

KNOWLEDGE PACK

Watford Borough Council
LPWAN Innovation Competition

BACKGROUND

Despite increasing pressure on public sector budgets, Watford Borough Council is constantly looking at ways to improve its services for residents and businesses. As a bold and progressive council, Watford has also seen the opportunity to exploit new technology to improve the customer experience and service efficiency.

Having embarked on a journey to become a customer-focused, digitally-enabled and commercially-minded organisation, the council has recently completed a review of all its services to identify areas which could benefit from new technology. The challenges Watford is facing are the same as those which local authorities up and down the country are dealing with. If these challenges can be overcome, the council could radically transform service delivery and provide a better service for customers.



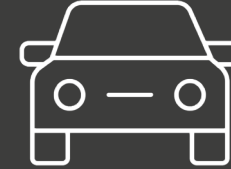
Scenario

The number of vehicles on UK streets is increasing. The need to manage road space effectively is one of the toughest issues for local authorities, particularly in urban areas.

Remotely identifying the location of specific vehicles could have a range of benefits for local authorities, residents and businesses alike. For instance, being able to confirm when licensed taxis are parked in designated ranks will ensure customers are directed to those specific taxis. They can also receive information about the driver and vehicle before reaching the rank. It could even help customers locate specific types of taxi (e.g. accessible taxis) more easily and notify taxi drivers in feeder ranks that spaces are available.

Such technology could also support targeted, more efficient parking enforcement by alerting the council when:

- Non-taxis are parked in taxi bays.
- Vehicles without permits are parked in designated permit bays.
- Vehicles parked in limited wait bays (which are designed to promote high turn-around of visitors to local businesses) have overstayed.



Challenge one

PARKING

Objective: Develop technology that identifies if a specific vehicle is in a particular parking bay and then generate an alert detailing when it arrives and leaves.

Scenario

With the rise of internet shopping and pressure on household incomes, UK high streets are competing to attract shoppers and visitors and ensure that they remain vibrant and relevant.

Watford is no exception and with the redevelopment of its regional shopping centre, significant investment in public areas and an annual town centre events programme, the on-going footfall in the High Street is a key indicator for the council.

It is also advantageous for the council to track footfall for temporary periods in other parts of the town to assess, for example, the impact of improvement works.

Current footfall counters are operated through the use of hard-wired, fixed camera units which identify the flow of pedestrians in specific zoned areas.

The council is looking for a cheaper, innovative and more flexible alternative to provide the following information:

- Footfall numbers on a daily and weekly basis, and for specific periods so that the impact of events/promotions and other initiatives can be identified.
- The annual variance in footfall numbers on a weekly basis and for specific periods so that the impact of events can be identified.
- The peak day and peak hour of each week in terms of footfall numbers.

This data is required in relation to specific zoned areas (i.e. the events space or the on-street market) and also includes some areas with no WiFi coverage (such as parkland).



Challenge two

FOOTFALL

Objective: Develop technology that can provide footfall and visitor flow information to the same or better standards than existing camera type methodologies.

FUNDING

Up to

£20k

Investment funding
available for the
parking challenge

Up to

£10k

Investment funding
available for the
football challenge

Funding will be provided in two stages:

50%

Upfront

50%

At completion
of the trial

FUTURE COMMERCIAL RELATIONSHIP

As a commercially-minded local authority with access to other public-sector partners, specialist knowledge and live test areas, the council is looking to secure a commercial relationship with the challenge winners to develop their solutions further.

Some potential options may be:

- An opportunity for further investment from the council or its commercial company.
- Preferential commercial rates when rolling out a larger scale solution in Watford.
- A success-based commission agreement for introductions to other local authorities and potential commercial clients.

Shortlisted applicants will be given the opportunity to speak with the council and discuss what form of relationship may be most mutually beneficial for them and aligned to their business model.

COMPETITION TIMELINE

Open Call goes live

MON 14 MAY – MON 11 JUN

Innovators apply to the competition through the [Digital Catapult website](#).

Final selection of innovators for pitch event

FRI 22 JUN – MON 25 JUN

Shortlisted applicants receive a follow-up phone call to assess their application in more detail. The calls will also be an opportunity to find out more about the type of commercial relationship Watford may be interested in developing with challenge winners. Following these phone calls, the finalists for each challenge are identified.

Final proposals and pitches

THUR 19 JUL (West Herts College, Watford)

Finalists privately pitch to a panel of experts and challenge owners. Scores are calculated and challenge winners announced. Challenge winners will then get the opportunity to publicly present their pitches in the new business lounge at West Herts College to an audience made up of local authorities, local businesses and public sector organisations.

MAY

JUN

JUL

Application shortlisting

MON 11 JUN – FRI 22 JUN

Online applications are assessed and a shortlist of applicants identified.

Challenge webinars

WED 27 JUN

Finalists are invited to participate in a webinar (one per challenge) hosted by Digital Catapult and experts from Watford Borough Council. This is an opportunity to ask further questions about the challenges and gain a deeper understanding of the requirements.

Live trials

FRI 20 JUL onwards

Challenge winners discuss and agree next steps with Watford Borough Council, including initiation of live trial.

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

Applications will be assessed on three criteria:

- Understanding of the challenge/Open Call.
- Expertise in relevant technology area.
- Feasibility of the solution proposed.

At the pitch event, pitches will be assessed against the following five criteria:

- Response to challenge.
- Strength of business case.
- Technical feasibility and ability to deploy.
- Ingenuity/innovation.
- Quality of presentation.

The nature of any commercial relationship Innovators may be interested in discussing with Watford will not affect the outcome of the Innovation Competition (Pitch Event).



ABOUT WATFORD

Watford is an urban borough, just outside of London, in South West Hertfordshire. The borough has excellent transport links with mainline rail connections to London.

Watford is the centre of a sub-region serving around 500,000 people living within a 20 minute travelling time catchment. As part of the London commuter belt, Watford is strongly influenced by London, which brings the benefits of a buoyant economy.

The borough is currently experiencing a high level of regeneration and development and, with its active business community, is a vibrant and exciting place to do business.

WATFORD AT A GLANCE

£1.4bn

Local investment
underway - mix of public
and private funding

7

Major development
and regeneration
projects

4.8k

Registered businesses

99k

Jobs across the borough

84%

Of the population
economically active

36

Average age of
Watford residents

HOW TO APPLY

1

Register your interest by filling in the form on the [open call webpage](#).

2

You will then be sent an email with the details of a short application form to complete.

Applications will close on **Monday 11 June** (midnight)

For more information please contact
krista.nicholson@digicatapult.org.uk

