

LONDON'S TECH MANIFESTO 2021



ABOUT THE AUTHORS



Tech London Advocates (TLA) is a private sector led coalition of more than 10,000 expert individuals from the tech sector and broader community who volunteer to champion London as a global tech hub and campaign to address the challenges facing tech companies in the UK. Tech London Advocates is supported by a range of commercial partners, including Lakestar, Hiscox, Shoosmiths, Penningtons Manches, CENTI, Credit Suisse, Here East, KPMG, Interxion, Russell Reynolds and Globalization Partners. The organisation is part of Global Tech Advocates, which has 16 networks around the world of over 12,000 tech professionals, spanning six continents and 50 countries. The group works together to drive collaboration, innovation and trade between international tech hubs. HP is the global strategic partner for Global Tech Advocates.



techUK is the trade association which brings together people, companies and organisations to realise the positive outcomes of what digital technology can achieve. With over 800 members (the majority of which are SMEs) across the UK, techUK creates a network for innovation and collaboration across business, government and stakeholders to provide a better future for people, society, the economy and the planet. By providing expertise and insight, we support our members, partners and stakeholders as they prepare the UK for what comes next in a constantly changing world.



London First's mission is to make our capital the best city in the world in which to do business. We operate as a business campaigning force, with over 200 members, and are uniquely placed to champion the city. Over the past three decades, we've campaigned for the creation of the office of London Mayor and Transport for London, for Crossrail, for congestion charging and for expansion at Heathrow; we incubated Teach First and created the UK's largest annual jobs and careers fair for school leavers, Skills London. Now, we are pursuing an agenda that will keep London at the forefront of global business, working with and for the whole UK: people, place, competitiveness and connectivity.



Here East is a catalyst for growth and London's fastest growing innovation campus. Located at the heart of Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park in London, it is a launchpad for innovation. The former Press and Broadcast Centre for the Olympic Games, has been transformed into a thriving community of over 4,500 creatives. Here East is home to three of the fastest growing clusters in the capital: esports, cybersecurity and the creative sectors. Tenants include: BT Sports, Plexal (Here East's innovation centre), Fiit.tv, Sports Interactive, Ford Smart Mobility, Studio Wayne McGregor, MATCHESFASHION and The Trampery on the Gantry who provide 21 studios for local artists and designers. The 1.2 million sq ft campus is home to over 4,500 academics and innovators, and is designed to foster collaboration, allowing tenants to collaborate, scale and grow at pace. Here East is owned by clients of Delancey, a specialist real estate investment advisory company.



plexal

Plexal is an innovation centre and coworking space located in the fast-growing Here East technology and innovation campus in London's Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park. It was launched in 2017 and was founded by clients of specialist real estate investment advisory company Delancey. Collaboration is at the heart of Plexal's approach to innovation. Its innovation team delivers bespoke programmes for clients like Innovate UK and Transport for London, and specialises in forging connections between industry, academia, investors, startups and scaleups to tackle some of the biggest challenges facing society while getting ideas market-ready. Startup and scaleup members of Plexal's workspace benefit from a comprehensive programme of events (both virtual and offline) and 1:1 support and advice. Plexal is home to over 700 members who work in areas like mobility, AI, healthtech, cybersecurity, fintech, the Internet of Things, VR and more.

Centre for London is the capital's dedicated think tank. The Centre develops new solutions to London's critical challenges and advocates for a fair and prosperous global city. Founded in 2011, Centre for London helps national and London policymakers think beyond the next election and plan for the future.



FOREWORD

London has been hit hard by the global pandemic and we still don't fully understand the long-term impact of the last 12 months upon the economy, employment and health of the city.

However, amidst the crisis, London's technology sector has proved remarkably resilient. The city's tech companies continue to attract record levels of investment – a staggering £7.6bn in 2020 alone – and London remains the tech capital of Europe.

As we start to look ahead to the post-pandemic recovery, the success of the tech sector is more important than ever. With the country desperate for economic growth, job creation and innovations that can positively improve the lives of UK citizens, the tech ecosystem offers a way forward.

The Mayor of London will preside over a critical period in the history of UK tech – a time when technology is expected to drive the economic recovery, a time when the city is re-imagining its relationship with Europe and other international partners and a time when Londoners are asking hard questions about the future of work, diversity and inclusion and fair opportunities for all.

The purpose of this manifesto is not only to highlight where there are exciting opportunities to capitalise on the current standing of UK tech as a true world leader, but fundamentally address the critical challenges that remain through a series of policy recommendations that support the sector, drawn from the combined insights of organisations with a commitment to strengthen the UK's digital economy.

Alongside these organisations, there is a unique role for the Mayor to play in creating, accelerating and sustaining the requisite infrastructure, regulatory and legislative environment for an attractive UK tech community to flourish:

- **Convene:** bring together the public and private sectors to identify and drive solutions.
- **Champion:** promote London as a global hub of digital excellence.
- **Collaborate:** work with the tech sector to address the challenges it faces, and ensure that Londoners are equipped with the skills to benefit from all that the sector has to offer.

The ideas and recommendations that follow are the work of many, and we are very grateful to those who contributed their insights and expertise during the research process. In particular, thanks are due to: Lewis Cannon, Oliver Wyman Digital; Has Dosanjh, Oliver Wyman Digital; Jo Corfield, Centre for London; Hannah Kitcher, Doteveryone; David Lutton, London First; Sarah Luxford, TLA Women in Tech; Mike Magan, Here East; Caroline Puygrenier, Interxion; Richard Brown, Centre for London; Andrew Roughan, Plexal; Russ Shaw, Tech London Advocates & Global Tech Advocates; Jess Tyrell, Beyond; and Anthony Walker, techUK.

All of the above gave their time to attend a roundtable discussion that was instrumental in shaping the thinking of this manifesto.

We have published this manifesto to ensure that the city, its companies and communities, share in the success of digital innovation and benefit in the immediate future. We look forward to working with the candidates and elected Mayor towards that end.

RUSS SHAW CBE
FOUNDER • TECH LONDON
ADVOCATES


ANTHONY WALKER
DEPUTY CEO • TECHUK

RICHARD BROWN
INTERIM DIRECTOR •
CENTRE FOR LONDON

DAVID LUTTON
DIRECTOR OF CONNECTIVITY
TRANSPORT & INFRASTRUCTURE
• LONDON FIRST

GAVIN POOLE
CEO • HERE EAST

ANDREW ROUGHAN
MANAGING DIRECTOR • PLEXAL



THE NEXT MAYOR OF
LONDON WILL HAVE A UNIQUE
OPPORTUNITY TO BUILD ON THE
EXCEPTIONAL SUCCESSES OF
LONDON'S TECH SECTOR AND
PLAY AN INTEGRAL ROLE IN
FACILITATING ITS EVOLUTION

RUSS SHAW CBE
FOUNDER • TECH LONDON ADVOCATES

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INTRODUCTION

TECHNOLOGY HAS BECOME ONE OF LONDON'S GREAT SUCCESS STORIES: A SECTOR THAT IS ATTRACTING TALENT, CAPITAL AND ATTENTION FROM AROUND THE WORLD

London's tech sector in recent years has consolidated its position as a globally significant digital hub, capable of attracting record-levels of inward investment, scaling high-growth businesses and seeding innovative start-ups to create a diversified ecosystem across multiple industry verticals. From fintech to artificial intelligence, retailtech, cyber and healthtech – London is setting the global agenda in many instances.

Over the past five years, those organisations considered to be the first cohort of London's tech sector have now transitioned and matured to become amongst the most successful scale-up businesses in Britain and beyond. London has provided the ecosystem requirements to support rapid growth – with access to skilled digital talent, progressive regulatory frameworks, vast availability of capital and the infrastructure required of a changing economy.

These levels of success stand-out in the context of the UK's uncertain political position for the past four years. As an inherently outward facing sector, tech relies heavily on the globalisation of markets and access to overseas opportunities along with international talent to provide the skills and knowledge needed to scale.

And yet with the future of these issues consistently in the air until December 2019, tech has remained resilient; a centre point of growth, optimism and confidence for London's business community, bringing more Londoners than ever into the digital economy.

Since Brexit, the global pandemic took hold with the economic consequences not expected to be fully visible for a number of years to come. Whilst the Mayor of London will be met by a strong and ambitious sector upon election, there remain core pressure points and questions over how technology can support London's reopening, underpin the future of work and continue to thrive so that the sector works for everyone in the city, both economically and socially.

In recent years, tech entrepreneurs have consistently cited that sufficient access to skilled digital talent is the single greatest challenge they face when growing – and whilst the sector expands so too does the number of

● THROUGHOUT 2020
● THERE WERE 391,532
● UNIQUE TECH JOBS
● ADVERTISED

job vacancies as demand exceeds supply in the labour market. Despite the impact of Covid-19, in its 2021 report on the UK technology landscape, industry body Tech Nation reported that throughout 2020 there were 391,532 unique tech jobs advertised. Not meeting this number of vacancies has been exacerbated by a failure to address a critical lack of diversity at all levels of the tech sector.

The incoming Mayor will equally be afoot of several large-scale technological transformations that pose considerable opportunities for London to realise its potential as a truly Smart City and global hub; representing the future of mobility, healthtech, artificial intelligence and data usage, connectivity, sustainability and tech for good.

The broader opportunity is for London to ensure that the tech sector drives Britain's economic recovery from the Covid downturn, its post-Brexit future, increases productivity and generates frontier innovation and advancements, to feed growth across the country. As the gravitational centre of the economy continues to move towards tech, transformational technologies such as Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning see heightened levels of deployment, 5G connectivity reimagines network capabilities – the importance of London's digital entrepreneurs will be unparalleled.

The Mayor of London has considerable power to affect the trajectory of London as a digital hub and by working collaboratively with central Government – can enhance collaboration, convene and campaign for a tomorrow driven by innovation and an understanding that London is bound to a digital future.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

01

CHAMPION TECH COMPANIES

To drive London's long-term economic recovery

04

SHOWCASE THE BEST OF LONDON TECH

Support the sector in diversifying across
the city's boroughs

02

SUPPORT TECHNOLOGY-LED SOLUTIONS

For the future of work and reopening
the economy post-Covid-19

05

ENGAGE WITH INVESTORS

Work to attract greater inbound investment
from a range of global partners

03

INVEST IN DIGITAL SKILLS

Support the public and private sectors
to meet new employment needs

06

STIMULATE CROSS-CITY COLLABORATION ACROSS THE UK

Work together with the country's city Mayors

07

CHAMPION A FAIR AND MANAGED IMMIGRATION SYSTEM

Present London as open and welcoming
to international tech talent

08

INTRODUCE A CHIEF DIVERSITY, EQUALITY & INCLUSION OFFICER

Appoint someone responsible for diversity in tech
and business to support the Chief Digital Officer

09

REALISE THE POTENTIAL OF DATA FOR LONDON

Unlocking and optimising the value of data
for London, ethically and responsibly

10

PEOPLE, SOCIETY AND PLANET

Launch new initiatives that support
tech to deliver greater impact and
tackle major challenges

11

INVEST IN DIGITAL INFRASTRUCTURE

Remove barriers to 5G rollout and create
a Gigabit Connectivity Taskforce

12

EMBRACE TRANSPORT INNOVATION

Encourage micro-mobility and mobility platforms

CHAPTER 01

INVEST IN TECHNOLOGY IN ALL AREAS AND FOR ALL PEOPLE IN LONDON

INVEST IN TECHNOLOGY IN ALL AREAS AND FOR ALL PEOPLE IN LONDON

The global Covid-19 pandemic has caused extensive damage to the local economy in London – closing many businesses for sustained periods of time and emptying the city of workers and visitors for several months. The economic impact is predicted to be realised in the years to come as the true scale of the disruption to growth and employment is shown.

Despite Covid-19, London has continued amassing a robust reputation globally as an economy that is ahead of the curve when it comes to tech innovation. And whilst the City retains its historic prevalence as one of the financial centres of the world – the UK capital has added tech to its allure for foreign investment, exceptional international talent and for entrepreneurs looking to start and scale businesses.

There is now a unique role for the technology sector to play in driving London's resurgence and enabling it to evolve and meet the new needs of citizens and businesses. London tech is well placed to support future growth owing to the resilience it has demonstrated since the pandemic took hold. In 2020, tech companies attracted record sums of investment capital, with businesses raising £15bn in venture capital funding alone – representing an increase on 2019.

The Mayor has a primary responsibility to use City Hall as a means to strengthen the local Digital Capital of London and to ensure that innovation, growth and the employment it generates impacts London's population at large. In practice, this means building on successes achieved to date, ensuring that the city's digital development positively reaches all Londoners, whilst protecting the privacy, safety and security of citizens and enterprise alike, as we recover.

THE INCOMING MAYOR HAS A CHIEF RESPONSIBILITY TO UTILISE CITY HALL AS A MEANS TO STRENGTHEN THE DIGITAL ECOSYSTEM IN LONDON.

Practically, tech solutions can support businesses and workers in returning to the city and opening up once more - in ways that provide Londoners with security, confidence and are achieved sustainably. Equally, London's hubs of digital businesses, campuses, accelerators and co-working spaces play a vital role in employment ecosystems – and so their return to greater numbers of employees and visitors will be very important for localised prosperity in 2021.

Embracing technology as part of London's journey to a 'new normal' can support people in utilising new patterns for commuting and taking advantage of multiple modes of transport. Tech innovation can also play a major role in managing in-person contact that facilitates hybrid working environments, allows greater flexible working and supports companies in optimising city locations for employers so that they are fit for purpose post-covid and meet the new needs of the workforce. City Hall can help this transition by regulating, advocating and showcasing in support of businesses and employees as the use of transport, offices and public spaces are reimagined.

At large the pandemic has also transformed the role of tech companies in the economy and innovation throughout other industries – hyper-accelerating digital first business solutions such as cloud technologies and alternative banking services. Accordingly, almost 590,000 Londoners are now employed in digital tech and in the coming four years, the indicators are that this figure will rise, placing new skill demands on workers.

The world of work is fundamentally transforming and with it, traditional forms of employment, career structures and where the economy derives value from human beings. The consequences have been that the supply of digitally-equipped workers with the necessary skills has not kept pace with demand, resulting in mounting levels of vacancies across London's tech sector.

MAYOR SHOULD ALSO BE A LEADING AND ACTIVE VOICE IN PRESENTING LONDON AS OPEN AND WELCOMING TO OVERSEAS TECH TALENT.

Yet, whilst there is a sizeable volume of vacancies, it is widely acknowledged that the level of representation of women, ethnic minorities, people from lower socio-economic backgrounds, members of the LGBTQ+ community and people with disabilities has not kept pace with the growth of the industry. Combating this critical issue for the long-term prosperity of the sector and the city could be supported by the introduction of a comprehensive Digital Skills Strategy for London by the Mayor – that channels investment and support into home-grown talent and facilitates the provision of digital skills to communities in which they are currently not accessible. This should ultimately aim to ensure that all Londoners have a basic level of digital skills, we narrow digital exclusion and develop routes for upskilling.

The Mayor can use a newly created Digital Skills Strategy to better distribute the Adult Skills Budget towards the technology sector to establish a culture of life-long learning in London. Public sector-led digital skills education can be accompanied by encouraging businesses to invest within their own training and reskilling programmes both internally and by direct engagement in the community. Identifying areas and people that would benefit to the largest extent from upskilling would be a role City Hall can play in support of the private sector using its resources and expertise to improve access to digital skills training.

Complementing the contribution of home-grown talent is the important role that overseas workers play in London's tech sector – with digital businesses reliant on highly-skilled foreign nationals to deliver growth and knowledge transfer. National visa reform to date has failed to meet the needs of London's tech sector with calls to increase visa allocation across various entry routes frequently ignored by policy makers. The Home Office may play a central role in determining policy direction and the majority of legislation, however the new Mayor should actively campaign to support London's demands.

In addition to influencing national legislation, the new Mayor should call for a streamlined and more efficient immigration system that ensures London is internationally competitive in attracting the brightest and best talent from around the world. At present the system is too complex and timely, and acts to discourage talent from coming to London and secondly, represents a barrier for start-ups and scale-ups in bringing in the skills they need from overseas. The Mayor and City Hall must work for reform to simplify, streamline and reduce barriers. For international workers, rhetoric matters and therefore the Mayor should also be a leading and active voice in presenting London as open and welcoming to overseas tech talent.

Creating a more strategically-aligned environment for tech in London across its boroughs will also prove critical for its long-term success. London's tech sector was for several years almost exclusively linked to Shoreditch and the 'Silicon Roundabout' that surrounds Old Street – however London is a city of 33 local government areas. Today, we find pockets of innovation and investment in diverse areas across the capital, which has helped the sector to reach a greater number of communities who now have a stake in the growth journey of the digital economy. There is more to be done to recognise the variety of tech districts and innovation zones throughout London, stretching from East to West, North to South. The Mayor of London should utilise the office to stimulate growth and further the development of tech clusters throughout the city. This should include the recognition of an annual 'London Borough of Tech' and the introduction of Innovation Districts, based on the model of the recently established Creative Enterprise Zones. Specific recognition across Boroughs would help to diversify the concentration of digital businesses in London and ensure the positive benefits of tech are felt across the city. Replicating the model of the London Borough of Culture – would form the basis of a new initiative to encourage innovation and technology to sit at the heart of local communities.

THE NEW MAYOR SHOULD INSTRUCT LONDON & PARTNERS TO UP THE NUMBER OF INBOUND FUNDING TRADE MISSIONS, SPECIFICALLY TARGETING INVESTORS NOT JUST IN SILICON VALLEY, BUT AROUND THE WORLD

As well as enshrining London's innovation hotspots, the capital needs to continue attracting growth capital from overseas. Inward investment is another essential component of creating an environment that supports digital businesses in scaling and realising growth.

Withstanding the pandemic and the anticipated impact of exiting the European Union, there remains significant opportunity to build on London's growing reputation as a global hub for world-class tech talent, fintech, healthtech and tech for good, and forge ahead in attracting investment from overseas into the sector. The Mayor should instruct London & Partners to increase the number of inbound funding trade missions, specifically targeting investors not just in Silicon Valley, but around the world. To complement the initiative, the Mayor should publicly send a strong message that London's door remains open to both funders and founders looking to invest in London's tech companies and digital infrastructure.

Whilst we look at the potential to generate growth by working with overseas partners, it should be widely acknowledged that London's success is intrinsically linked to that of the rest of the country and that although London has unrivalled connections to tech, finance and business hubs around the world – domestically, collaboration with other cities in the UK has not reached a sufficient level. The charge that London is isolated from digital hubs beyond the 'Golden Triangle' with Oxford and Cambridge, is central to broader narratives of over-investment in London from central government in contrast to other regions, particularly in the north. The role for London now is to showcase what tech has done for the capital, to create an environment for continued innovation, and to play a role in ensuring this success is rolled out to the rest of the country by collaborating with other UK cities.



EXPERT VIEW

JAMES KLEIN

SHOOSMITHS

Despite the economic turmoil brought about by an unprecedented year, and the uncertainty of the Brexit aftermath, the UK continues to attract more VC investment than any other European country. Particularly in the sub-sectors or areas of Fintech, Artificial Intelligence, MedTech and Machine Learning, the UK is undoubtedly becoming a globally renowned hub for technology and innovation.

For the UK tech sector to continue thriving, it must continue to attract international investors and strengthen its ties with the wider global tech ecosystem, especially from China and the US. Our start-ups and scale-ups have the potential to be some of our most valuable exports.

The UK tech industry must work closer than ever with Government to ensure that Brexit is used as an opportunity for it to become even more globally oriented. This will involve connecting our tech hubs with other key clusters around the world, and streamlining the visa process, to increase the influx of talent into Britain. As the sector continues to grow, we risk creating more jobs than we have people to fill them – and it is for the benefit of our industry that we remain open to the brightest and best from around the world.

THE SOLUTIONS

The Mayor of London must be a vocal champion of the city's technology companies and digital industries. The Mayor has a powerful platform and should celebrate the growth of London's tech ecosystem, showcase emerging success stories and address the challenges facing start-ups. Priorities must be:

01

CHAMPION TECH COMPANIES TO DRIVE LONDON'S LONG-TERM ECONOMIC RECOVERY

The Covid-19 pandemic has resulted in unprecedented economic distress across the UK, with long-term scarring effects likely to mean the economy will still remain 3% smaller in 2025 than pre-pandemic forecasts predicted. Yet, the technology sector throughout 2020 continued to attract record sums of investment capital, with businesses raising £15bn in venture capital funding – representing an increase on 2019. The tech industry has the potential to drive London's long-term economic recovery, generating growth and creating jobs. The Mayor should champion the capital's innovative companies and support startups, scaleups and corporates to play a leading role in the renewal.

02

SUPPORT TECHNOLOGY-LED SOLUTIONS

Technology enabled solutions can play a critical role in reopening London and bringing employees back into workplaces and public spaces – safely, securely and sustainably. For local businesses, retailers and the hospitality sector, having London's vibrant tech districts populated once more will also be essential for their viability. Technology can help people to utilise new patterns for commuting, and support in organising and managing in-person contact for a return to the city that is flexible, secure and instils confidence for people. Technological innovation will equally drive the future of office environments, facilitating hybrid spaces and optimising city locations for employers so that they are fit for purpose post-covid. City Hall should take a leadership role convening businesses and local representatives to assess the infrastructure that is needed to support changes in how people want to work. Ensuring London has a working culture and supporting infrastructure that meets the demands of the workforce of tomorrow will be vital for London's attractiveness. City Hall should also seek to market financial support, such as Help to Grow: Digital so that every business can become a digital business.

04

SHOWCASE THE BEST OF LONDON TECH

Even just five years ago, when people thought of London tech, they thought of Shoreditch and Hackney. More should be done to recognise the increasing variety of tech districts and innovation zones that now exist across the capital – from Canary Wharf to Clerkenwell, the Olympic Park to Oval. The Mayor must establish initiatives that attract entrepreneurs and investors to all boroughs of London, stimulating growth in those that have developing tech clusters. This should include an annual 'London Borough of Tech' and the introduction of Innovation Districts, based on the model of the recently established Creative Enterprise Zones across the city.

03

INVEST IN DIGITAL SKILLS

Despite the major economic disruption caused by Covid-19, employment opportunities in tech have rebounded and in 2020 there were 391,532 vacancies for tech jobs advertised. The pandemic has acted to accelerate digital adoption within businesses, leading to an increase in demand for digital skills across industries. Equally, the sector continues battling a diversity crisis, with women, ethnic minorities, people from lower socio-economic backgrounds, members of the LGBTQ+ community and people with disabilities under-represented. The Mayor should introduce a comprehensive Digital Skills Strategy for London to invest in home-grown talent and ensure that all Londoners have access to digital skills. This should include distribution of the Adult Skills Budget towards the technology sector to establish a culture of life-long learning in London. Public sector-led digital skills education can be supported by encouraging businesses to invest within their own training and reskilling programmes both internally and by direct engagement in the community. As society emerges from the pandemic, City Hall can also work with the private sector to identify areas and people that have the greatest need for support and find effective means for technology companies to contribute resources in upskilling the population as their future talent.



EXPERT VIEW

STEPHEN NUNDY

LAKESTAR

Moving beyond the devastating impact of Covid-19 for many businesses, and as London continues to ascend as a global front runner in tech, efforts now need to be made to support the City's exciting start-up ecosystem with a focus on achieving scale with the availability of capital that can take these companies through the later stages in the UK.

London has produced the greatest number of tech companies that exceed a \$1 billion valuation in Europe, and is home to an array of fast-growth digital firms that are climbing the ranks. Yet looking to the US and China, there remains a significant shortfall in scale-up funding within the UK since investors traditionally are less patient and concerned with profitability sooner, to the detriment of top line growth.

Efforts must be made to ensure that while new UK tech businesses are undergoing the kind of growth that so many others are currently enjoying elsewhere, there should be no situation where the brakes are put on while they look abroad for larger funds or the allure of public markets. All routes are important but not mutually exclusive.

The introduction of a revolving 'London Borough of Tech' would help serve this well – and support in showcasing the diversity of growth opportunities across the city that form this great international hub. Technological innovation is now not simply reserved to Shoreditch's Silicon Roundabout but is happening throughout London, ensuring that all companies have access to the ecosystem requirements for scale is going to prove critical in the long-run – and is an attractive proposition to all investors.

05

ENGAGE WITH INVESTORS

The market is reporting resilient investment activity and with the strong reputation of London as a global capital for world-class tech talent, fintech, AI and tech for good mean there are significant opportunities for London's tech companies to attract investment from overseas investors – particularly from Asia. The new Mayor should instruct London & Partners to increase inbound funding trade missions, specifically targeting investors not just in Silicon Valley, but around the world. At the same time, the new Mayor should publicly state they have an open door to investors and companies seeking to invest in London's tech companies and digital infrastructure.

06

STIMULATE CROSS-CITY COLLABORATION ACROSS THE UK

London is a global city, with world-renowned connections to tech, finance and business hubs around the globe. However, London is less effective at working with other cities across

the UK and stimulating collaboration and growth domestically. The new Mayor should work in close collaboration with other UK mayors, city and tech leaders to strengthen the relationship between London and other UK tech hubs to encourage greater investment, knowledge exchange and job opportunities across the country. As part of this, the Mayor should demonstrate that the levelling-up agenda requires generating a greater distribution of economic activity and investment across the country but not at the expense of London, which must remain as an international tech hub alluring inbound capital, businesses and talent.

07

CHAMPION A FAIR AND MANAGED IMMIGRATION SYSTEM

National visa legislation isn't meeting London's needs. Time and time again, the call for increased immigration for skilled tech workers from industry bodies, CEOs and founders is ignored. The Mayor should campaign for a streamlined immigration system which presents the city as an attractive destination for international talent, is globally competitive and does not discourage workers. Currently securing a visa takes too long and requires navigating an incredibly complex and costly administrative process. The Mayor and City Hall should work with government to establish a more efficient and flexible immigration system that delivers against London tech's talent needs and the requirements of emerging areas such as quantum or Deeptech. When it comes to immigration, rhetoric matters and the Mayor needs to re-iterate the message that London is open and welcomes world-class talent.

CHAPTER 02

MAKE LONDON A GLOBAL PIONEER FOR PURPOSE-LED TECH AND DIGITAL CITIZENSHIP

MAKE LONDON A GLOBAL PIONEER FOR PURPOSE-LED TECH AND DIGITAL CITIZENSHIP

London has never been more alive to the challenges and crises that threaten society. The pandemic has compounded economic inequality for many whilst the dangers of climate change and the need for action become ever more prevalent as we head towards COP26, hosted in the UK.

The question of how politics and business responds to climate change and social challenges will help to define the next five years. Technology has already transformed the world in the 21st Century, and the industry now has a responsibility to create digital citizens, purpose-led businesses and answers to some of the biggest challenges society has ever faced. There is an opportunity for London to become the capital city that stepped up and tackled these issues head on, creating a globally renowned purpose-led tech hub in the process.

Globally, public trust in technology companies is being tested with citizens calling for greater levels of transparency about the role that these businesses play in society. In 2019, António Guterres, the United Nations Secretary General said: "We can and must do more to ensure that digital technologies are a force for good." This is the potential that London can deliver.

Many of the technologies that have become indispensable to us over the last year call London home. From providing platforms to receive remote health care, to ensuring children from disadvantaged backgrounds have the resources to learn from home – London's tech community has stepped up to the mark.

Concerns arise when technology is imposed on the public, even if ultimately the technology benefits them or they would have chosen to use it had they been given a choice. The challenge for the Mayor is to show that despite concerns, tech is a force for good for London and the increasing speed at which our world is digitalising sponsors positive transformation. This opportunity can only be seized if citizens have trust in the technology and the companies developing and providing it. The Mayor must harness the increased energy for activism towards positive social action and rehabilitate trust in technology in the process.

Unexpected things will always happen and there will always be times of economic adversity. It is no longer enough to be driven by profit alone. There is a growing movement spanning London and the rest of the world that is calling on business to embrace purpose as well as balancing the books, and commit to serving people, society and the planet.

THE CHALLENGE FOR THE MAYOR IS TO SHOW THAT DESPITE CONCERNS, TECH IS A FORCE FOR GOOD



THE MAYOR HAS THE OPPORTUNITY TO ORGANISE THIS GROWING COMMUNITY OF PURPOSE-LED ENTREPRENEURS AND BUSINESSES INTO A GLOBAL POSITION

Technology can, should and will provide the answers to incredible social challenges. London is already emerging as a global capital for purpose-led technology, with Tech Nation reporting that 'tech for good' companies in the UK have attracted more than £1.4bn in investment. From financial inclusion in fintech to renewable energy suppliers, entrepreneurs are proving that technology can be used to have a positive social impact as well as create world-beating businesses.

Record levels of tech investment descended on the capital in 2020, leading to growth and opportunity within the sector. Glowing figures of the health of the tech ecosystem must not come at the cost of overlooking the sector's prevailing issues. The Mayor has the opportunity to organise this growing community of purpose-led entrepreneurs and businesses into a global position for London as a tech hub that takes people, society and our planet seriously.

We believe this can be done in three ways. Firstly, the new Mayor must act to ensure the technology sector becomes more inclusive and diverse – giving an individual working alongside the Chief Digital Officer at City Hall responsibility to review the city's business diversity strategy and make recommendations to boroughs about how to reach currently under-represented members of the community with digital skills training and job opportunities.

Secondly, we believe the Mayor has the opportunity to positively endorse technology's potential to improve everyday lives. From connectivity platforms that facilitate education in lockdown, to challenger banks tackling financial exclusion as a key factor in homelessness, to providing us with convenient means to navigate the city – tech has transformed our lives for the better. It can do more, but its existing benefits are too often drowned out. Practical and accessible examples need to be celebrated so that artificial intelligence, data and new technologies such as mobility services or facial recognition are seen to be deployed to empower, not restrict, Londoners.

Finally, the Mayor must establish London as the world's leading tech hub for purpose-led technology. A Global Cities Forum with international political, tech and business leaders specifically designed to discuss the role of digital innovation to address major social problems would give a platform to the city's critical mass of purpose-led tech companies and investors and would consolidate the capital's leadership position in this debate.



RECORD LEVELS OF TECH INVESTMENT DESCENDED ON THE CAPITAL IN 2020, LEADING TO GROWTH AND OPPORTUNITY WITHIN THE SECTOR.



EXPERT VIEW

SARAH LUXFORD

TLA WOMEN IN TECH

Imagine if London was renowned the world over for being the first city that addressed tech's diversity crisis. Imagine if London's tech companies openly published figures about their diversity, if female tech leaders were hailed as role models and female entrepreneurs were confident that a meeting with a venture capital firm wouldn't just involve men. After a year that has provided us with a unique 'reset' opportunity, this is our opportunity to grasp it, should we choose to.

I know that if we collectively turned lip service and intention into action then the number of start-ups and scale-ups in London, the amount of investment the city's tech companies attracted and the number of highly skilled tech workers in the capital would increase dramatically.

The new Mayor of London needs to take this seriously. For too long, diversity and inclusion has been tech's guilty secret. Women have been disproportionately affected by the pandemic and after a year when reporting of the gender pay gap was suspended, the new Mayor will have a unique platform to raise awareness about this issue, demand change and send a clear message to the rest of the world.

As new job opportunities within the tech sector emerge in the aftermath of COVID-19, apprenticeships and budget for digital skills initiatives should be targeted towards under-represented communities and should be central to the new Mayor's business strategy.

We already live in the world's most diverse capital city. The private sector is ready to support City Hall to create the world's most diverse tech hub.

THE SOLUTIONS

The Mayor of London must be a vocal champion of the city's technology companies and digital industries. The Mayor has a powerful platform and should celebrate the growth of London's tech ecosystem, showcase emerging success stories and address the challenges facing start-ups. Priorities must be:

08

INTRODUCE A CHIEF DIVERSITY, EQUALITY & INCLUSION OFFICER

London's tech sector is more diverse than many tech hubs around the world, but more needs to be done to create the most diverse and inclusive technology community in the world. The Mayor should appoint a Chief Diversity, Equality & Inclusion Officer to advise the Chief Digital Officer with responsibility for diversity and inclusion within the industry. The holder of this new position will champion diversity in tech and amplify existing initiatives and organisations such as the Tech Talent Charter, Ada College, Code First: Girls, UK Blacktech and TLA Women in Tech and Black Women in Tech. The new position would also lead a commission on diversity in the sector to examine inclusion across the full business and employment landscape in London.



EXPERT VIEW

PRIYA GUHA

MERIAN VENTURES

London's tech ecosystem can be defined by its vibrancy – it is full of ambitious entrepreneurs from all over the world who are driving the economy and scaling the solutions they believe will change the world. This digital community is one that the incoming Mayor must value.

If we are to fuel Europe's most prosperous tech ecosystem, London's tech leaders must find City Hall welcoming and open; a place committed to supporting every step of their journey.

Connecting London with the rest of the UK and the world is a necessity. The high rate of digital transformation across every sector of the economy means we have to support the UK's whole population in becoming both capable and comfortable working with technology.

Back in the UK capital, despite the pandemic, there remains a high level of vacancies within the sector, as the supply of skilled talent has failed to keep pace with demand. Domestic and international talent will be key to filling this gap: maintaining a London that remains open to all is fundamental to its culture and success.

Part of this openness is also addressing underrepresentation across technology. The widespread recognition of a need for greater diversity and inclusion gives me great hope, particularly because we've moved beyond talking about the moral imperative to recognising simply that diverse companies make more effective products and more successful businesses. The new Mayor must reinforce this and firmly establish inclusion as core to the ability of the capital's tech ecosystem to thrive.

09

REALISE THE POTENTIAL OF DATA FOR LONDON

City Hall can support in unlocking and optimising the value of data for London, ethically and responsibly. The Mayor should create a Data for London board with the responsibility for convening public and private sector leaders to unlock data led solutions to the capital's challenges and take forward the work of embedding the principles of the London Data Charter into the city's data sharing arrangements. The adoption of an ambitious new city data strategy would help to realise the full potential of data sharing to transform London and give the city competitive advantage. The strategy should reflect the Data for London (DfL) framework proposed by the London Data Commission. This framework aims to create a world class data sharing platform to harness the potential of the city's anonymised data to better target public services, plan infrastructure and identify opportunities for local growth and innovation. Commit to long term sustainable investment in the London Datastore to support these ambitions and allow it to play a pivotal role as a registry of all critical city data and in establishing City Data Trusts to solve some of London's critical challenges.

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PEOPLE, PLANET AND SOCIETY

Society is facing unprecedented challenges – from climate change to increasing inequality. London has a critical mass of purpose-led business leaders, tech for good companies, social campaigners and impact investors. The Mayor should leverage these assets and convene a Global Cities Forum with other tech cities, hubs and regions from across the UK and around the world to position London at the forefront of the debate around technology and citizenship and demonstrate the city's pioneering approach to these issues. London also has world-class academic institutions, brilliant people working in public and civic sectors and entrepreneurs driving globally influential innovations. However, too often sectors work in isolation. The Mayor should outline and prioritise the key challenges facing London to introduce Challenge Prizes that encourage collaboration and data sharing across the academic, public and private sectors. Financial backing will enable collaboration that addresses fundamental problems facing London and its citizens.

CHAPTER 03

EMBRACE NEW TECHNOLOGIES TO HELP LONDON BECOME A WORLD-LEADING SMART CITY

EMBRACE NEW TECHNOLOGIES TO HELP LONDON BECOME A WORLD-LEADING SMART CITY

Despite the increasing influence of technology and digitisation on the capital, there is a tension between the emergence of London as a true smart city and the capital's antiquated and over-regulated transport infrastructure.

The unique circumstances of the pandemic have only exacerbated this challenge. Remote working has increased connectivity requirements whilst social distancing has encouraged workers to avoid public transport and seek alternative methods of commuting.

The city's complex, multi-borough political system presents an obstacle to change and cohesive implementation of digital initiatives. For example, the roll out of 5G networks requires co-ordination between a variety of stakeholders, only for those conversations to be duplicated across 33 different local authorities. Despite the progress made by Chief Digital Officer, Theo Blackwell, greater collaboration across boroughs must be a priority.

The Mayor, while supporting the capital's thriving commercial landscape, must also find ways to prioritise the evolution of urban infrastructure. The answer might be to marry the two. Helpfully, much of the technology already exists in industry, but needs to be repurposed to establish London as a leading smart city.

All the ingredients for transformation are already present – world-class academic institutions, a concentration of utility providers and start-ups and organisations such as the London Data Store driving innovation. Removing barriers and navigating diverse stakeholders is vital to create a truly world-leading smart city.

REMOTE WORKING HAS INCREASED CONNECTIVITY REQUIREMENTS

The London Office of Technology and Innovation (LOTI) is already working to innovate and scale-up digital advancements across London's public services – but must be consistently well funded and supported to deliver throughout the capital in the coming years. Within two years LOTI has managed to foster collaboration across the boroughs to solve common challenges, this should now evolve to include better partnerships working with the tech ecosystem to improve outcomes for Londoners and break down the barriers for SMEs with innovative solutions to improve the lives of Londoners.

Whoever next takes the helm at City Hall has a significant opportunity to use the innovation present in industry and apply it to its infrastructure – creating a smart city in the process that improves the capabilities of businesses and the lives of its citizens.



LONDON HAS MADE HUGE PROGRESS IN ADDRESSING INFRASTRUCTURE AND SMART CITY CHALLENGES

The Mayor can achieve this in five ways. Firstly, upgrade existing street furniture to ensure London is capable of housing the advanced 5G connectivity it requires to be a truly smart city. Improving collaboration with local councils, network operators and landholders alike will be crucial to this and must be formalised with defined initiatives and timelines for boosting the capital's connectivity.

Secondly, we believe the Mayor must foster an environment for widespread adoption of micro-mobility services. London must find ways of giving its citizens access to efficient and seamless urban transport options. Embracing mobility innovation will be vital to ease the capital's congestion issues and environmental footprint, but will require a re-assessment of transport laws.

Next, there is a huge opportunity to take advantage of the information already at London's disposal. As the volume of city data generated increases, so does the number of opportunities afforded by it – carrying the potential to inform significant improvements in transport infrastructure, urban planning and online services if used responsibly as the catalyst for private-public sector collaboration. Intelligent use of data is a prerequisite for any smart city and London must better harness the vast amounts at its disposal.

The introduction of London's Ultra Low Emissions Zone (ULEZ) has been considered highly successful in reducing the number of the worst polluting vehicles from the centre of the city. With the sale of all petrol and diesel cars to be banned in 2040 – London has the digital capabilities and infrastructure to lead out in front with the use of electric vehicles. The introduction of a city-wide system of road user charging for all traditionally fuelled vehicles could position London as a first mover and leader in reducing emissions and improving air quality for Londoners.

Finally, the Mayor should better incentivise innovators to solve the barriers to London becoming a leading smart city. Whether private sector, public sector or academic institutions, too much emphasis is placed on solving business issues rather than contributing to enhancing the environment around us. By making these challenges clear and introducing challenge prizes to encourage innovators to solve them, the Mayor can foster cross-sector partnerships to improve the lives of the capital's citizens.

London has made huge progress in addressing infrastructure and smart city challenges that defined the last ten years – access to affordable space, broadband connectivity and capturing data across public transport. However, the next five years will be equally critical and must have significant investment into the smart city infrastructure required to ensure the capital can compete globally.



THERE IS A HUGE OPPORTUNITY
TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE
INFORMATION ALREADY AT
LONDON'S DISPOSAL



EXPERT VIEW

ANDREW ROUGHAN

PLEXAL

For years, London has faced increasing congestion and decreasing air quality. The city now faces the twin challenge of needing to encourage workers back into the office to re-stimulate the city's economy whilst keeping the city's environmental impact as low as possible.

There is an opportunity to use technology to help solve this problem by providing cleaner, more environmentally friendly forms of transport – something that has been recognised in more than 100 cities around the world, such as San Francisco, Paris and Copenhagen, where thousands of people have taken to riding electric scooters.

For those looking to do the same in the UK, historic legislation has stood in the way of innovations. This has been most recently demonstrated by the battles to permit e-scooters on the streets of London.

Going forward, it is imperative that legislators and regulators are aligned with the technological community in the UK and that there is a heightened sense of collaboration which is both progressive but also safeguards Londoners. There must be a mutual understanding of the challenges that the economy and society face but also the power of entrepreneurs to solve them.

THE SOLUTIONS

When it comes to digital infrastructure, smart city innovation and the deployment of new technologies, there is a tension between London's inherent challenge and opportunities.

On the one hand, London is struggling with Victorian infrastructure, a complex system of 33 local government areas and antiquated laws regarding mobility. On the other hand, all the ingredients for transformation already exist – world-class academic institutions, a concentration of utility providers and start-ups and organisations such as the London Data Store driving innovation. Removing barriers and navigating diverse stakeholders is vital to create a truly world-leading smart city. Priorities for the new Mayor must be:

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INVEST IN DIGITAL INFRASTRUCTURE

Bring street furniture into the digital era and make sufficient funding available for smart city infrastructure – from updating lamp posts with smart units to equipping air quality sensors, installing more electric vehicle charging points to increasing public wi-fi. Central to this must be greater clarity for London boroughs about the roll out of 5G and installation of full fibre broadband. The Mayor must also create a Gigabit Connectivity Taskforce for London, which would bring together key public and private stakeholders to help drive an action plan to achieve 100% gigabit-capable connectivity across the capital by 2025. Without this infrastructure, London will never compete with other capitals and tech hubs around the world.



EXPERT VIEW

CAROLINE PUYGRENIER

INTERXION

The next step in London's technological evolution is the roll out of 5G connectivity across all of the capital's boroughs. Forget the luxury of mobile video streaming on your phone; the low latency network will allow surgeons to perform remotely, cars will be able to communicate with sensors around the city to drive autonomously; and with enough bandwidth, you'll even be able to use VR technology on the move. In fact, it's been estimated that 5G networks could add almost £16bn to the UK economy.

At the moment, however, the UK is falling behind the US and China on the adoption of 5G technology, who are on their way to rolling out super-fast connectivity for their consumers and businesses. In London, there is currently a lack of integration, strategy and coordination amongst local authorities, network carriers and the early private-sector adopters who would benefit most from 5G. We are also observing a lack of application based test beds in and around London, compared to the rest of the country (source DCMS).

London cannot afford to be left behind when it comes to digital infrastructure. We know that it has the potential to transform almost all of our sectors and unlock crucial opportunities for businesses and millions of people. Investing in and upgrading our network infrastructure with a funded national strategy and a coordinated approach must be prioritised or the government and the next Mayor of London.

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EMBRACE TRANSPORT INNOVATION

Resistance to micro-mobility solutions is undermining the narrative that London is open to mobility innovation. The development of integrated mobility platforms that allow travellers to plan and pay for multi-modal journeys will improve efficiency and congestion for consumers and service providers alike. London must roll-out a city-wide system of road user charging to lead the world in electric vehicle usage, as well as provide infrastructure for increasingly popular e-scooters and e-bikes. The Mayor must work with the Department for Transport and Transport for London to establish a review of governance and regulation of new mobility services, including micro-mobility solutions.

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