

Newham Data Strategy

2025–2027

Transforming Our Data to Improve
Resident Services and Boost Productivity



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Foreword

Data is shaping the world around us, driving innovation, transforming services and powering modern economies. Here in Newham, we see data as a powerful tool for change. It can help us deliver better services, make more informed decisions and build a more inclusive and responsive borough for everyone who lives and works here. We recognise that much of the data the council holds is highly sensitive, and we must always maintain the highest standards on data security, ensuring Newham residents can trust the council with their confidential information.

Newham is one of the UK's most diverse and dynamic communities. To truly meet the needs of our residents, we must be smarter, better connected and ready to act. This strategy puts data at the heart of how we transform public services, helping us make decisions based on real insight, tailor services to the people who use them and build trust through openness and transparency.

We're aligning with the best of what's happening across government and industry, but this strategy is firmly grounded in Newham's unique local context.

It reflects our ambition and our challenges, and it also looks to the future.

One of the most important steps we're taking is preparing for the responsible use of emerging technologies like Artificial Intelligence (AI). By investing in strong data governance, building skills across our workforce, and putting the right systems in place, we're ensuring that Newham can adopt and govern AI in a way that is ethical, transparent, and focused on public benefit.

This strategy is about more than data, it's about how we use it to improve lives. As we put it into action, we're laying the foundations for a fairer, more innovative borough, one where data helps create new opportunities, drive inclusive growth, and ensure every resident benefits from better, smarter public services. It will also help us improve how the Council works, strengthening performance, enabling more joined-up decision-making and making sure every service we deliver is efficient, accountable, and focused on what matters most to our communities.



Our Data Strategy at a Glance

The purpose of the Newham Data Strategy is to outline a clear vision and action plan for how the Council will manage and leverage its data effectively to achieve our goals. Our strategy places data at the heart of delivering the We Are Fairer Newham Corporate Plan and Transforming Newham for the Future, ensuring every decision is guided by data-driven insights.

Our data strategy seeks to address key challenges and build the foundational layer to maximise the value of our data. We will do this by streamlining our processes, reducing manual effort and increasing automation in our data management.

The strategy emphasises key strategic opportunities for advancing our data and digital capabilities, with a strong focus on improving the resident experience, meeting regulatory standards, and establishing strong governance and architecture around the overall management of our data. Furthermore, it aims to promote better data sharing with our trusted partners and informed decision-making across the organisation. We will use data and digital tools to create seamless, personalised experiences for our residents, from applying for support to accessing services, with fewer delays and greater impact.

By aligning with best practices established by partners including London Office of Technology and Innovation (LOTI) and Local Government Association (LGA), we plan to strengthen our data leadership, enhance data literacy, and modernise our technology stack to deliver impactful outcomes. For example, using data to help children and families get better support, vulnerable residents receive faster help and to deliver a greener, cleaner borough.

With the broader availability and types of data and growing impact of artificial intelligence, harnessing data in real time will enable us to improve our internal processes, allocate resources and work with our partners more effectively to enhance our ability to predict demand in critical areas such as social care, housing, planning and community safety.



Where We Want To Get To

As one of London's most diverse and rapidly evolving boroughs, Newham has a duty to do more with the wealth of data it collects across its services. We recognise that staff and residents continue to face challenges due to fragmented, untimely and poor-quality data that is often not fit for purpose. From applying for housing benefits to obtaining a parking permit, individual transactions become more efficient and resilient when information is integrated and shared effectively within the Council.

We aspire to become a data-led Council, where decisions in all areas, from frontline services to policy-making, are powered by timely, trustworthy, and actionable insight.

By 2027, we want our staff to have access to real-time data at their fingertips, leading to informed decision making and delivering improvements to

our services such as smarter waste collection, personalised Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) plans and predicting housing demand. Our goal is to ensure a high proportion of staff possess a strong foundational understanding of data literacy. We are committed to successfully transitioning our legacy systems to modern platforms, fully integrating them into our evolving digital infrastructure.

With ethical AI and real-time data, we will detect trends earlier, automate routine tasks, and deliver more targeted, proactive support where it's needed most. We will enhance our understanding of data related to equality, diversity and inclusion, ensuring that our policy decisions and workforce planning are proactive, inclusive, and responsive to emerging needs.



Where We Are Now

Recent Newham Council reviews such as LGA Peer Review, Regulatory of Social Housing inspection and Data Maturity Assessment have highlighted both our progress and the urgent need to modernise our data systems, strengthening governance, compliance and capability across the board.

We are proud of the diverse community we serve and the many achievements of Newham Council. While we have made significant strides, we acknowledge that in a large organisation,

there are both areas of excellence and pockets where improvement is necessary. Data plays a pivotal role in enabling us to become a more forward-looking, resilient Council.

As demand for services increases and local government finances face increasing pressure, we need to promote data-led innovation to thrive in the future. The challenges we currently face with data include:

Data Silos	Much of our data is fragmented across various systems, making it difficult to access, integrate, and analyse effectively. Additionally, some data is held by our partners and we lack the right agreements or mechanisms to share this data securely and efficiently.
Understanding Resident Experiences	We are limited in our capability to capture, analyse and interrogate data that provides insights into the lived experiences of our residents. By doing this, we can better understand the outcomes and needs of various demographic groups accessing our services.
Data Standards and Governance	While some progress has been made, further work is needed to embed consistent data standards and governance practices across both the Council and its partners such as Health, Police and Voluntary Sector Organisations (VSO). This will ensure that terminology is consistent, services are aligned on how they manage their data and data can be exchanged securely.
Outdated Systems	Older systems are struggling to accommodate changes in legislation, policies, and government requirements, leading to inefficiencies and off-system processes that delay insights. Our current infrastructure limits our ability to capture and analyse data in real time.

What We Will Do

We will build on the strong foundations already in place across the Council by uniting our efforts under a single, organisation-wide data framework that ensures consistency, supports agility and drives innovation. This strategy initiates a cultural shift towards continuous learning and improvement,

boosting data confidence and promoting a mindset of “data curiosity” across all services. Through collaboration, we will embed smarter, faster and more evidence-driven ways of working, placing data at the heart of how Newham delivers for its residents.

Our Data Principles

Our data principles are the foundation upon which this strategy is built. These principles will guide our approach to managing and utilising data effectively across the organisation:

1	Single Source of Truth	Establish a single source of truth for resident data by unifying and consolidating data across all systems. This will ensure consistency, reliability and data quality across the entire data lifecycle. We will manage data in our systems rigorously to maintain quality and drive continuous improvement.
2	Security and Compliance Adherence	Implement a robust governance framework that regulates data access through security protocols. Compliance with regulatory and organisational policies will be fundamental to ensuring the integrity and privacy of our data.
3	Driving Data Literacy and Innovation Excellence	Create a culture of high data literacy within the organisation, ensuring staff at all levels have the skills to interpret and act on data insights. We will also explore and apply innovative Artificial Intelligence technologies to enhance data management, analytics capabilities and overall service delivery.
4	Standardising Data Practices and Governance	Adopt a consistent approach to data collection, storage, and management by using common standards and terminology. We will promote data reuse, linkage, and integration across departments, ensuring that data-driven insights are central to decision-making.
5	Culture of Leadership and Responsibility	Create a culture of leadership and shared responsibility for data governance and stewardship across the Council. We will ensure that data management is ethical, transparent, and legally compliant, with clear accountability at all levels.

Our Goals

To bring our data strategy to life, we will focus on key areas that drive tangible improvements in service delivery, operational efficiency and resident engagement. These initiatives are designed to align with our strategic goals and ensure that our data-driven approach supports regulatory compliance, service innovation and a more transparent and inclusive Newham.

1 Improving Regulatory Compliance and Reporting

We will enhance regulatory compliance and reporting by standardising data management practices across the organisation, ensuring consistent data capture, definition and usage to meet regulatory standards efficiently. This will involve helping our services in developing bespoke data strategies, implementing automated processes for tracking and reporting compliance, and establishing robust data validation mechanisms to maintain ongoing accuracy and reliability. Our goal is to standardise our data to automate reports and reduce manual efforts.

We will create analytics for real-time tracking of compliance metrics, accessible to compliance officers and senior leadership, to improve visibility, decision-making and accountability. Continuous monitoring and improvement of data processes will help mitigate regulatory risks and ensure adherence to evolving standards.

2 Enhancing Service Efficiency

We aim to drive operational efficiencies and enhance decision-making by optimising the management and integration of resident data across services. Data insights will help us identify the most resource-intensive processes, address inefficiencies and develop a consistent approach to service catalogues and self-service, further enhancing operational efficiency.

Through automation and self-service analytics tools, staff will be empowered to make data-driven decisions quickly, reducing manual data entry and increasing overall efficiency. We will streamline support services by rationalising and centralising activities, using data to identify inefficiencies and guide improvements. This will empower frontline staff, including social workers, health visitors, planning officers, housing officers and repairs operatives to deliver services more efficiently.

We will establish a 'centre of excellence' with small, skilled teams offering expert services and coaching, while AI will help automate high-volume tasks such as case and meeting summaries. Additionally, we will improve access to self-service information and training, enabling staff to develop the skills they need for future decision-making. By embedding data into these initiatives, we will drive smarter, more efficient practices across the organisation.

3 Strengthening Resident Experience and Transparency

We will strengthen the resident experience and enhance transparency by making data more accessible and creating opportunities for meaningful engagement. Data will play a key role in this by ensuring that services like 'Apply For It' (council tax single sign-on, direct debit sign-up, building control, licensing and small business rate relief), 'Report It' (safeguarding concerns and housing repairs), 'Book It' (digitised booking processes

Strengthening
Resident Experience
and Transparency
(continued)

for ASC appointments, housing hub appointments and football pitch bookings) and 'Pay for It' (Civica Payment Platform and direct payments automation) are seamless and responsive to resident needs. By using web analytics to track and streamline these services, we will improve access, speed and user satisfaction.

We will use quantitative and qualitative data to identify gaps in access and inform the development of services that cater to diverse needs and enhance inclusive digital resources. We will offer multilingual and accessible services, ensuring that all residents, regardless of background or ability, can access and benefit from council services.

We will use predictive analytics to proactively anticipate residents' needs and to provide tailored interventions for those who require the most support. Through these initiatives, data will be the driving force behind a more responsive, inclusive and effective service delivery model.

4 Advancing
Digital
Transformation

We will modernise our data infrastructure and digital services to future-proof our operations, ensuring more efficient service delivery. This includes fully transitioning from legacy systems to a sovereign ICT environment with integrated data services, adopting cloud-based AI and data platforms. This will enhance scalability and analytics, and migrating our on-premises data warehouse to the cloud for improved accessibility and interoperability.

We will strengthen cybersecurity and data privacy measures, ensuring compliance with regulations and safeguarding resident data through investment in technology and training. This transformation will enable us to deliver better services while maintaining trust and security in our digital platforms.

5 Skilled
Workforce
and Enhancing
Data Literacy

We recognise that a data-literate workforce is critical for the successful implementation of our data strategy. Our initiatives will focus on developing the necessary skills to maximise the value of data across the Council. This will include a comprehensive Data Literacy Training Programme to equip all employees to understand what data is, how to use data effectively, analyse trends and make informed decisions.

We will introduce upskilling Initiatives for Data Roles by appointing 'Data Champions' within departments to advocate for data-driven practices, and to invest in general and specialised training for key roles such as Data Engineers and Data Scientists to build internal expertise.

Through Community Engagement in Data Literacy, we will offer workshops and resources to residents via the Future Newham Programme, enabling them to understand and leverage data for better governance and decision-making. Additionally, we will foster a culture of collaboration through Mentorship and Knowledge Sharing programmes, where experienced professionals can guide junior staff. Finally, by forming Partnerships with Educational Institutions, we will create pathways for young people to enter data-related fields, ensuring the future talent pipeline is aligned with the Council's data needs.

Our ADAPT Model

A key element of our approach will be our own **ADAPT** model, which will drive our transformation. The ADAPT model is derived from the best practices developed by public sector experts. It provides a structured approach to ensure that data is purposeful, accessible and actionable to support our strategic priorities.

It focuses on the following core elements:

A 	Architecture <tr> <td data-bbox="323 667 400 705">Goal</td><td data-bbox="651 667 1414 739">Modernise our data infrastructure to meet future analytical, service delivery and transformation needs.</td></tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="323 786 515 824">Key Actions</td><td data-bbox="622 786 1406 1093"> • Development of an enterprise data platform using modern cloud architecture. • Review and suggest improvements to our legacy data systems including data marts, data warehouse and data held in outdated systems. • Ensure that our systems (whether migrated, procured or developed) meet data sovereignty, architecture and governance requirements. </td></tr>	Goal	Modernise our data infrastructure to meet future analytical, service delivery and transformation needs.	Key Actions	• Development of an enterprise data platform using modern cloud architecture. • Review and suggest improvements to our legacy data systems including data marts, data warehouse and data held in outdated systems. • Ensure that our systems (whether migrated, procured or developed) meet data sovereignty, architecture and governance requirements.
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D 	Data Governance <tr> <td data-bbox="323 1249 400 1288">Goal</td><td data-bbox="651 1249 1377 1321">Establish a Council-wide data governance framework to improve data management and standards.</td></tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="323 1368 515 1406">Key Actions</td><td data-bbox="622 1368 1414 1637"> • Establish data standards across priority services to ensure consistent data capture and retention. • Establish quality metrics to assess accuracy, security and timeliness of data. • Establish a live data catalogue solution that tracks where data is stored, its sensitivity classification, who owns it and how it can be shared securely. </td></tr>	Goal	Establish a Council-wide data governance framework to improve data management and standards.	Key Actions	• Establish data standards across priority services to ensure consistent data capture and retention. • Establish quality metrics to assess accuracy, security and timeliness of data. • Establish a live data catalogue solution that tracks where data is stored, its sensitivity classification, who owns it and how it can be shared securely.
Goal	Establish a Council-wide data governance framework to improve data management and standards.				
Key Actions	• Establish data standards across priority services to ensure consistent data capture and retention. • Establish quality metrics to assess accuracy, security and timeliness of data. • Establish a live data catalogue solution that tracks where data is stored, its sensitivity classification, who owns it and how it can be shared securely.				

A	Accountability
	Goal Ensure we have a data-driven culture where our leaders and employees have clear ownership of data management and quality across the organisation.
	Key Actions • Conduct an internal assessment to understand current gaps in ownership, knowledge and skills. • Engage with services to develop process maps that establish clear roles and responsibilities for the ownership and management of their data. • Establish data stewardship roles to ensure data completeness and quality are maintained.
P	People
	Goal Build a data-literate workforce where leaders and staff can effectively use data to make decisions and deliver improved service.
	Key Actions • Adopt a culture of data leadership that encourages asking the right questions and viewing data as a valuable resource for making informed decisions. • Understand what training is required to maximise data literacy. • Provide targeted training to develop a range of capabilities, from basis analytics to specialist skills, around data science and data engineering. • Establish communities of practice to support staff.
T	Transformation
	Goal Explore ways to use data that transform our services and internal processes.
	Key Actions • Develop policies to ensure ethical and transparent use of Data and AI. • Identify areas where data and Artificial Intelligence can be leveraged for transformation, predictive analytics and personalised interventions. • Produce an implementation plan to transform prioritised user cases.

Our Approach to AI

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is one of the fastest-growing technologies and is central to achieving our strategic objectives. Our data strategy positions the Council to effectively develop, adopt and govern AI technologies responsibly, while recognising the rapid pace at which AI is evolving.

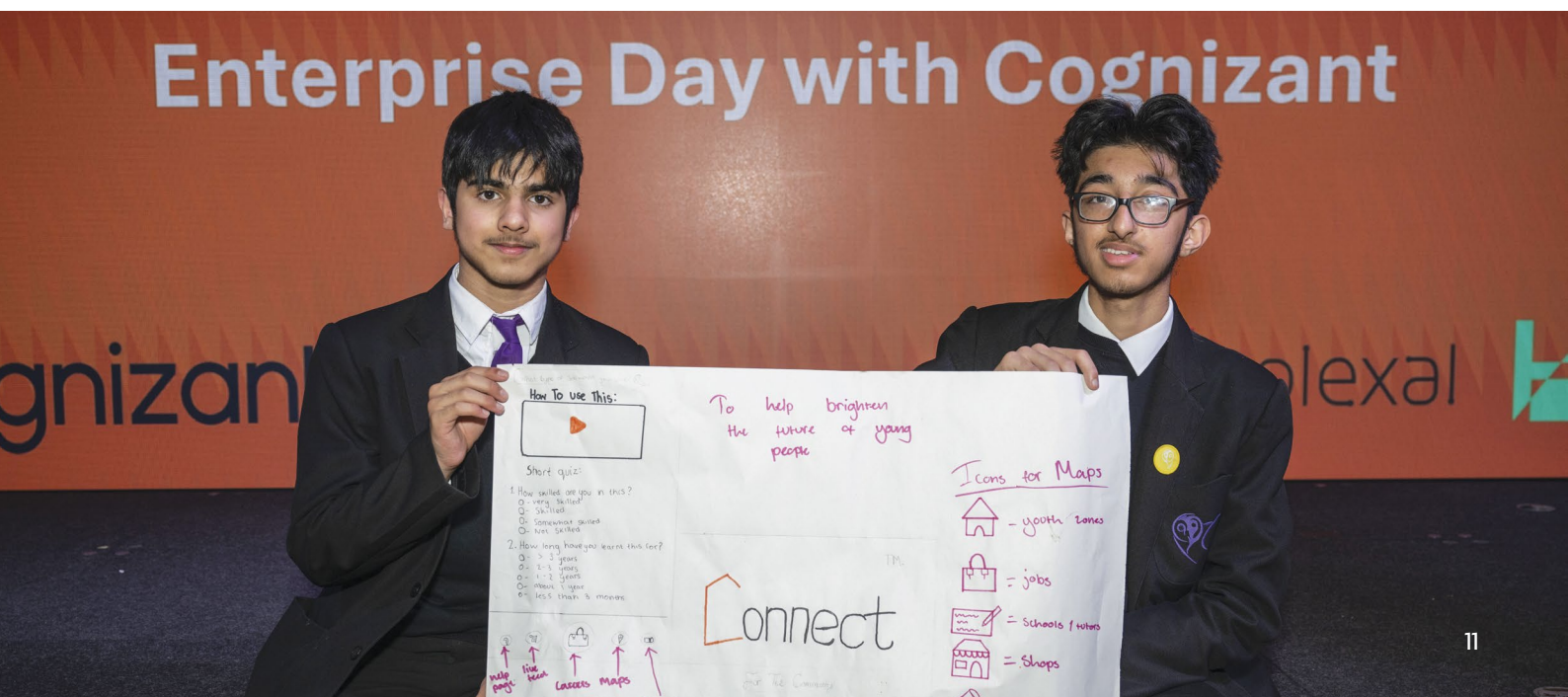
In Newham, we are actively exploring the use of AI to enable services to work more efficiently and support data-driven decision making across the organisation. Several forms of AI are currently being assessed and applied in a range of contexts, each with tailored approaches to governance, deployment and risk management.

Generative AI is being considered for tasks such as summarisation, creative writing, educational support, content generation, search and translation. To guide the responsible use of these technologies, the Council has developed a general-purpose AI policy. This outlines expectations for staff when using both corporate and non-corporate AI-powered tools. The policy aims to ensure the adoption and use of generative AI delivers clear benefits while managing potential risks and maintaining public trust.

Assistive AI, often referred to as AI agents, are also being piloted to support specific, task-oriented functions that enhance productivity and operational efficiency. These systems typically rely on human input to guide decision-making and include applications such as chatbots and automated meeting note generation. The Council is taking a proportionate and evidence-based approach to implementation — starting with low-risk pilots, learning from these experiences and scaling responsibly.

Our UK Centre for AI in the Public Sector is exploring the use of predictive AI, which applies data to forecast future trends and support proactive decision-making to Council services. On autonomous AI, technologies capable of making decisions or taking actions without human intervention — the Council is proceeding with caution. Where appropriate, the approach will align with the UK Government's AI Vision, advocating for a principles-based, context-sensitive framework that balances innovation with robust risk management. This careful, incremental strategy reflects Newham's broader commitment to ethical, transparent and accountable AI use.

To support this work, a dedicated AI Strategy is being developed, alongside balancing ethics and governance frameworks. These will provide a clear vision for AI adoption within the borough and ensure consistent, values-driven implementation. The Council is also actively collaborating with other local authorities and partners, including the London Office of Technology and Innovation (LOTI), to share learning, coordinate activities and enable innovation across the wider public sector.



How We Will Deliver AI Solutions

Recognising the wide range of AI initiatives already underway across the Council, we are committed to bringing these efforts together under a unified approach. To ensure strong governance, strategic alignment and responsible implementation, we will focus our work around three core areas:

1 Empowering Colleagues with AI Fluency

Supporting staff with the skills, guidance and technologies they need to use AI safely and effectively in their daily work.

- We have piloted the use of Microsoft Co-Pilot to support staff in working more efficiently with AI assistance. Building on this, we have developed a general-purpose AI policy to guide colleagues in the appropriate and effective use of AI in the workplace.
- As part of our commitment to the responsible use of AI, we will implement comprehensive internal policies covering all AI tools, including web-based generative platforms. These policies will emphasise ethical considerations, data protection and alignment with the Council's values.
- To support this, all staff will be required to complete mandatory training to ensure they understand the best practices in the use of AI and are operating in line with the Council's guidelines and ethical standards.

2 Enhancing Services through the Adoption of AI Tools

Piloting and deploying existing AI-powered tools in the market where they can deliver clear benefits to service delivery and resident outcomes.

- We have piloted the use of AI to capture and summarise resident conversations and case notes in Children's and Adults' Social Care. Building on this success, we will explore further use cases where AI-generated summaries can enhance service delivery.
- To improve the efficiency and accuracy of responses, we will enhance our online chatbots through the integration of generative AI solutions.
- All AI tools that directly impact residents will be assessed in line with our AI policies to ensure transparency, accountability and public trust.

3 Enhancing Services through the Development of AI Tools

Building tailored AI tools that address local challenges, supported by robust internal capabilities and external partnerships.

- We are developing new AI tools using existing Council data to improve services. A key example is our partnership with LOTI and the University of East London (UEL) to deliver an AI-driven solution for temporary accommodation.
- To enable this work, we will continue to build internal data science capability and support innovation across the organisation.
- We will also collaborate with key government departments to stay informed about the latest developments in AI and explore how they can be applied to benefit residents in Newham.

How Success Will Be Measured

Several initiatives are already underway to support our data strategy and last year, we established an internal steering group to guide its implementation.

Going forward, the steering group will focus on driving the action plan to support this strategy, with key elements incorporated into the work plans of relevant service areas and teams. Progress will be monitored on a quarterly basis, with updates provided to the Digital, Data and Technology Board and Corporate Leadership Team as appropriate.

The first phase of our Enterprise Data Platform project is also underway. This will focus on implementing a secure, scalable and robust Landing Zone, serving as the foundation for a modern data analytics platform. This will mark the Council's first transition into a cloud-based data lake. The Data Platform will be crucial for enabling 'democratised' access to data, allowing services to build reports using Power BI or use data for predictive analytics. It will also ensure data access is managed by a permissions framework, with consistent application of data quality, ethics and standards, enabling the FAIR principles (Findable, Accessible, Interoperable, Re-usable).

The establishment of the UK Centre for AI in the Public Sector exemplifies the power of collaboration between Newham and its partners. This innovative partnership is a driving force for inclusivity, community engagement and economic growth, leveraging AI to tackle public sector challenges. Officially launched at DigiGov UK, the Centre has already delivered significant outcomes, including the successful 'AI Basics' training programme for local businesses.

The success of this strategy will be assessed through both quantitative Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and a qualitative evaluation of the evolving data culture at Newham. These KPIs will help us measure the effectiveness of the strategy and its impact on operational efficiency, decision-making and service delivery. Importantly, we will also assess the cultural shift within the organisation — how using data feels at Newham.



KPIs	
Culture & Capability	• Staff Data Literacy % of staff with basic data skills • Training Completion % of staff completing data training • Data Champion Engagement # of active data leaders in teams • Resident Data Literacy % of residents attending data workshops
Infrastructure & Systems	• Legacy System Transition % of systems modernised • Cloud Adoption % of data and systems on cloud platforms • Golden Record Adoption % of residents with unified data profiles • Data Standardisation % of teams following consistent standards
Compliance & Security	• Compliance Accuracy % of error-free reports • Report Generation Time Average time to produce compliance reports • Privacy Compliance % of systems aligned with GDPR • Cybersecurity Incidents # of breaches per quarter
Impact & Engagement	• Staff Data Adoption % using self-service tools (e.g. Power BI) • Proactive Services % of services using predictive analytics • Resident Engagement % of residents involved in surveys or feedback • Service Delivery Time Average time to complete service requests

The data strategy steering group will be responsible for agreeing to metrics and monitoring these KPIs. At the end of each financial quarter, they will assess the progress of actions outlined in the data strategy and ensure continuous improvement in both the use of data and the way it drives the council forward.



Newham Data

The future lives here.