broadband connectivity for Southwark and its least connected ward areas, Rotherhithe and Surrey Docks, is shown in the table below. Whilst Southwark generally compares well against UK statistics and shows good progress with ultrafast broadband and full fibre connections, there is a huge disparity in wards such as Rotherhithe and Surrey Docks. However, assessing connectivity figures only can be misleading, as take-up of broadband services is an indicator of digital inclusion: for example, in Rotherhithe, whilst superfast connectivity is 73% the take-up is 24%; a significant gap that needs addressing. Related to this is the level of basic online skills, with 17% of Southwark residents estimated as not having basic online skills.

Broadband Connectivity	UK	Southwark	Rotherhithe & Surrey Docks
Overall UK Superfast	93.60%	91.30%	
Superfast UK (>24 Mbps):	93.97%	91.34%	
Superfast EU (>30 Mbps):	93.57%	91.33%	73%
Ultrafast (>100 Mbps):	53.05%	74.97%	
Below 10 Mbps down: (USO)	2.83%	0.92%	8.70%
Virgin Media Cable:	50.81%	69.32%	
Full Fibre (FTTP or FTTH):	2.86%	8.82%	
Source: Think Broadband - Oct-2017 (UK & Southwark), Ofcom Connected Nations Bermondsey & Rotherhithe - Jun-2016			

3.2 Improving broadband provision and addressing 'not spots'

The council engaged with BT Openreach to facilitate delivery of its broadband improvement plans for the Rotherhithe area (implementation of FTTC). In September 2015

BT Openreach committed to connecting 18,000 premises in the borough through the installation of approximately 60 new cabinets. Since April 2016, BT Openreach has delivered 21 new broadband street cabinets borough-wide, providing the opportunity for approximately 6,880 properties to connect to superfast broadband. Nine of those cabinets have been delivered on the Rotherhithe peninsula, representing 2,922 possible new connections.

3.3 Key baseline data

Significant work has been undertaken by the council to map the 'not spots' and areas of low broadband speeds in the borough using geographical information systems (GIS) and post code analysis, so as to identify priority areas for improved digital infrastructure. The resident survey on the subject of broadband experience in the Rotherhithe area, published in September 2017, has been one of the primary sources of this data, and this work will continue under the council's new Digital Infrastructure Programme, with a view to assembling a complete set of baseline data that will be used to inform any future procurement options.

Other key data to be gathered will include:

- Ducting across the borough, including within council owned assets;

- CCTV connectivity;

- Underground assets, including public utility data;

- Street furniture and other assets which may offer connectivity points, such as lampposts, billboards, benches and rooftops;

- Broadband speeds across the borough.

A comprehensive view of the above, including key postcode and property data mapped using GIS, will offer attractive data sets which can be used by the market to deliver services in the areas that require it most.

3.4 New digital infrastructure initiatives

As part of developing this strategy, key services across the council were engaged to understand more about current and planned initiatives. Some of these digital infrastructure initiatives introduced by the council include:

- **DCMS funding –** the council is actively pursuing funding options as part of the Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport's (DCMS) LFFN programme, outlined later in this strategy;

- **Smart benches** - the council is introducing the concept of smart benches across the borough, starting with some early pilots, to offer key information points and Wi-Fi to local users. At present, the council has nine in operation, with a planned addition of a further 20, all at no cost to the council;

- **Street lighting CMS** – an ongoing roll out of a modern management system for street lighting. Currently only rolled out to parks, awaiting a council decision for full roll out across Southwark's 18,000 street lighting columns. This provides the platform for enabling small cell Wi-Fi and 5G technology through the use of street furniture;

- **Electrical vehicle (EV) charging using street lighting columns** – TFL funding of £300k for the installation of 150 EV charging points on existing street lights across the borough (for resident use only). Service subject to metered charge to all users;

- **Digital assets** – the council is in early exploration of an automated single view of every road in the borough, which together with the council's GIS data would improve the overall visibility of owned and managed council assets;

- **CCTV** – the council is currently exploring an opportunity to utilise spare capacity on its wireless CCTV network, but this would be subject to strict segregation rules, with limitations of any alternative use of data from the network. Potential opportunities for DCMS funding and support to test new technologies such as 'small-cell' and 5G trialling;

- **Advertising on public highways –** the council has a contract with JCDecaux for highway billboards. Currently in 38 locations, the intention is upgrade these to digital boards, which will potentially offer Wi-Fi capability**;**

- **Business Improvement Districts (BIDs)** – Southwark's BIDs are keen to explore options for providing free Wi-Fi in their districts, funded via their BID levies and other grants. This could potentially link to schemes to offer discounts to members of the public for local businesses, bars, restaurants within these districts.

4 Building a better digital infrastructure

4.1 Emerging technology landscape

In creating this digital infrastructure strategy, the council understands the importance of closely monitoring the emerging landscape that is shaping broadband (a move to FTTP, mobile / wireless provision etc.), especially the emergence of 5G and small cell technology, and other developments associated with digital infrastructure including use of mobile sensors and monitors as part of the Internet of Things (IoT)

Whilst this strategy more specifically focuses on connectivity for Southwark residents and businesses, mainly driven by fibre and Long Term Evolution (LTE) / 4G / 5G wireless solutions, we will remain aware of emerging infrastructure developments such as intelligent transport systems, autonomous vehicles, AI, robotics and others areas under development.

4.2 Full fibre / fibre to the premises

Central government policy has led to large-scale investment in superfast fibre technology (defined in the UK as download speeds of 24Mbps and above, in the EU 30Mbps and above). This has largely been achieved through fibre to the cabinet (FTTC) and mostly via BT Openreach implementation across the UK.

To promote better connectivity, the Digital Economy Act 2017 was introduced in part to guarantee a legal right for every household in the UK to have access to high-speed broadband, with the government expected to enforce a minimum download speed of 10Mbps under a new broadband USO.

However, the UK comes 31st in the global rankings for broadband speeds, and 10Mbps (via the USO) is not a future proof commitment. As such, it is important that all innovative technologies form part of the digital infrastructure for the borough, not only to keep up with other local authorities but also to create the kind of distinct digital destination that will strengthen Southwark's regeneration and local economy.

The aspiration of this strategy, therefore, is to deliver full fibre solutions to cover 'not spots' and to make the borough's connectivity more futureproof. This can be achieved in a number of ways:

- Accessing funding via the current DCMS LFFN programme;
- Stimulating the market to invest in the borough through improved access to wayleaves;
- Providing gap funding to the market for either of the above.

The Local Full Fibre Networks Programme

In August 2017 Southwark expressed its interest in accessing the Challenge Fund of the LFFN programme. At the time of writing, the programme offers four potential delivery methods, listed below:

- **Public Sector Anchor Tenancy** - building a local fibre network with a partner;

- **Gigabit Voucher Scheme (GbVS)** - voucher scheme which helps businesses (or clusters of businesses) buy gigabit-capable connectivity;

- **Full Fibre Upgrades for Public Sector Sites** - tactical connectivity upgrades to full fibre at specific public sector locations;

- **Re-use of Public Sector Infrastructure Assets** - re-use or developing public sector infrastructure assets (for example CCTV duct networks) to facilitate the deployment of new fibre networks.

Whilst further information from DCMS may extend or change the nature of these proposed delivery methods, such as the introduction of wireless and 5G schemes, the council will pursue at least two of the four current delivery methods, namely:

- Re-use of Public Sector Infrastructure Assets;
- Gigabit Voucher Scheme.

The two schemes will be included as projects within the Digital Infrastructure Programme. The council will scope out each in readiness for calls for submissions by DCMS, which are expected later in the year.

For the LFFN programme as a whole, it has been recommended that Southwark Council keep all options on the table for now, as it is likely that DCMS will revise the rules and requirements for access to its funding programme.

However, whilst fibre will be a significantly important technology solution for the borough's digital infrastructure it is noted that:

- although its robustness and longevity make it a more acceptable investment, fibre is the most expensive technology to implement retrospectively. For an area such as the Rotherhithe and Surrey Docks wards, the lack of fibre in the area makes this an attractive option;

- for new developments the cost of FTTP installation is greatly reduced, and the council has an opportunity to tie this requirement into its New Southwark Plan (this action has been secured);

- it takes time to procure and deliver where funding is involved and relies on reasonable levels of take-up by residents and businesses to deliver a return on investment (normally 30%).

For these reasons, other technologies, particularly wireless options, are considered as part of the borough's digital infrastructure solution.

Key Strategy Actions
1. **The council will enable a full fibre programme for the Rotherhithe and Surrey Docks wards, as part of the nationwide Local Full Fibre Networks programme.**
2. **The council will enable fibre broadband providers in the borough to upgrade fibre connections from fibre to the cabinet (FTTC) to FTTP.**
3. **The New Southwark Plan will prioritise the importance of fibre broadband connections, or equivalent, in new and existing developments.**

4.3 Wireless technology

Wireless connectivity covers a wide range of technologies including:

- **Wireless technology** - via relays of rooftop and high rise aerials connected to end devices and routers, focusing more on broadband and Wi-Fi connectivity;

- **Small cell technology** – developments on street furniture (i.e. lampposts) that maximise the use of assets and make them accessible to all network operators for 4G and 5G connectivity;

- **Wi-Fi meshes** – commercial developments that offer limited, free Wi-Fi access with the option of pay-as-you-use upgrade to faster speeds. Such Wi-Fi developments can be delivered via commercial investment in target locations, and through the utilisation of public assets such as street furniture and highways assets.

Planned developments include:

Wireless provision utilising rooftop locations for 4G telecommunications aerials

Southwark Council is in the process of significantly expanding its practice of hosting wireless telecommunications aerials on the rooftops of council owned assets. Heads of Terms have been agreed with three network operators, and the roll out of Wi-Fi aerials is scheduled to commence at the end of 2017, targeting the Rotherhithe area initially. This project will offer a rapid solution to many of the borough's 'not spots', by improving 3G and 4G network coverage (not to mention mobile phone signal) across Southwark at a reasonable price for residents and businesses.

Utilisation of lampposts for small cell installations to support Wi-Fi and 4G / 5G provision

Initial discussions have begun on a potential partnership that will create a revenue sharing model to install small cell technology on lampposts in order to create a network of connectivity to support Wi-Fi, enhanced cellular coverage, future 5G provision and the provision of IoT devices.

5G technology will be introduced fully into the UK by 2020 and early pilots are being encouraged by central government, via DCMS, and through growing market interest.

Targeted commercial partnerships to increase Wi-Fi provision

As outlined earlier, the strategy will continue to support ongoing innovations in the use of street assets, including smart benches, billboards and local schemes, to provide increased Wi-Fi provision to residents and businesses in the borough.

Key Strategy Actions
4. **The council will work actively with wireless providers to support commercial investment in the wards of Rotherhithe, Surrey Docks and other 'not spots', to provide alternative broadband options and enhanced mobile provision.**
5. **The council will signal its openness to approaches from IT developers who wish to trial new technologies, initially undertaking a pilot and if successful, moving to a full commercial partnership to install small cell technology.**
6. **The council will coordinate a programmed approach to the utilisation of public realm assets in order to extend Wi-Fi provision, building upon initiatives to date.**

4.4 Wayleave strategy

Research leading up to the development of this strategy indicated that access to public and private wayleaves was a significant barrier to broadband rollout.

Upon assessment, and following market engagement, the council considers the best approach will be to offer a wayleave model for its housing stock, and in particular its multi-occupancy properties, which encourages and attracts applications from commercial companies.

Taking this forward, we will launch a wayleave strategy that sets out expectations for suppliers, detailing a streamlined process for wayleave applications, the key contacts for this process within the council and the documents that will be adopted for it. These will be non-exclusive arrangements, granted on a first come first served basis, the internal cost of administering which the council will look to recover from suppliers or, where appropriate, subsidise (in part or wholly).

Dedicated resource will work with companies to build full fibre solutions; target all property types and 'not spots'; build a wayleave 'toolkit' for the market to use and offer fair pricing to help tackle digital exclusion due to affordability issues.

The council is already in contact with a number of suppliers who are interested in entering into wayleave agreements to install fibre broadband in the Rotherhithe area. It is, therefore, expected that launching a wayleave strategy will achieve genuine progress in the short term (the granting of wayleave agreements to any interested suppliers), which should result in significantly improved broadband delivery in the Rotherhithe area in the medium term (within 18 months), once the relevant wayleave agreements have been approved.

Key Strategy Actions
7. **The council will develop a proactive wayleave strategy that promotes commercial investment in the wards of Rotherhithe, Surrey Docks and other 'not spots'.**
8. **To support this new wayleave strategy, the council will provide dedicated resource to facilitate a rapid wayleave application and support process.**

4.5   Digital inclusion

Digital inclusion will enable and support our community to self-serve through digital means. Basic digital skills are improved and the social value of digital transformation is increased exponentially through higher levels of employability; digital literacy; maintaining independence; social inclusion; mental and physical wellbeing and financial capability.

Social housing tenants are a particular target group as UK research indicates this group may face lower digital skills and awareness through affordability and access challenges. Improving digital skills and awareness for this group will help tenants to access housing and other public sector services online and improve their economic opportunities whilst also helping to meet the council's commitment to make savings through increased use of digital services.

As such, the council will support a wider and more inclusive roll out of digital connectivity in the borough through the following four main incentives:

- **Easy and affordable payment mechanisms** for residents and businesses who would find difficulty with the impact of the full commercial cost of digital connectivity, including full engagement with the DCMS Gigabit Voucher Scheme;
- **Assist providers to implement comprehensive coverage** of wireless and fibre roll out, by offering co-ordinated and flexible street works permit schemes, wayleave management and clear planning requirements;
- **Provision, co-ordination and sign-posting of digital training** for our residents and businesses who have low skill levels;
- **Work with other partners**, both inside the borough and throughout London, to promote the need for full digital inclusivity.

Key Strategy Actions
9. **The council will target digital inclusion and digital skills improvement as a key activity to improve levels of digital take-up across the borough, with a particular focus on social housing tenants.**

4.6   Incentives to the market and residents

The council needs to consider what incentives it can offer suppliers and residents alike to further stimulate the market.   Such incentives could include waiving parking permit requirements for suppliers or offering a voucher scheme to residents. The importance of developing innovative incentives has been highlighted by DCMS and should improve the council's chances of securing funding from the DCMS Challenge Fund.

Changes to the New Southwark Plan around broadband and telecommunications helps to create greater market incentives, and further opportunities lie in ensuring that our planning policies are aligned to support residents and market investment in broadband and improved connectivity.

Key Strategy Actions
10. The council will revise key policies, including planning, highways and those governing public realm assets, to ensure that they provide incentives to stimulate market investment in broadband and network connectivity.

5   Delivering this strategy

5.1   Governance

A Digital Infrastructure Steering Committee will be set up to oversee the implementation of this strategy. This will incorporate oversight of the work that is already underway to support better broadband for the wards of Rotherhithe and Surrey Docks. A Digital Infrastructure Programme core delivery team, reporting to the Steering Committee, will be established to manage specific project implementation.

This Steering Committee will include representation across a range of council services, such as:

- Modernise (including IT & Digital Services)
- Planning
- Regeneration
- Highways
- Parking & Network Management
- Property
- Asset Management
- External Affairs
- Street Furniture
- Resident Services
- Local Economy Team

The core delivery team for the programme will comprise of an overall Programme Sponsor / SRO, supporting programme resources and project specific, third party consultants (legal and technical).

This new programme will be funded for an initial period of two years, at which point the need for its continuation will be reviewed, using income generated by current digital infrastructure projects to pay for the additional resources required, and by leveraging existing resource from within the council.

Key Strategy Actions
11. **The council will establish a Digital Infrastructure Steering Committee to oversee delivery of this new strategy.**
12. **The council will establish a Digital Infrastructure Programme to implement this new strategy.**

5.2 Short term programme activities

The key short term programme activities over the next 12+ months are listed below :

Project / Activity
1. Set-up and mobilisation of a Digital Infrastructure Programme;
2. Development of a comprehensive baseline of assets and data for market use, including full property data and coverage for target 'not spot' areas;
3. Development of a wayleave strategy and a streamlined application process, including a support 'toolkit';
4. Continued development of wireless broadband and telecommunications installations, with a focus on the Rotherhithe area. Development of revenue share model as part of this initiative;
5. Identification of a partner for, and development of, a pilot scheme for small cell technology application on street furniture;
6. Continue to redefine and improve the council's planning policies, building guidance and requirements as they pertain to digital infrastructure for new developments;
7. Programme support to other ongoing digital infrastructure initiatives identified in this strategy;
8. Development of a programme to promote digital inclusion in priority / target groups and areas;
9. Continued application for funding via the DCMS Local Full Fibre Networks programme.

5.3 Projects and activities to 2020

Longer term projects to 2020 are listed below:

Project / Activity
10. Procurement and implementation of LFFN programme schemes for fibre broadband to the borough's 'not spots';
11. Extension of small cell technology pilot scheme into full commercial partnership and potential revenue share model;
12. Continued implementation of short term projects, extending into new areas and initiatives.

Key Strategy Actions
13. **This strategy will fully scope priority projects into a comprehensive programme delivery plan.**
14. **The council will invest in internal and specialist external resources to accelerate programme delivery.**

5.4 Funding options

It is expected (with the exception of council owned assets and directly sponsored projects) that a significant part of the funding for new digital infrastructure in Southwark will be provided by the open market and private sector investment.

At the time of writing, the following represent the main sources of the funding for digital infrastructure available to the council:

Local Full Fibre Networks programme, started earlier this year, represents a DCMS-led government investment of £200m to fund a fibre broadband programme of local projects to test ways to accelerate market delivery of new full fibre broadband networks, by:

- Bringing together local public sector customers in order to create enough broadband demand to reduce the financial risk of building new full-fibre networks;

- Offering full fibre broadband connection vouchers for businesses, to increase take-up of services where new networks are built through the programme;

- Delivering new fibre broadband connections directly to public sector buildings, such as schools and hospitals. This will bring fibre closer to more homes and businesses, thus enabling them to be connected;

- Opening up public assets, such as existing ducting, to allow fibre to be deployed more efficiently.

Digital Infrastructure Investment Fund, a £400m cornerstone funding programme that is intended to kick-start a nationwide roll out of FTTP. Central government investment is expected to be more than matched by funding from the private sector, which should take the fund's total to over £1bn.

Fibre business rates relief: although currently at consultation stage, it is expected that through these new powers, business rates relief will be provided to operators of telecommunications networks who install new, full fibre infrastructure on their networks. This new fibre will be eligible for 100% relief from business rates for the five years from 1 April 2017 (retrospective) to 31 March 2022.

National Productivity Investment Fund, although targeting a number of infrastructure types across government, there is £740m earmarked from 2017/18 to 2020/21 for:

- 5G trials and testbeds – coordinated programme of integrated 5G and fibre projects to accelerate and de-risk deployment of future technologies; and

- Local full fibre networks – as a means to stimulate more commercial investment to deliver increased gigabit capable connectivity.

The above will often be subject to a bid process, delivery models and other conditions, which allows them to be used jointly, or not, with the council's own sources of investment, including the Southwark CIL, and via **prudential borrowing**, **through the compliant use**

of available reserves and income generated from complimentary activities (i.e. wireless rentals).

In terms of funding options for this strategy, we will:

- Promote and sponsor private sector investment in digital technologies in the borough;

- Only use the optimum funding model appropriate for each digital project;

- Where possible, minimise funding and cost pressures on the council's overall budget;

- Proactively seek available central government funding;

- Manage operational and investment risks;

- Promote and communicate funded voucher schemes to our residents and businesses.

Key Strategy Actions
15. This strategy will monitor and actively pursue alternative funding mechanisms to support wider digital infrastructure roll out.

October 2017