

# Manchester's Digital Strategy Delivery Plan 2025

## Plain Text Version

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## 1. Strategy '21 – '26

Our vision for Manchester's digital future hasn't changed.

The "UK's top technology city" is home to a thriving £5 billion digital ecosystem, recognised as having one of Europe's fastest growing tech sectors. In the wake of rapid technological acceleration, we want to ensure that nobody is left behind. Our aim is to empower all people with the opportunities a digitally progressive city offers.

Our Strategy sets out an aspirational vision, backed by a robust framework, to support and grow our thriving digital ecosystem. Encompassing the entire city - businesses, charities, social enterprises, and residents - our Strategy outlines four key priorities for collaborating with people and organisations to realise Manchester's ambition to become a world leading Digital City by 2025.

Developed in collaboration with over 63 partners and networks across Greater Manchester's digital sector, our Strategy outlines shared strategic principles and commitments that prioritise people, city, and future.

## 2. Delivery Plan 2025

Words alone won't shape our future; actions will define our success.

Our annual Delivery Plan defines our areas of focus for the coming year, setting out the steps we will take to realise the objectives and aims of the wider Digital Strategy.

- Tangible outcomes to drive meaningful change
- Accountability and transparency as guiding principles
- Intentions anchored with practical actions and clear routes to success

While the Digital Strategy lays the foundations for our vision, the Delivery Plan drives execution, offering actionable steps forwards. Within the context of the wider strategy, the Delivery Plan maps the key objectives for each year, our current projects, and progress towards achieving the goals outlined in our four thematic priority areas.

Simply put, our Delivery Plan ensures that we are driven by meaningful, real-world outcomes that positively impact the lives of people in Manchester.

## 3. We're #DoingDigitalTogether

- We believe in a fair future where everyone can benefit from advances in digital technology.
- We always put people at the heart of our plans.
- We value open collaboration.
- We invite a diverse range of voices to strengthen and mould out strategy. We exclude no-one from the conversation.

- We want to make a meaningful, tangible, and positive difference to people's lives.
- We empower people to take advantage of the opportunities offered by the digital world and realise their chosen futures.
- We want to create a more equitable, prosperous and resilient society for all.

## 4. Four Key Themes

1. Remarkable People, Extraordinary Opportunities
2. Connecting Places, Enhancing Lives
3. Pioneering the Future, Prosperity for All
4. Rising to Challenges, Future-Proofing Our City

**Our themes provide the foundation for our Strategy.**

These themes are not intended to work in isolation, but interweave, support and enrich each other. Through defining our priorities, we take a targeted approach to realising our vision of Manchester as a future leading digital city. Together, our four themes provide the roadmap for how we will leverage data and technology to transform Manchester into a centre for digital innovation, collaboration, and connectivity.

Our strategy is uncompromisingly ambitious, and our priorities can only be achieved by city-wide collaboration. Our Delivery Plan supports and contributes to the wider objectives set out in the Our Manchester Strategy, Manchester City Council's long-term plan to improve the lives of people in Manchester.

## 5. Theme 1 – Remarkable People, Extraordinary Opportunities

**The digital world is everywhere.**

It's crucial that all our residents have access to the essential, skills, knowledge, services, and resources to fully participate in the digital ecosystem and benefit from its many opportunities.

We prioritise the incredible communities that make up Manchester, focusing on initiatives that will be of most benefit to real people. We believe that irrespective of background or circumstance, everybody should be able to connect to the digital world.

### 1.1 DIGITAL INCLUSION ACTION PLAN

Delivering the priorities set out in the Digital Inclusion Action Plan to ensure digital inclusion is an integral part of strategic plans city-wide.

**This will mean we'll:**

- Implement the refined Digital Inclusion Action Plan, staying accountable to milestones, deadlines and deliverables within a strategic roadmap.

- Establish a review of progress against milestones through qualitative and quantitative data and methods, including regular reporting, mapping and data dashboards.

### **1.3 CEIAG BENCHMARKS FOR THOSE AGED 19+**

Continuing to lead the way in Careers Education, Information, Advice, and Guidance (CEIAG), for those aged 19+, ensuring that digital skills are embedded as a key strategic focus.

#### **This will mean we'll:**

- Champion the importance of digital skills within the GM All Age Careers Strategy.
- Pioneer local CEIAG best practice for digital skill.

### **1.3 SKILLS FOR LIFE**

Embedding digital skills and digital literacy across the refreshed Skills for Life framework.

#### **This will mean we'll:**

- Raise the profile of digital skills across Manchester.
- Support more young people to develop the confidence, motivation and skills to benefit from the opportunities offered by digital.
- Build strong foundations to help every young person thrive in a digital-first future, ensuring that no child is left behind.

### **1.5 POST-16 STRATEGY GROUP**

Supporting Manchester's Post-16 Strategy Group to remain at the forefront of educational innovation.

#### **This will mean we'll:**

- Scale-up and sustain existing entry-level pathways into digital jobs and maximise new pathways within the skills and careers system, by strengthening connections between colleges and industry.
- Enable the integration of digital tools and emerging technologies into curriculum planning and decision-making processes.

### **1.6 MANCHESTER DIGITAL SKILLS FRAMEWORK**

Transitioning into the test and learn phase of the Manchester Digital Skills Framework, a user-focused framework for the Manchester digital ecosystem.

#### **This will mean we'll:**

- Identify and map clear pathways and progression routes for the most in-demand digital roles.
- Enable productive and meaningful conversations between industry, businesses and skills providers to identify and analyse workforce digital gaps.

## **1.6 RISE**

Improving access to inclusive learning opportunities through the RISE e-learning platform.

### **This will mean we'll:**

- Reduce barriers to learning and employment by offering access to flexible, accessible, high-quality courses through the RISE platform.
- Collaborate with partners across Manchester to support a wider range of residents to confidently access and engage with e-learning.
- Empower more residents to learn new skills that enhance their access to current and future employment opportunities in Manchester.

## **6. Theme 2 – Connecting People, Enhancing Lives**

**We believe in bringing people together.**

Digital spaces foster connections with the world around us and with one another. To build a truly inclusive society, the city of Manchester itself- alongside its people - must facilitate access to conversations, culture, and essential services through high-quality digital infrastructure and responsible use of data.

We will advocate for the adoption of the best tools and practices whilst keeping people's data safe. High-speed, secure, and affordable connectivity should not be a luxury of the privileged; everyone within our city should be able to safely enter the digital world, however and wherever they choose.

### **2.5 FIBRE AND MOBILE MAPPING**

Mapping mobile and infrastructure assets in the City Centre, collaborating with key stakeholders across Highways and Planning to guide the development of a strategy for mobile infrastructure.

#### **This will mean we'll:**

- Deliver a successful connectivity mapping project in partnership with Network UX and Biffa, enabling areas of Manchester City Centre with weak, inconsistent or unreliable connectivity to be identified.

### **2.6 CONNECTED PLACES**

Embedding digital in development processes for Strategic Regeneration Frameworks (SRFs) and Neighbourhood Development Frameworks (NDFs) to enable more residents to benefit from the opportunities of connected placemaking.

#### **This will mean we'll:**

- Work with colleagues in the Digital Infrastructure Interest Group (DIIG) to develop digital plans that sit within place plans (SRF's and NDFs), initially focusing on Newton Heath, Wythenshawe and Holt Town.

### **2.6 DIGITAL TWIN FOR TRANSPORT**

Developing practical applications for a digital twin to enable data-driven decision making around transport, improving the strategic planning and management of transport networks in Manchester.

**This will mean we'll:**

- Establish a regular working group to agree, ideate, and progress the development of a digital twin, in partnership with colleagues from Transport for Greater Manchester.
- Secure funding for recommended use cases.

## **2.6 ZERO CARBON ACTION PLAN**

Supporting the delivery of Manchester's Zero Carbon Action Plan by leveraging digital technologies to positively impact Manchester's transition to a zero-carbon city.

**This will mean we'll:**

- Embed Digital Strategy priorities and projects in the Zero Carbon Action Plan and deepen engagement with key council teams across Transport, Highways, Zero Carbon and City Centre Growth and Regeneration.

# **7. Theme 3 – Pioneering the Future, Prosperity for All**

**Manchester's future prosperity relies on everyone being included.**

By laying the foundations for digitally enabled people and places to thrive, we can create extraordinary opportunities for learning, business and investment in our city. We want Manchester to be the city of choice for the digital sector; a place where innovation is embraced, and ideas come to life.

We welcome change but deny that progress should demand a compromise on moral principles. While advances in digitisation and technology present exciting possibilities for our city, they simultaneously pose a challenge to existing ways of life. Doing Digital Together champions ethical and sustainable tech that uplifts our city and our people.

## **3.2 REGIONAL START-UP LANDSCAPE**

Strengthening the start-up ecosystem to drive Manchester's growth as a leading hub for growing and scaling tech start-ups.

**This will mean we'll:**

- Develop the Tech Hubs Working Group to strengthen connections across Manchester's digital network, facilitating practical, action-based collaboration.
- Progress recommendations from the 'Strengthening Manchester's Start-Up Ecosystem' research.

### **3.6 UNDERSTANDING OUR AI ECOSYSTEM**

Developing intelligence on the potential impact of AI, promoting new thinking around socially inclusive responses to establish Manchester as a leader for ethical, responsible tech.

#### **This will mean we'll:**

- Integrate training materials from the People's Panel for AI in 'Train the Trainers' workshops, providing SMEs with insights on how AI could be used to improve services.
- Partner with academia to develop a data-led report identifying opportunities and challenges in Manchester's AI ecosystem.

### **3.7 TECH FOR GOOD**

Advocating for socially responsible practices in deploying AI and other new technologies, both in essential public services and the broader ecosystem.

#### **This will mean we'll:**

- Progress recommendations from the 'Tech For Good in A Human Centred Smart City' research - supporting our tech for good community.
- Convene a task and finish workshop with key stakeholders in the AI ecosystem to explore potential use cases that drive inclusive, ethical and people-centric approaches to AI, across key priorities and city challenges.

### **3.7 COMMUNITY CHALLENGES**

Working with people, businesses, and organisations across Manchester to develop solutions to social challenges faced by marginalised communities.

#### **This will mean we'll:**

- Collaborate with successful pilot teams to engage community organisations in Longsight in the co-creation of tech-enabled solutions.
- Disseminate pilot learnings across the council to inform future best practice.

## **8. Theme 4 – Rising to Challenges, Future-Proofing Our City**

**The future of our planet is the future of our city.**

Digital expertise is needed to develop practical approaches to reduce carbon emissions and confront the climate crisis. Valuing the environment, and leveraging our digital knowledge to enhance sustainability, can transform Manchester into a greener, healthier, and more attractive place to be.

From embracing eco-friendly digital initiatives to using data analytics to lower carbon footprints, our mission is for Manchester to become a zero-carbon city by 2038. We believe that data is power, and that our digital ambition is key to securing a resilient future for all.

### 4.3 TACKLING FUEL POVERTY WITH DATA AND TECHNOLOGY

Promoting the use of technology and data to better manage the demand on energy networks, alleviating the impact of fuel poverty on people in Manchester.

#### **This will mean we'll:**

- Use insights from electricity and energy data to co-create specific actions and programmes of activity that address and reduce fuel poverty in local communities.
- Collaborate with stakeholders to initiate a piece of research that enhances understanding of the climate tech ecosystem in the city.

## 9. Working Together

**Our success relies on open collaboration.**

Although developed Manchester City Council, our strategy embraces the city's entire digital ecosystem. Its success depends on working together with people and organisations to harness the wealth of skills, passion, and expertise that exists within our city. Doing Digital Together means taking action to lead Manchester into an ambitious future as a leading global digital city where everybody can prosper.

In 2025, this means we will:

- Work with partners and stakeholders to deliver the objectives set out against the four key thematic priority areas in the 2024 Delivery Plan.
- Strengthen our existing relationships across Manchester's digital ecosystem, while exploring new opportunities for impactful collaboration and engagement.
- Progress our 15 currently ongoing projects towards successful outcomes that positively impact the people in our city.
- To ensure accountability, The Digital Strategy Governance Board, made up of council leaders and representatives from key stakeholders, oversees the Digital Strategy Team's progress towards key outcomes. We are Doing Digital Together, not in isolation. Together, we will continue to put people first and work towards our shared vision for a bold, exciting, pioneering digital future.

## 10. Get Involved

**We want everyone to join the conversation on digital.**

Find out more about the work we do with businesses, organisations and communities in Manchester, and how you can get involved by clicking on the links below:

**Bluesky:** [mcrdigitalstrategy.bsky.social](https://mcrdigitalstrategy.bsky.social)

**Instagram:** [manchesterdigitalstrategy](https://www.instagram.com/manchesterdigitalstrategy)

**LinkedIn:** [Manchester's Digital Strategy](https://www.linkedin.com/company/manchester-digital-strategy)

X: [MCRDigiStrat](#)

Website: [manchesterdigitalstrategy.com](http://manchesterdigitalstrategy.com)

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Sign up to our monthly newsletter to receive all the latest news from the Digital Strategy team.