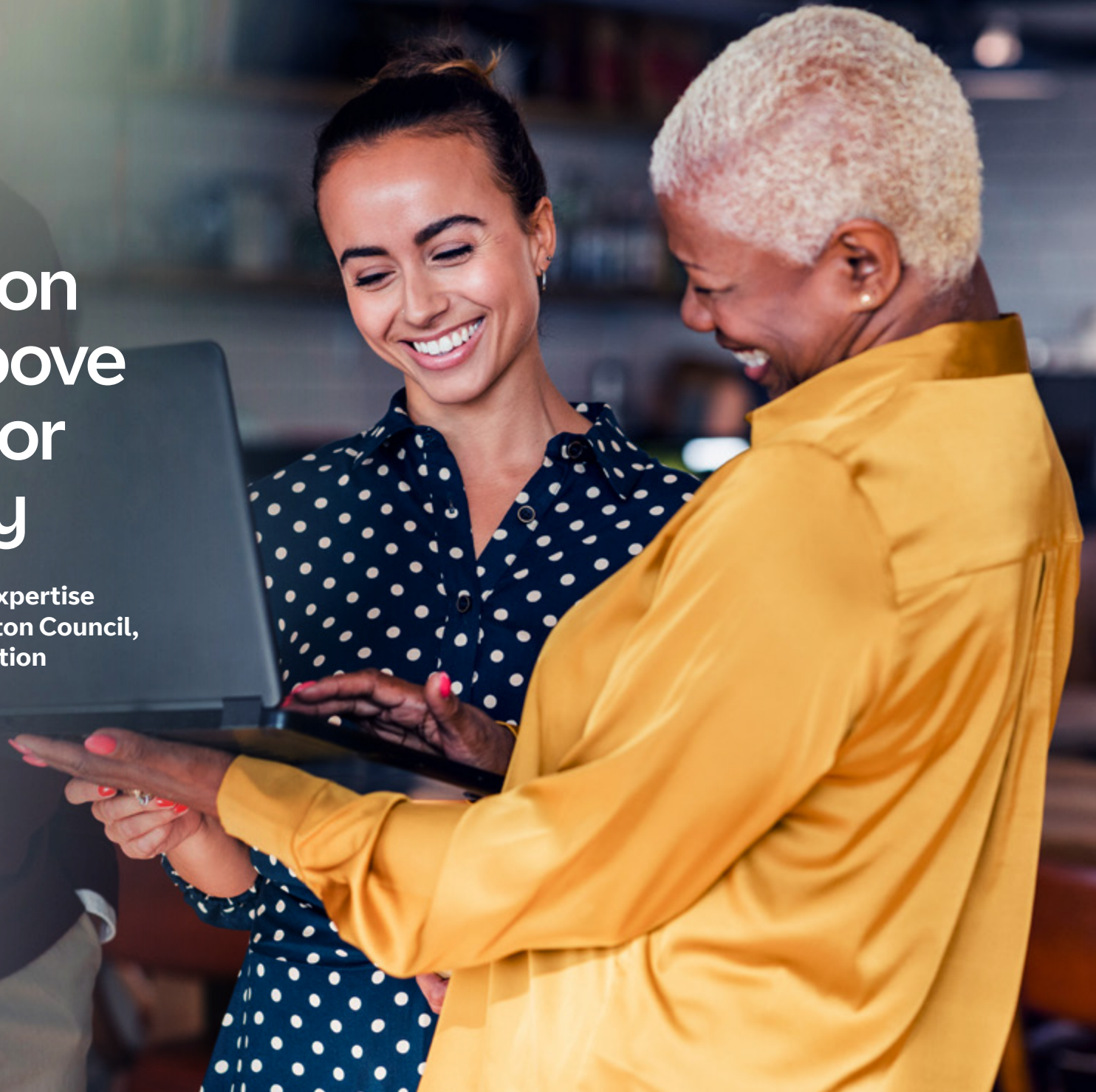# BT

Helping Merton Council go above and beyond for its community

Bringing the right technology and expertise together to digitally transform Merton Council, with our Microsoft Azure cloud solution

Industry: Local government

Location: London

Employees: 2,500

Solution: Microsoft Azure

Gold
Microsoft Partner
■■ Microsoft

Local government faces many challenges. It's under pressure to balance making extreme cost saving with finding new and better ways to deliver more for communities. These local authorities are on the front lines, improving the quality of public services from health and care to law enforcement, waste disposal to social housing. While also helping drive economic growth and the green agenda.

To better serve its 200,000 residents and 7,500 local businesses in south-west London, Merton Council knew it had to change. It wanted to replace its out-of-date legacy systems. The local authority knew with better connectivity, it could deliver improved outcomes for the community. Plus, optimise spend on network services.

We moved the local authority to smarter cloud hosting with Microsoft

Azure. But the solution wasn't just about finding the right technology. It was also about having the right team in place from the get-go. We work with an ecosystem of strategic partners and engaged Crimson, who had the expertise to help carry out the project. We worked closely with Merton Council every step of the way, providing end-to-end support to help the council achieve its digital transformation.

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The challenge

While many local authorities are only just migrating to the cloud, Merton Council had already made the move. Unfortunately, the hosted solution it had wasn't up to the job anymore. The system supported an online portal that let residents self-serve. Making it easier for residents to access and use council services. They can report if their bins haven't been collected or book onto training courses. All without having to visit a council office in person or wait on the phone. But the web service had become unreliable and prone to outages.

To make things worse, this system didn't come with 24/7 support. So when it crashed, it could stay down overnight or entire weekends. This had a huge impact on the vital public service the council provided. Not only could residents not access the online portal when the system was down, but council workers couldn't access the files they needed either.

The problem was that the system was built on an aged platform, made up of old technologies and obsolete operating systems. While this meant the system struggled to keep up with demand, it also made it more expensive to maintain. So the council faced spiralling maintenance costs, on top of what it was already paying for hosting.

In an attempt to reduce costs and better serve its community, Merton Council cancelled its existing service. But taking responsibility for hosting put greater strain on the council's IT team, who had to work longer hours to fix problems with the troubled system. The local authority knew it needed to find a partner it could work with to transition the service to a new public cloud platform. That's when they got in touch with us.

"The system used to crash on a weekly basis and no one really knew why. I had spent at least three weekends on the phone to the supplier getting the website back up. And that's something that is just not tenable for an organisation. We needed stability."

Richard Warren
Head of IT Service Delivery,
Merton Council

> ## "BT brought a firm rigour to the project through its project management."
>
> **Clive Cooke**
> Head of IT Systems, Merton Council

The solution

The key to Merton Council's digital transformation was not one technology or partner. It was about bringing it all together to meet the local authority's needs from end-to-end. And that's what we do best.

Working closely with the council, we developed a two-step plan. Firstly, we would migrate its web services as soon as possible, so it no longer had to waste money maintaining its aged platform. We recommended Microsoft Azure because it's a secure, reliable service that's built for business. It made sense for Merton because Microsoft was already a strategic partner to the council. It's a service they understood and felt comfortable with. Offering more visibility and control, it has made it easier for the local authority's IT team to monitor. And it's simple to scale if digital demands increase.

While we oversaw the project, we brought in one of our strategic partners to help. Crimson had the specialist expertise the council needed to design and implement the cloud migration to Azure. Helping to make sure it was done right and at speed.

While that was underway, Crimson also started planning for how to transform the council's services with Microsoft Dynamics 365, once the move to Azure was complete. This set of intelligent business applications would help them work more efficiently and deliver even better service through predictive, AI-driven insights.
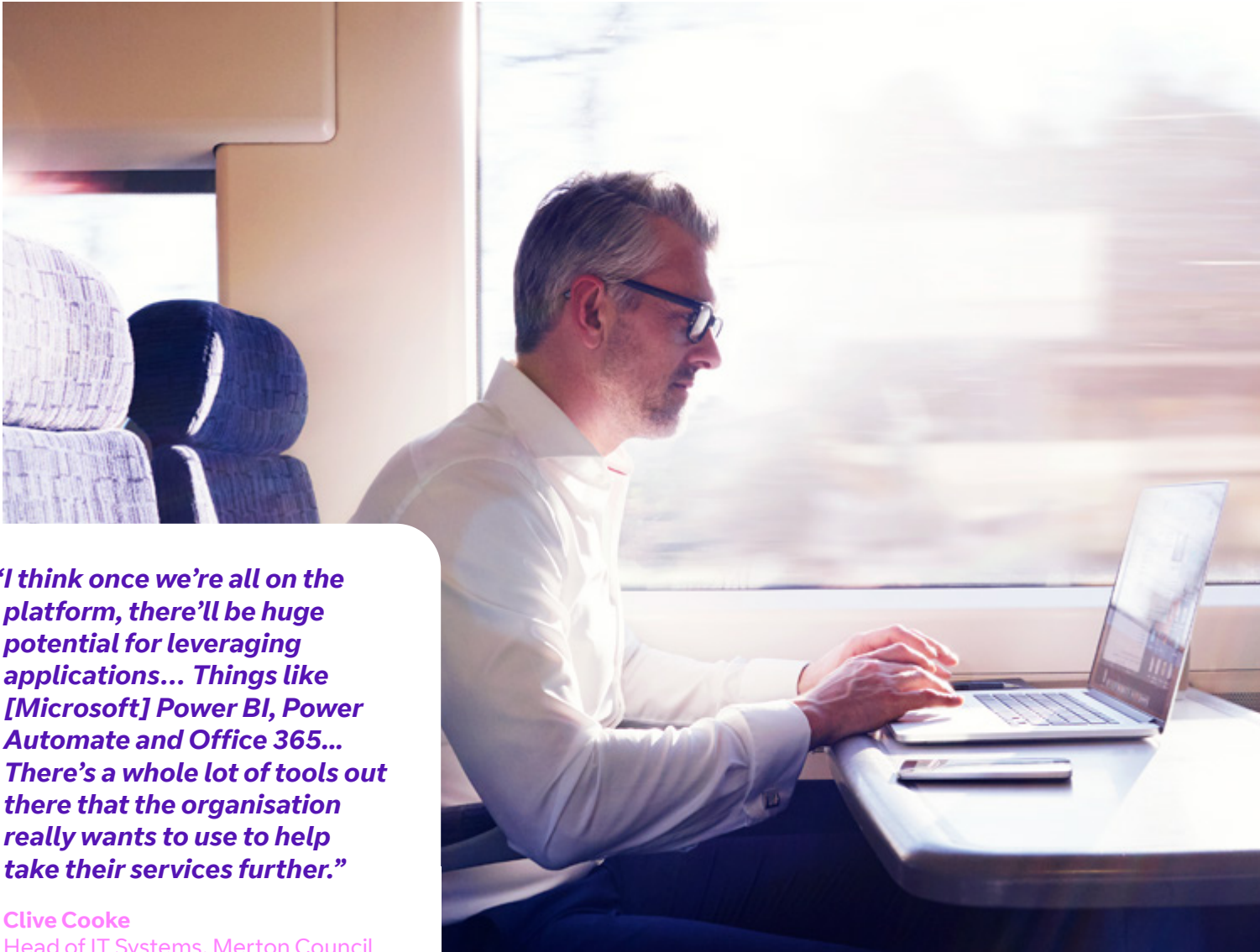
> *"I think once we're all on the platform, there'll be huge potential for leveraging applications… Things like [Microsoft] Power BI, Power Automate and Office 365… There's a whole lot of tools out there that the organisation really wants to use to help take their services further."*

Clive Cooke
Head of IT Systems, Merton Council

The results

Merton Council now has a cloud solution they can count on, with web services that work. Implemented online over the last 10 months, the new Microsoft Azure-based system we've put in place has been put to the ultimate test by the coronavirus crisis. Many council workers now work remotely, connecting to files and collaborating using Azure. While the online portal allows the whole community a reliable and safer way to engage with local services.

Now that they have a platform they can trust, Merton Council has the confidence to go further. Where the IT team were previously afraid to make changes to the system in case it broke, they're now considering how they can make it even better. We're helping them do it, by implementing the Dynamics 365 plans we developed for them. So they can better provide for their community, today and tomorrow.

Find out more visit:
business.bt.com/public-sector

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