

For General Release

REPORT TO:	CABINET – 12th December 2016
AGENDA ITEM:	9
SUBJECT:	Digital inclusion
LEAD OFFICER:	Graham Cadle, Director of customer and transformation
CABINET MEMBER:	Councillor Mark Watson, Cabinet Member for Economy & Jobs
WARDS:	All
<p>CORPORATE PRIORITY/POLICY CONTEXT/AMBITIOUS FOR CROYDON:</p> <p>In the current financial climate it is critical for the Council to maximise the use of its resources towards the highest need and greatest impact. Ambitious for Croydon outlined the overall need to protect front-line services whilst providing value for money. A key approach to reducing costs in areas where less support is required has been through digital services. Over £6.3m has been saved by the Council to date by assisting residents to self-serve and to raise requests for services, bookings and make payments automatically.</p> <p>However even more importantly digital services provide enormous opportunity for residents and businesses to maintain and increase their independence, to reduce their costs and to ensure they can communicate and be part of the community. The Council have committed to ensuring Croydon becomes a fairer place for all who live and work here and therefore having access to digital services is key for all. Access to digital services reduces a family’s costs, is really important in helping someone find employment and provides huge benefits to assist communicating and feeling part of the community. These are enablers for every person to reach her or his full potential.</p> <p>As the digital agenda continues to speed up the gap for those unable to access digital services will become larger and in many cases those most in need will be unable to access key support. Therefore, working with partners, the community and shaping our own services to support as many people to be able to access wider digital services, whilst supporting those unable to, is a significant priority.</p>	
<p>FINANCIAL IMPACT</p> <p>Over £6.3m has been saved to date through the Digital and Enabling project. There are also a number of improvement and efficiency workstreams across the Council where digital services support the solution and future approach. Which will enable further savings to be generated in the future.</p>	
<p>KEY DECISION REFERENCE NO.: Not a key decision</p>	

The Leader of the Council has delegated to the Cabinet the power to make the decisions set out in the recommendations contained within this report:

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Cabinet is asked to note the outcomes of the GO ON Croydon programme, and endorse the proposed next steps as detailed in this report.

2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 2.1 The Cabinet paper of 15th December 2014 outlined the approach to providing digital services and the principles the Council would be taking into account to maximise digital inclusion and to ensure those unable to access digital services were not left behind.
- 2.2 It detailed the below areas of focus with a view to supporting and developing capacity in the community;
 - Digital skills – being able to use computers and the internet
 - Connectivity – access to the internet
 - Accessibility – services will be designed to meet all users' needs, including those dependent on assistive technology to access digital services.
- 2.3 As a key work stream to progress this work a report was brought to Cabinet on 16th November 2015 detailing the GO ON Croydon digital inclusion program, which was to run from December 2015 for a year. The program, which was the first such program in London, brought the UK digital skills charity and a number of their partners from across private, public and voluntary sectors to Croydon to promote and develop basic digital skills.
- 2.4 A further paper to cabinet in June 2016 updated members on the progress to date and provided some of the detail of the specific project streams and examples of the benefits to the community and Council to date.
- 2.5 The GO ON Croydon project closing event was held on 1st December and whilst the evaluations from the project are not yet fully complete, this report further details the deliverable from the projects and the arrangements now in place to ensure this initial work continues and is built on.

3. DETAIL

- 3.1 The Governments digital inclusion strategy (2014) outlined a number of key statistics with regard to digital inclusion and since then further surveys and analysis have suggested that the loss to a family of not being on-line could be £1,000. It

also showed speed with which digital services are progressing and the potential gap could increase further.

GO ON Croydon

- 3.2 The UK digital skills charity GO ON UK, founded in 2012 by its chair, Martha Lane Fox actively seek out and work with partners across the public, private and voluntary sectors to identify opportunities and develop programs that improve digital skills among people and organisations across the UK.
- 3.3 GO ON UK have determined a minimum level of skill someone should expect to have to be seen as digitally literate;
- 3.4 The year long program was launched on 9th November 2015 and included a number of initiatives;
- Baseline statistics to better understand exclusion and to monitor progress through the program
 - Provision of a number of digital zones across Borough
 - Development of a network of digital champions
 - Delivery of a number of deep dives, testing specific approaches to digital services – providing analysis and evaluation for each in order to understand how they can be utilised going forward
 - Facilitate a sustainable network of resources and organisations to further develop basic digital skills for all
- 3.5 The project has been overseen by a local partnership board jointly chaired by Croydon Council and GO ON UK. A number of local and national organisations were represented on the board, which checked progress against key targets and identified further working opportunities.

Understanding the Croydon Context

- 3.6 In the initial months of the project two pieces of research have given insight into where digital support is most required for Croydon. This was used by the project alongside specific service knowledge and current resident support provided directly by the Council and its partners. The work was

1. GO ON UK – Digital Exclusion Heatmap

Developed with support from BBC, LGA, The London School of Economics and Political Science in association with Lloyds Bank.

www.go-on.co.uk/resources/heatmap

Likelihood of overall exclusion – **LOW**

Infrastructure – 5.4% of households in Croydon do not receive broadband speed of at least 2 megabits per second (Mbps).

Access – 10.3% of adults in Croydon have all five Basic Digital skills

Basic Digital skills used – 34% of adults in Croydon have used all five basic digital

skills in the last three months.

2. Go On Croydon baseline (Lloyds bank survey)

85,000 adults in Croydon do not have basic digital skills

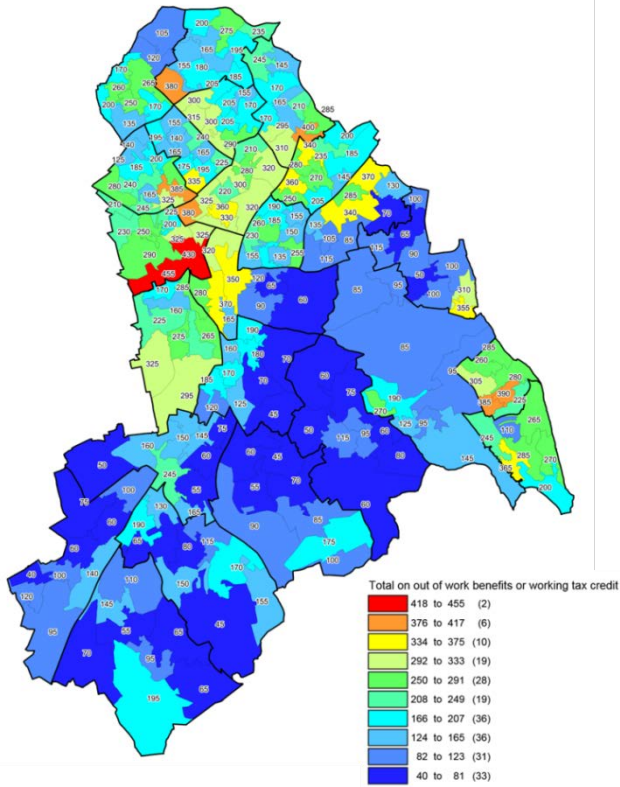
35% of C2DE (*skilled working class*; skilled manual workers, *working class*; semi-skilled and unskilled manual workers and *non working*; casual or lowest grade workers pensioners and other who depend on the welfare state for their income.) lack basic digital skills

40% of low income households lack basic digital skills (compared to just 8% of high income households)

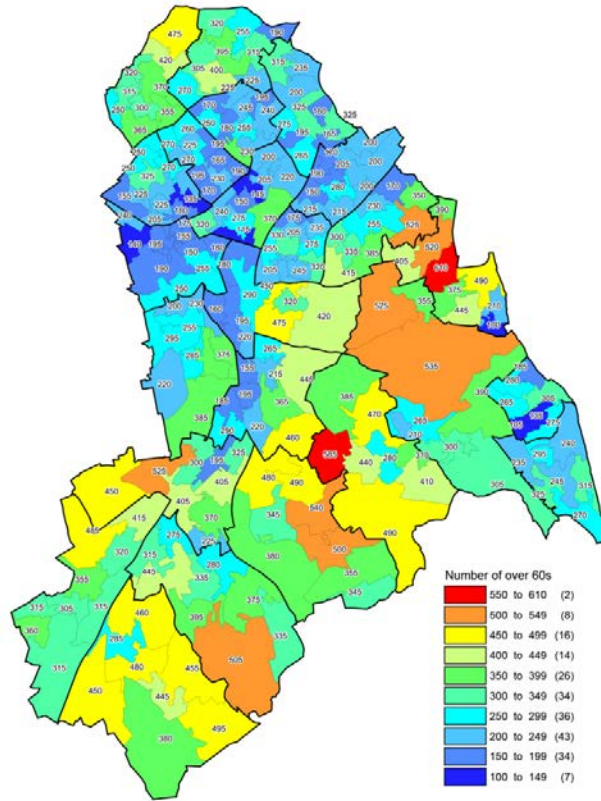
64% of over 65's lack basic digital skills.

- 3.7 Whilst this information is still fairly high level the Council have used it both internally and with our GO ON partners to check back with our plans and tailor where appropriate. It has been agreed this will add further focus for older people and low income families. Mapping those customer groups geographically shows as below. The last map shows the network of support facilities that have been set up through the GO ON Project;

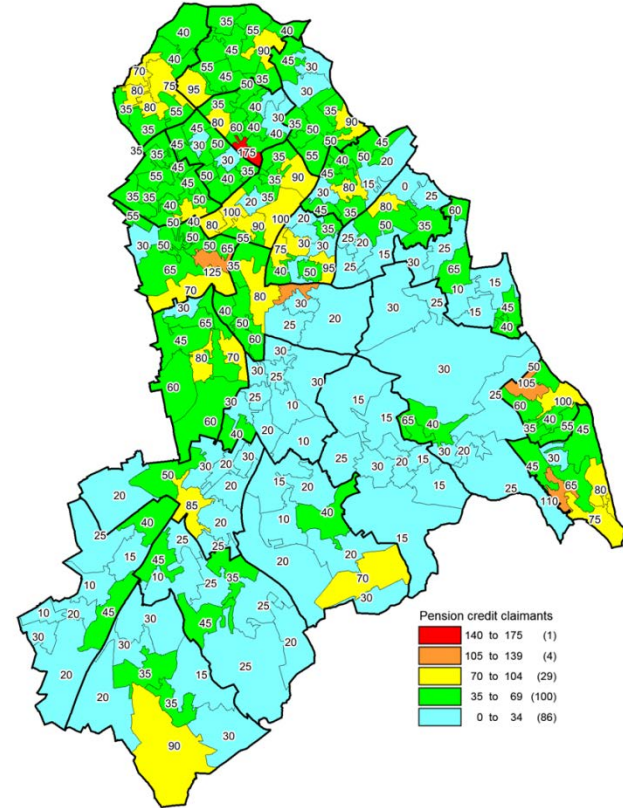
Low income working age adults



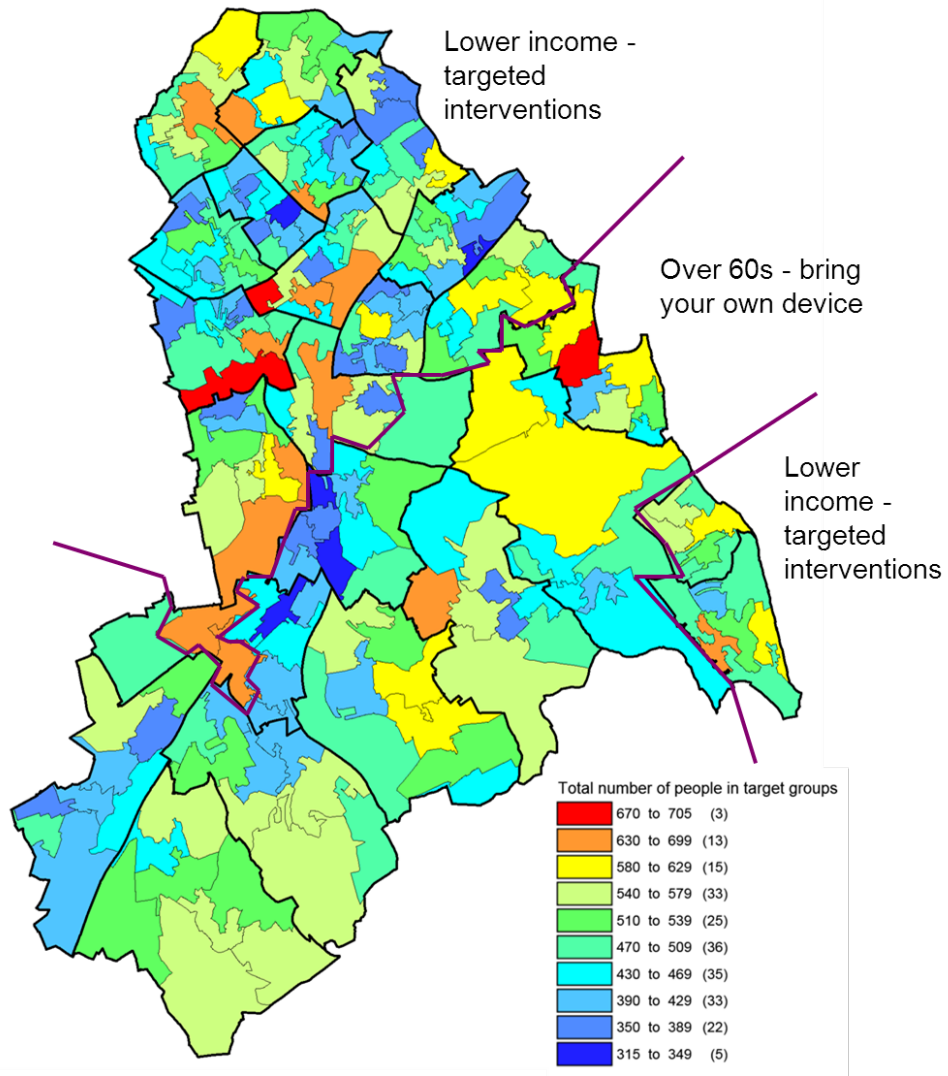
Over 60's



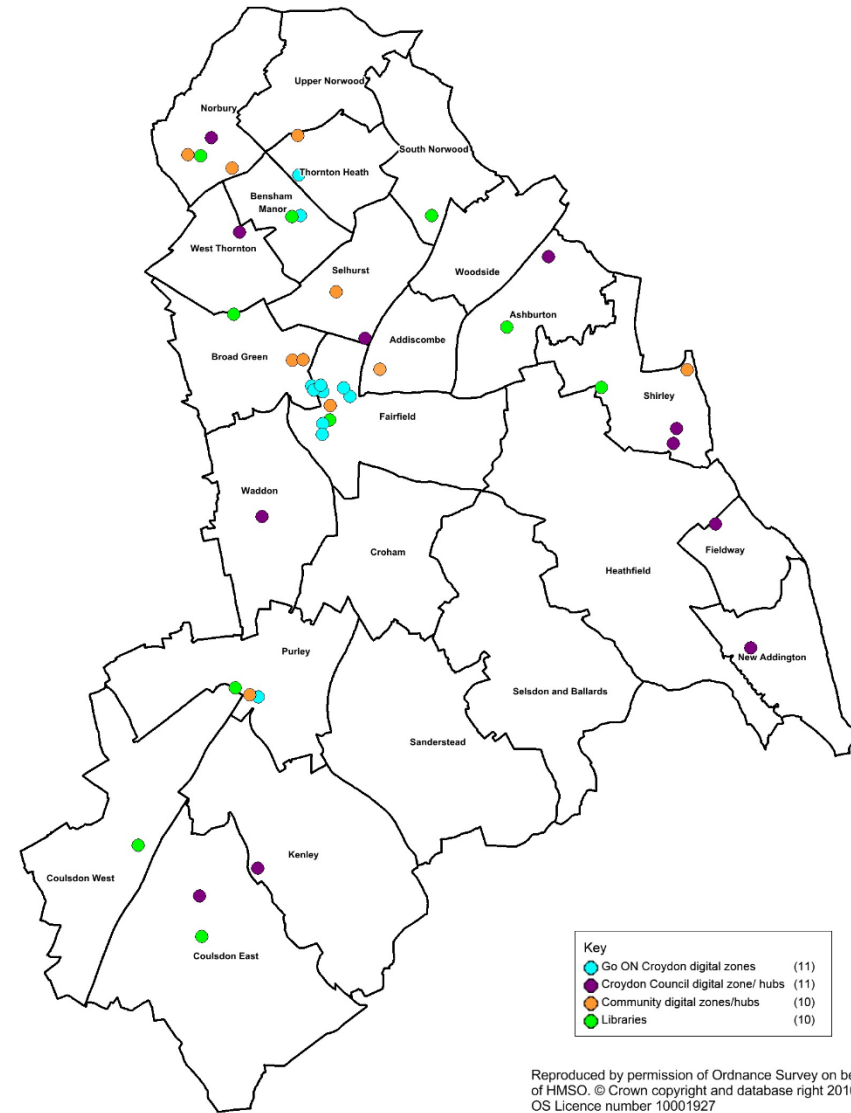
Pension Credit Claimants



All customer groups



Digital zones and hubs in Croydon



3.8 The digital zones shown in the above map are being delivered as part of the Go On Croydon program through a number of partners. The Digital zone in Access Croydon was the first ever such facility and it has been a key way of providing support and assistance to residents generally, but also those accessing Council services.

3.9 Whilst the Council do not have the final figures for the year –the below table provides headline figures for the impact and success of the digital zones;

- **Number of venues provided across the borough** **42**
- **Number of sessions provided/zones open** **490**
- **Number of people assisted** **2,900**
- **Customer feedback;**
 - **% feel more confident from visit** **100%**
 - **% feel skills have improved** **94%**

Figures include estimate for last month for project.

3.10 The Council are currently confirming which facilities will continue beyond the project, however, have already confirmed the Access Croydon, Lloyds bank and Age UK facilities will continue alongside the library and community facilities now in place. The Council hope to continue to build on this early in the new year

Council digital service development and take-up

3.11 The Council has continued to develop its own on-line services and to deliver significant efficiencies and improved options for engaging and working with residents and local businesses. The digital inclusion work is a key aspect to support these efficiencies and has provided a number of examples of where support to use Council on-line services has assisted residents to gain/access wider learning and opportunities. Whilst new services such as green waste and landlord licencing have been implemented digitally, arrangements are in place for customers unable to access digitally to be supported appropriately. Some details of take-up and a summary of performance figures to date are given below;

Heat map of customer sign-ups (below); shows take-up across the Borough geographically to be generally in line with population



Age Profile of MyAccount sign-ups

	0 to 17	18 to 24	25 to 39	40 to 64	65 +	TOTAL
Age Profile of MyAccount sign-ups	1,115	6,339	39,960	48,361	8,607	104,382
Population for Croydon for 2016	94,768	28,450	89,885	121,888	49,886	384,877
% of sign up as proportion of pop.	1.2%	22.2%	44.5%	39.7%	17.3%	27.1%

Source: GLA Population projections, 2014 round, based on 2014 BPO data, capped household size variant (standard model), 31st March 2015
 Not all customers provide their age as part of MyAccount sign-up

Number of New Users

Time frame	Number
July 2013 - March 2014	26,743
April 2014 – March 2015	49,221
April 2015 – March 2016	76,506
April 2016 - Nov 2016	28,787#

pro rata for full year would equate to 43,180 new users

On-line service usage (*My Account opened July 2013 but different services have varying start dates from them*)

Service	Total (mid Mar)	Total (mid May)	Total (mid Nov)
Registrations for MyAccount	148,738	160,064	181,263
Rents - value of payments taken	£10,364,570	£11,657,294	£15,657,217
Overall value of payments taken	£20,560,837	£22,412,067	£27,374,506
Planning appointments booked	1,194	1,325	1,542
Repairs reported	9,791	10,692	12,981
Ordering waste bins	29,129	33,557	41,905
Missed collections reported	23,277	28,414	42,665
Building Control applications	1,523	1,675	2,031
Housing Register - customer registered	4,424	4,573	4,967
Bulky waste collections booked and paid	24,688	27,412	34,551
white goods collection booked and paid	4,119	4,653	6,020
Online env reports received	30,361	34,107	44,071
Housing appointments made	6,484	6,989	8,347
Council Tax sign-ups	20,857	23,147	26,924
Benefit sign-ups	2,314	3,177	3,596
Business Rates sign-ups	1,459	1,535	1,840
Private Rented Property Licences	22,591	23,029	24,124
Garden Waste sign-ups	10,033	14,379	16,591
Housing Application and self-help tool		6,448	8,347
Mobile App Downloads	16,009	17,154	19,631
Mobile App Reports	15,900	17,626	21,476

3.12 The above table only includes functions provided directly through the councils MyAccount and mobile app services. We are continuing to work with contractors to pull such information into the overall approach. For instance significant additional on-line services have been provided for parking recently that have delivered service improvements alongside efficiency.

RECYCLING EQUIPMENT INTO THE COMMUNITY

3.13 During 2016 the Council updated its ICT equipment as part of its contract with Capita, as the equipment was unable to run on the latest operating systems, in some cases was unsupported and in order to provide a number of service efficiencies and accommodation savings.

3.14 Whilst the equipment is not fit for the business environment, the Council has been able to partner with a charity to bring some of the equipment back into use. The Council's partner organisation will be responsible for safely deleting data from the machines (in line with government guidance), refurbishing the equipment and providing basic operating and software licences to make this possible. Bearing in mind the age and wear of the equipment only a percentage will be usable and others will be needed as parts. The arrangement allows a percentage of devices to be made available free of cost and a number to be sold at a minimal £29.99 cost.

3.15 As the implementation of new equipment in the Council is only now coming to its completion the Council cannot be sure of the final number of pieces of equipment this will provide. As at 17th November 2016, from just over 700 devices being passed across to the charity;

- 196 laptops/pc's available for donation
- 147 laptops/pc's available for sale

3.16 The Council has advertised the availability of this equipment through community and various local network groups who are looking to provide digital skills training. In return the Council asks that the organisations make a commitment to supporting local people in order to benefit from the offer. Where appropriate the Council have also then supported in arranging for digital champions to help deliver training and various other support to get initiatives off the ground. The Council are also linking this equipment into Council services supporting specific groups and individuals to ensure digital inclusion is part of a number of support arrangements.

3.17 To date interest has been as below;

- | | |
|---|------------------------------|
| • Total number of donated devices | 66 |
| • Organisations now in receipt of donated devices | 7 (further 7 being arranged) |
| • Organisations purchasing equipment | 6 (further 2 being arranged) |

- Requests currently under consideration
- Organisations include; community centres, sheltered housing, churches and religious organisations, public house, various third sector organisations

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- 3.18 The supply of affordable equipment to support community organisations to set up local digital skills facilities is a key part of the approach to build community capacity and capability, improving skills across the Borough and the further equipment expected from the Council's replaced equipment is providing a significant impetus to the work.
- 3.19 Moving forward the Council will continue to work with community organisations to understand where this will assist and how we can work with partners to provide digital champions and other support to assist start-up and further build a support network in the community.

PARTNERSHIP INITIATIVE

- 3.20 The following paragraphs list a number of other initiatives and work streams developed through partnership working as part of the project.

Pop-up digital zones

- 3.21 Two specific day long sessions have been held, in the town centre and Surrey Street market, where partners have come together to resource a stall for the day, providing support, advice and sign-posting.
- 3.22 The Surrey Street event tied in with a Council initiative to provide free Wi-Fi in that area, to promote both businesses, including market stalls, and customers to use the area in a different way. The Council have funded the Wi-Fi for an initial period with one of the businesses taking ownership for a webpage promoting the facilities and retail opportunities. Support was provided to businesses as to how they can utilise this facility and digital opportunities to build their business, and to shoppers/visitors to the area to raise awareness.
- 3.23 On Saturday 23rd July, Croydon Council and many of the GO ON Croydon partners ran the first Digital Day in North End. The aim of the event was to drive up awareness of the importance of digital skills, and of the activities taking place to increase individual skills and confidence. The event was supported by volunteer Digital Champions from Doteveryone, Lloyds, Argos, U3A, Age UK, CVA, the Met Police, the local community and Croydon Council. Argos and EE provided tablets and connectivity for instant online 'how to' guidance, and the Council were able to reward engagement with some well stocked goody bags thanks to Croydon Council, Argos and Lloyds. At least 300 people engaged with the team. The questions posed were varied both in terms of what people wanted to learn about, and the devices they are using. Equally, many people made the point that even though they were confident

in their own digital skills, they knew of a relative or friend who could do with some guidance and coaching. This gave the opportunity to signpost those people in need of support towards the Digital Zones in Croydon. Discussions about how Croydon Council can run similar events in future (ideally in areas outside the town centre) are ongoing.

Integrating our library offer into the approach

- 3.24 On the afternoon of Thursday 20th October, Croydon Central Library held their first “meet and greet” digital engagement day. This was supported by Digital Champions from Croydon Council, Lloyds, JCP, the Met Police cadets, Doteveryone and the library. Despite the library footfall numbers being in line with the usual level, the number of people engaged (25) was quite small. However, the depth of some of those engagements was quite strong. One example is an older lady is an artist, and was shown how to attach photos of her artwork to her emails to send to galleries. This was something she had not been able to do previously, and she fed back that the time spent had been very helpful. There are a number of learning points under consideration for future events such as increased advance promotion (in the library and elsewhere), setting up in a more accessible part of the library in order to catch people passing by more readily, and testing the approach in a different library outside the town centre.
- 3.25 Following on from this initial meet and greet session, Croydon’s library partner Carillion is keen to run further sessions. Further work is now underway to ensure those sessions are more engaging, and how they might be rolled out into areas outside the town centre. There is now a strong partnership to align the digital inclusion work with the service initiatives in the libraries to help develop new areas as a space and place for communities to use.

TWITTER in Croydon

- 3.26 As part of Doteveryone’s relationship with Twitter, on 6th May almost 50 small businesses and charities from Croydon took part in a one day workshop in the Centrale Shopping Centre. The workshop (the first of its kind) was designed and tailored to help these groups to understand how social media (not just Twitter) could help them to reach out to customers, donors, volunteers and potential partners in a more effective way. Twitter’s participation was part of their FridayForGood volunteering day (twice a year across the entire company, and across the world), and six expert volunteers came down to Croydon for the day. Feedback from the participating small businesses and charities was universally positive, and not surprisingly many of them tweeted about the workshop to say how much they had learned. Comments such as "really helpful", "a very good use of my time" and "I learnt so much" were commonplace. Equally importantly, many of the participants took the opportunity to speak to each other and build their network. Superhighways has also taken the same concept forward and ran a further workshop in June with more in the pipeline.

Deep Dive Projects

3.27 The June report to Cabinet detailed a number of deep dives projects working with various partners to produce fully evaluated outcomes from specific workstreams. Those projects have or are now coming to a close, but the evaluations are not complete at this time. The evaluations are being delivered by specific partners and the Council are working closely to ensure we can benefit from those pieces of work. Updates on a two of the projects that are further evolved are detailed below;

Digital Connect

3.28 The Digital Connect pilot project was a unique cross sector collaboration between Accenture, Doteveryone, Lloyds Banking Group and Seetec. It was designed to build understanding around two aspects of the digital skills issue. Firstly, to help small businesses/charities to appreciate more fully their potential to grow their digital capability via attending a digital workshop. Secondly to identify young people not in employment, education or training but who had some digital skills. They were then matched to the engaged small businesses/charities in order to help the businesses grow their digital capabilities, simultaneously giving young people valuable work experience.

3.29 The project met its objectives and proved that the concept behind the approach is valid. Whilst volumes were relatively small (48 businesses/charities and 14 young people took part), the findings of the pilot showed positive trends with the digital importance, digital skills and digital confidence of the businesses/charities and young people increasing. Additionally, the workshop had a positive impact on the perceived financial benefit of digital for the businesses/charities and increased the likelihood the businesses/charities would employ a digital expert. 79% more of the businesses/charities' increased their agreement with the statement "I have the knowledge and experience I need to make my business/charity more digital", compared to the start.

3.30 From the young people's viewpoint, overall they improved their digital skills by 73% and their employability skills by 44% (comparison between the beginning of the training and the end of the work experience). Within 6 weeks following the programme, 70% of the young people progressed to a positive outcome (i.e. apprenticeship, employment, further education).

Supporting homeless people

3.31 This project was set up as a partnership between Crisis, EE, Doteveryone and Croydon Council. The project aims to understand and work to remove the barriers to digital inclusion for the homeless and provide them with an opportunity to become Digital Champions and help their peers. The project uses 90 EE provided smart phones with £50 of pay as you go credit (released in £10 increments). To obtain a phone, Crisis members take part in two training sessions (held on successive days) of between two and three hours. Since the sessions started in the summer Crisis has trained the first 19 people, with more to follow in the Autumn term.

- 3.32 The mix of participating members has varied widely and includes sofa surfers, hostel dwellers, and women living in a refuge following domestic violence issues. Feedback has been positive across the board including comments such as “this will genuinely change my life for the better”, “if you’ve got a smartphone, you’re winning” and “now I can see why everyone is into these b****y phones so much”. The literacy and digital skills of the participating members vary widely. For some for whom basic literacy is a challenge, using a smart phone and keypad can be a difficult process.
- 3.33 Discussions are already taking place with EE and Crisis on how this pilot might be able to be scaled up to a pan-London or even national level. Significant funding would be required to achieve this, but the purpose of the pilot is to show the art of the possible.

TAKING THE APPROACH FORWARD – OUR NEXT STEPS

Partnership Steering Group

- 3.34 It has been agreed by most members of the current group to continue the commitment – including Croydon Council, Lloyds bank and Age UK. The Council have agreed that early in the new year it will look to add further members, particularly from community and third sector groups and to review the boards purpose based on the findings from the project and those organisations key digital objectives. The Council have shaped a part-time role as part of the investment to support its digital and enabling savings to support and help drive the partnership arrangements.

Digital zones

- 3.35 The Council already have a commitment to continue the Access Croydon arrangements, as have Lloyds bank and one location for Age UK. The libraries will continue to provide and develop their approach and those community led facilities detailed earlier in the report will remain. A focus of the use of recycled equipment will be to further develop more self-sustaining locations with digital services across the Borough. Doteveryone are progressing an “out of the box” digital zone solution to be taken forward nationally and the Council will look to help develop that tool with Doteveryone and then potentially utilise such a tool.

Recycled equipment

- 3.36 The Council will further look at identifying the right organisations to support with equipment, to broaden the offer across the borough and different sectors of the community. The Council will link the availability of the equipment to commitments

to support those areas of our Borough that most need it. Wherever possible continue to be the link to assist organisations to leverage other support such as digital champions, funding opportunities (including local Council initiatives) and good practice. It is expected that potentially a further 400 pieces of equipment will be available to the community.

Specific events including integration of libraries

- 3.37 The Council will look to replicate successful local events, as detailed earlier in the report, targeting both residents and local businesses to increase skills and access. The level of this work will depend on the success of continuing to maintain and build partnerships arrangement to support and resource that work. As above that work will be focused wherever possible in areas identified as requiring further support as well as the wider Borough.

New technologies and local tech start-ups

- 3.38 The Council will continue to trial and support new opportunities such as a trial of tablet devices to assist adult social care case to keep in touch with friends and family and the free Wi-Fi in Surrey Street as explained above. As further options become available the Council will continue to see how such options can assist Council services as well as those of our partner organisations. The Council will also look to further develop its links and partnerships with the local tech set-ups to support and assist that work, utilising where appropriate approaches such as “hackathons” to develop new ideas tailored to local needs.

Growth zone – infrastructure

- 3.39 The growth zone includes a workstream to improve the broadband and Wi-Fi connectivity across the Borough. This is still in a very early stage but the Council expect to develop firmer plans for this work and opportunity early in 2017 and will present a further report to Members for consideration once such plans are more developed.

Providing one stop info hub/network

- 3.40 Through the partnership work and building knowledge of resources and solutions available to support digital inclusions, the Council will look to provide advice and signposting for anyone looking to improve skills or provide support. There are significant resources and assistance available but it is often difficult to know it is there and how to find it. A key role for the Council will be in improving that awareness for residents, communities and local businesses and linking need to supply whilst building partnerships across the community.

4. CONSULTATION

4.1 There is no further consultation required

5 FINANCIAL AND RISK ASSESSMENT CONSIDERATIONS

REVENUE AND CAPITAL CONSEQUENCES

5.1 The continuation of the GO ON Croydon programme will be met from existing financial resources.

5.2 Where specific projects and innovations show there is a wider opportunity, they will be built into specific business case for approval through normal channels.

RISKS

5.3 There is a risk that if the right support is not provided the Council will be unable to meet projected budget savings as we will be unable to support customers across to cheaper and more effective online services.

Approved by: Lisa Taylor – Assistant Director of Finance and Deputy S151 Officer

6. COMMENTS OF THE BOROUGH SOLICITOR AND MONITORING OFFICER

6.1 The Acting Council Solicitor comments that there are no direct legal considerations arising from the recommendations within this report.

Approved by: Jessica Stockton, Solicitor for and on behalf of Jacqueline Harris-Baker, Acting Council Solicitor and Acting Monitoring Officer.

7. HUMAN RESOURCES IMPACT

7.1 There are no direct or immediate Human Resources considerations arising from this report for Croydon Council staff or workers.

Approved by: Jason Singh, HR Business Partner.

8 EQUALITIES IMPACT

8.1 Equality assessments are being carried out for each individual workstream where appropriate. There is also a full assessment progressing for the overall program.

9. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

9.1 There are no implications for this report.

10. CRIME AND DISORDER REDUCTION IMPACT

10.1 There are no implications for this report.

11. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS/PROPOSED DECISION

11.1 To advise members on the approach and expected benefits of the work and findings to date .

12. OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

12.1 Not providing appropriate support to our community would see many residents fall further behind in the digital agenda and lose out on various financial and social opportunities. This would also have a negative impact on the Council in terms of cost and also support for those then unable to live as independently.

12.2 Funding such work and providing it directly would have a very significant cost and be far less successful as the Council would not be able to reach all areas of the community, and would not have the skills and equipment required.

CONTACT OFFICER: Graham Cadle, Director of customer and transformation
(0208 726 6000 ext 63295)

BACKGROUND PAPERS: none

