

Cabinet

30 January 2020

Digital and Technology Strategy

Recommendation

That Cabinet approves the continuation of the Digital and Technology Strategy for the period 2018 to 2021 following its annual review.

1.0 Purpose of report

- 1.1 To seek Cabinet approval for the continuation of the Digital and Technology Strategy 2018 to 2021 into its second year of implementation.

2.0 Summary

- 2.1 In its first year of implementation, the Council's Digital and Technology strategy has delivered improved digital and technology outcomes in critical areas for the Council, supporting service delivery and the implementation of the new Target Operating Model.
- 2.2 The strategy shaped the way the Council engages with our customers through the implementation of a new updated website that was co-created with service users. It also introduced a fully digital school admissions process for the first time. Both projects fulfilled our pledge to put digital at the heart of the relationship with customers and bring the most appropriate digital tools and skills together.
- 2.3 For employees, the strategy was the foundation of the decision to migrate from Google to Microsoft 365 suite in what Microsoft described as record time, providing our colleagues with the tools to work securely from anywhere, anytime and on any device and the capabilities to excel in an increasing digitally enabled environment.

3.0 Background

- 3.1 The Council's Digital and Technology Strategy for the period 2018 to 2021 was approved by Cabinet on the 13th of September 2018. It is subject to an annual review to ensure continued alignment to the Council's objectives and expected outcomes for its customers.
- 3.2 The digital and technology strategy continues to support the delivery of WCC's objectives and ambitions and increasingly plays a key role in enabling the operating model for the Council. It will continue to assist the Council to

underpin its financial sustainability by leveraging advances in digital and technology to support service development.

4.0 Digital and Technology Strategy cross-cutting building blocks

4.1 The eight digital principles in the digital and technology strategy remain viable and continue to provide high-level guidance for everyone involved in shaping digital and technology services at WCC. The principles are:

- start by identifying our user needs.
- align user needs with our business objectives.
- keep it simple.
- build digital services not websites.
- use evidence not judgement or opinion
- design, launch, test, repeat and build for reuse
- build it for everyone, and
- design for context of use

4.2 The digital and technology strategy's four key building blocks continue to utilise guidance from industry standards and adhere to local government compliance requirements. They provide a firm foundation on which to continue to develop our digital and technology capabilities. The four building blocks are:

- **Best customer experience** - We will place digital at the heart of our relationship with our customers, increase digital self-service, redesign our services to improve customer satisfaction and reduce the cost of service provision.
- **Better use of data, information and information** - We will treat our data as an asset, utilising it to make better more informed business decisions; improve our demand management capability and increasing our ability to act proactively or undertake preventative interventions.
- **Operational efficiency, productivity and continuous improvement** - We will combine our digital and technology capability and capacity to enable the delivery of optimised and efficient services that are fit for purpose and delivered in collaboration with our services partners. We will consolidate and rationalised our application portfolio and design our future state based on the organisation's vision and strategy.
- **Innovation and creativity** - We will work to improve the organisational digital maturity of the council by increasing our digital leadership capabilities and developing a culture of collaborative innovation and creativity. We will enable and adopt modern ways of working.

- 4.3 The four building blocks are interdependent and connected, jointly creating an integrated framework for change and define a minimum acceptable digital and technology standard that will be governed and assured centrally.

5.0 Updating the strategy

- 5.1 The Council's New Operating Model is predicated on delivering better service outcomes and customer experience, greater customer convenience, availability and satisfaction, enhanced process efficiency, reduction in the cost to serve and the ability to focus our limited resources on our vulnerable residents. The digital and technology strategy is designed to deliver this.
- 5.2 However, two building blocks are yet to be fully delivered by the Digital and Technology strategy: Better use of data and information; and Operational efficiency, productivity and continuous improvement.
- 5.3 ICT have supported a commissioned partner to configure a new data analytics platform for the Commissioning Support Unit. This is currently in pilot and will deliver new performance reports through Microsoft's Power BI platform for the Council. This will now be a key focus of the Council's transformation as without appropriate, accurate and timely information to inform decision making, there is a danger that transformation will not be delivered.
- 5.4 In support of 5.2, ICT are part of a project to deliver a Data and information Strategy for the Council. Including this as an addendum to the Digital and Technology Strategy would improve the document's ability to guide ICT development.
- 5.5 The third building block highlighted in 4.2 requires the ICT team to continually improve operational ICT delivery. An addendum to the Strategy could set out how the ICT Team will deliver this, with annual operational targets set out to achieve these aims.
- 5.6 The above will be considered in light of the digital and data developments of the Council and any revisions to the Strategy will be brought back to Cabinet for consideration as necessary.

6.0 Financial Implications

- 6.1 The implementation of the strategy since its approval has included investment in both the underlying digital and ICT foundations of the organisation as well as investment in the individual applications and projects that will deliver the benefits and service improvements for customers outlined in the strategy. Much of the investment, particularly in terms of laying the foundations, is expected to occur in the early days of the strategy's implementation. The spend to the end of December 2019 was £4.8m with a further £8.3m need to spend identified in future years, subject to business cases for individual projects being approved, to complete the implementation. This investment will be funded from the organisation's transformation reserves and is reflected in the emerging Medium-Term Financial Strategy proposals.

7.0 Environmental implications

7.1 There are no environmental implications at present. In future, as the Council cloud footprint increases this will have a commensurate positive impact on utility usage due to minimising our current data centre footprint.

8.0 Equalities implications

8.1 An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed which will be monitored and reviewed as the strategy develops and is delivered. Action has and will be taken to mitigate / remove any identified negative impacts and maximise the positive ones.

9.0 Timescales associated with the decision and next steps

9.1 The following are the deliverables and indicative timescales for the strategy.

Digital and Technology Strategy review	January 2020
Customer Experience programme	April 2020
Business Intelligence Platform	April 2020
Service Area Redesign	April 2021

Background papers

None.

Supporting Documents

1. Digital and Technology Strategy 2018 – 2021.

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The report was circulated to the following members prior to publication: -

Local Member(s): n/a

Other members: Chattaway, Boad, Singh Birdi, Roodhouse, Chilvers, Warwick and O'Rourke