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Wednesday, 11 November 2020

Dear Sir/Madam

STRATEGIC (OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY) COMMITTEE

A meeting of the Strategic (Overview and Scrutiny) Committee has been arranged to take place **THURSDAY, 19TH NOVEMBER, 2020 at 6.00 PM** to consider the following business.

In light of the current Covid-19 pandemic and government advice on social distancing, the meeting will be held online and streamed live on the Council's [YouTube channel](#)

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Christie Tims', is written over a light grey circular stamp.

Christie Tims
Head of Governance and Performance

To: Members of Strategic (Overview and Scrutiny) Committee

Councillors Spruce (Chairman), Gwilt (Vice-Chair), Norman (Vice-Chair), Ball, Checkland, Grange, Greatorex, A Little, Matthews, Warfield, Westwood and White



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AGENDA

1. Apologies for Absence
2. Declarations of Interest
3. Minutes of the Previous Meeting 3 - 6
4. Work Programme 7 - 10
5. Medium Term Financial Strategy 2020-2025 11 - 30
6. Procurement Strategy (including a Local Procurement Code) 31 - 44
7. Digital Innovation Strategy 2020-2024 45 - 64
8. Review of Committee Meetings Verbal Report



STRATEGIC (OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY) COMMITTEE

1 SEPTEMBER 2020

PRESENT:

Councillors Spruce (Chairman), Gwilt (Vice-Chair), Norman (Vice-Chair), Ball, Checkland, Grange, Greatorex, A Little, Matthews, Warfield, Westwood and White.

(In accordance with Council Procedure Rule No.17 Councillors attended the meeting).

42 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor S. Wilcox.

43 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Grange declared a personal interest as a member of Friends of Friary Grange.

Councillor Checkland declared a personal interest as having dealings with Friary Grange Leisure Centre and Friary School in the past.

Councillor White declared a personal interest as a Member of Staffordshire County Council.

Councillor Greatorex declared a personal interest as a Member of Staffordshire County Council.

44 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the previous meeting were circulated. It was asked if a press release had been released regarding the Council's commitment to minority group inclusivity and it was reported that due to a change in Head of Service and the appointment of a new Communications manager, this had not been completed yet but was still a priority.

It was also asked if the O&S Coordinating Group would meet before its next scheduled meeting in November to discuss O&S involvement in the Covid-19 recovery plan. It was reported that an earlier date was being sought.

RESOLVED: That the minutes be signed as a correct record.

45 WORK PROGRAMME

The work programme was considered by the Committee. It was requested that an item on LEP governance be added to the work programme however it was noted that this was on the programme for the Economic Growth, Environment & Development (Overview & Scrutiny) Committee (EGED O&S) to consider as part of their remit. Similar, an item on the Lichfield BID was requested but it was noted that it was the remit of the EGED O&S to consider however it was important to gather learning from the Lichfield BID experience to help benefit the upcoming Burntwood BID. It was noted that as the government had announced their Devolution White Paper, the situation may change and there may be a need for a joint O&S Committee and this could be discussed at the Coordinating Group. It was noted that the

Money Matter Financial Performance report would be a briefing papers sent to Members in the usual manner.

RESOLVED: That the work programme be noted and amended where required.

46 MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2020-2025

The Committee received a report on the draft Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) for 2020-2025 which took into account the all reports that had been approved at Cabinet and Council but refreshed to remove the previous financial year and add the new financial year of 2024/25 as well as refresh and update assumptions to reflect the latest information available. It was noted that this year, in addition to the inherent uncertainty related to the Local Government Financing Regime, there was added uncertainty related to COVID-19 and changes to the Planning system and the introduction of the Devolution and Local Recovery White Paper. It was also noted that the report showed a project plan to enable the start of budget consultation for 2021/22.

It was reported that the Covid-19 pandemic had created an environment of uncertainty however it had also changed how the Council had worked and approached its finances. It was noted that over £20m of support had been granted to businesses and residents and overcome the challenges to remote working and with minimal impact. The Cabinet Member wished to thank all Officers in the Finance, Revenues and Benefits and Economic Development teams for their continual hard work in this area. This was also echoed by the Committee.

It was reported that the guiding principles of the previous budget of still delivering value with a diminishing budget must remain and although the Fair Funding Review and Business Rates Review had been deferred, they had been replaced by the impact of the pandemic. It was reported that there had been a number of funding streams promised by the government to recover some of the losses experienced, it was on a cost sharing basis. It was noted that the full impact was unquantifiable as it would be governed by the recovery phase and what happens in the future however a best attempt had been made with a figure of between £1.3m and £4.3m estimated. It was reported that the transfer to General Reserves as reported in February would now be unlikely.

It was then reported that there would be a change to the MTFS given the changes to the Public Loans Board regime and the impact it had on the Property Investment Strategy, it was proposed to take out the £45m capital investment and debt as it did not give a true picture given the Strategy as envisaged could not now be implemented.

The Head of Finance and Procurement then gave a presentation giving updated information from the report as well as details of the uncertainty of the financial environment. It was reported that there would be another one year settlement for 2021/22 and so following years would be a judgment based using the best information available. It was reported that there were a number of government plans that could affect the MTFS including the Planning White Paper, Devolution and Local Recovery White Paper as well as a Draft Waste Management Plan. Some Committee members felt that these changes were not best timed by the government and there were concerns it could be change for change sake. The Committee thanked the Head of Finance and Performance for his presentation.

It was requested that wording in one of the Budget Principles be amended to state that reorganisation of staff be considered rather than growth or to look at the alternative approach of apprenticeships. It was asked given the pay award of 2.75% for 2020/21 whether the assumption made of 2% in later years was realistic. It was reported that the assumption would be held under review at this time to allow for relevant information such as the projected level of inflation to be identified. Regarding the Hardship Fund, the impact and potential loss of Council Tax income compared to support will always be greater however not all the hardship

funds had been taken up and so it was asked if there would be a request to pay back that underspend or whether it could be kept to mitigate the losses experienced. It was reported that a number of the grants were subject to claw backs however the application criteria had been changed where possible to ensure as many businesses and people could access that help and prevent having to give funds back to the government. It was asked if local MPs had been lobbied to ensure all leisure centre losses due to Covid-19 would be covered and all funding be available for those in need and it was reported that a letter had been sent from the Leader of the Council and the Cabinet Member to them on this matter.

It was asked if the Council would be reimbursed for the Business Rate and Council Tax Collection fund losses. There were three aspects to the losses, firstly any Business Rate reliefs to the leisure, hospitality and nursery sectors required by the Government would be fully reimbursed by Section 31 grant, secondly any reduction in collection would create a deficit in 2020/21 and the Government was going to allow this to be spread over a three year period rather than a single year and thirdly the Government had indicated that in the forthcoming Spending Review there would be support for Council Tax and Business Rate collection reductions.

Risk was then discussed especially cash flow and it was asked if there were any concerns and it was reported that there were none at this time due to the money market funds, level of reserves and help from government. The risk of Section 114 notice was discussed although noted that it was not a high risk for Lichfield District Council, it was asked how the Council was monitoring the risk over investments held in other Council's and it was reported that there were no immediate concerns as Arling Close do their own assessments and close monitoring of the press and Local Government media to pick up on those authorities that start to declare issues and the S114 Notice process now expects authorities to engage with the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government at the earliest opportunity before a notice is required to identify all options available to prevent the issue of a S114 Notice.

It was asked if the funds on green energy were income or expenditure. It was reported that it was for moving the energy tariff to a green tariff and so was a cost. There was concern that the spending gap was increasing in future years and so it was questioned if the Property Investment Strategy was failing to generate any income. It was also noted there would be no Capital Programme budget for developing prosperity from 2021/22 onwards and it was again questioned if spending in this area could help decrease the funding gap. It was reported that even with the contribution from the Property Investment Strategy, the MTFS had a funding gap from 2021/22. It was highlighted that capital investment funded by debt focussed on 'Place Shaping' activities where a return was ancillary to the investment would still be able to be funded by borrowing provided by the PWLB and so discussions are underway on how to now address the situation.

RESOLVED: 1) That the contents of the Draft MTFS and the timetable for its further development be noted; and

2) That the views given by the Committee be considered as part of its development.

47 STRATEGIC PLAN OUTTURN 2016 TO 2020

The Committee received a report on the final outturn of the council's performance as at the end of March 2020, which was noted to be the end of year position and the final year of the previous strategic plan and had been delayed from summer due to difficulties in obtaining information on Corporate Indicators and some projects. It was reported by the Cabinet Member that in the future, it was proposed to use the Council's performance reporting systems to produce more up to date reports. He undertook to update the Committee on progress in bringing this in. The Committee welcomed this proposals as it would allow the

Committee to help provide input into targets and slippage for key projects. Officers were commended on their work delivering so many of the projects and it was noted that those that could not were mostly due to delays outside their control with a few relating to the pandemic response

There was some concern around affordable homes as it was mostly likely to be behind target. There was also concern that with the Planning White Paper and potential loss of quality homes.

It was asked for more information on those delayed projects which were not due to Covid-19 or other issues out of the Council's control and this was agreed to send this information to the Committee at a future meeting. It was noted however that the report did not cover the March and September 2020 period, except where expressly stated in the report, so there would be some items that will have progressed but officers may not have had capacity to provide that information yet due to other priority work. It was reported that the new Strategic Plan was now focused on the very high level actions that have a significant impact and although target dates may change throughout the life of the plan, there was a robust process to amend these dates and providing the information to Members on these decisions and outcomes. It was agreed that there was not an infinite resource so this more narrowed down priority list should help ensure there are completions and the key actions are prioritised.

RESOLVED: That the views expressed by the Committee are considered further where necessary by Officers and the Cabinet.

(The Meeting closed at 7.28 pm)

CHAIRMAN

STRATEGIC (OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY) COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME FOR 2020-2021 v6

Item	23 Jun 2020	1 Sept 2020	19 Nov 2020	27 Jan 2021	Details/Reasons	Officer	Member Lead
Policy Development							
Terms of Reference	✓				To remind the Committee of the terms of reference and suggest any amendments	CLL	
Draft Medium Term Financial Strategy 2020-2025		✓	✓		Report to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MTFS timetable and budget principles. • Latest projections for the revenue budget, general reserves and capital programme. 	AT	RS
Medium Term Financial Strategy (Revenue and Capital) 2020-25				✓	Scrutinise the Council's resource plans in relation to the delivery of the Strategic Plan priorities	AT	RS
Strategic Plan Outturn 2016-2020		✓			Performance report detailing the final outturn of the projects detailed in the Strategic Plan 2016 to 2020	CT	AS

STRATEGIC (OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY) COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME FOR 2020-2021 v6

Item	23 Jun 2020	1 Sept 2020	19 Nov 2020	27 Jan 2021	Details/Reasons	Officer	Member Lead
Delivery Plan and Corporate Indicators	✓				Details of the Delivery Plan and Corporate Indicators used to achieve the outcomes of the new Strategic Plan 2020 to 2024 - July 2020	CT	AS
Digital Strategy			✓			KR	AS
Communications and Engagement Strategy	✓					BW	AS
Future Options for District House				✓	To consider redevelopment of the District Council House	KR	IE
Procurement Strategy			✓		Including a Local Procurement Code	AT	RS

STRATEGIC (OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY) COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME FOR 2020-2021 v6

Item	23 Jun 2020	1 Sept 2020	19 Nov 2020	27 Jan 2021	Details/Reasons	Officer	Member Lead
Commercialisation and Development Company					Suggested at the O&S Coordinating Group. Updates as and when available	KR	
Briefing Papers							
Money Matters 2020/21: Review of Financial Performance against the Financial Strategy.	✓	✓	✓	✓	Scrutinise financial performance during the financial year.	AT	RS

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Medium Term Financial Strategy 2020-25

Cabinet Member for Finance, Procurement, Customer Services and Revenues & Benefits



Date: 19 November 2020
 Agenda Item: _____
 Contact Officer: Anthony Thomas
 Tel Number: 01543 308012
 Email: Anthony.thomas@lichfielddc.gov.uk
 Key Decision? YES
 Local Ward Members Full Council

**Strategic
 (Overview and
 Scrutiny)
 Committee**

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 The ability to deliver the outcomes set out in the **Lichfield District Council Strategic Plan**, and beyond, is dependent on the resources available in the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS).
- 1.2 The MTFS is the overall budget framework and consists of the Revenue Budget, Capital Strategy and Capital Programme and General Reserves.
- 1.3 The timetable for consideration of the various elements of the MTFS is detailed in the table below:

Date	Meeting	Topics
Budget Consultation Takes Place	01/09/2020	Strategic (OS) Committee
	06/10/2020	Cabinet
	19/11/2020	Strategic (OS) Committee
	01/12/2020	Council Taxbase
	27/01/2021	Strategic (OS) Committee
03/02/2021	Audit and Member Standards Committee	To review the Treasury Management Strategy Statement
09/02/2021	Cabinet	To recommend the Medium Term Financial Strategy and Council Tax increase to Council
16/02/2021	Council	Approve the Medium Term Financial Strategy and set the Council Tax

- 1.4 **The inherently high level of uncertainty surrounding the Local Government Finance regime has been compounded by the COVID-19 pandemic and proposed changes to the Planning system.**
- 1.5 **This unprecedented level of uncertainty means that to ensure the financial sustainability of the Council, the approved budget principles must be rigorously applied in controlling any proposed budgetary growth.**
- 1.6 The Council has at this stage agreed to remain part of the Staffordshire and Stoke Business Rates Pool subject to the outcome of the Local Government Finance Settlement likely in December 2020.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1. The Committee is requested to:
 - Note the contents of the report and provide views on the draft MTFS.
 - Note the intention to remain part of the Staffordshire and Stoke Business Rates Pool for 2021/22 subject to the outcome of the Local Government Finance Settlement for 2021/22.

3. Background

The Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS)

- 3.1. Council approved the Medium Term Financial Strategy (Revenue and Capital) 2019-24 on 18 February 2020 which covered the financial years 2019/20 to 2023/24 (plus a forward projection for 2024/25).
- 3.2. The Medium Term Financial Strategy includes:
 - **The Revenue Budget** related to the day to day delivery of the Council's services such as waste collection.
 - **The Capital Programme** and its financing for longer term expenditure in relation to the Council's assets, such as property.
 - **General Reserves** related to the amount of money available to balance the budget in the short term or fund short term initiatives.
- 3.3. The Revenue Budget and Capital Programme are connected by:
 - Any financing of the Capital Programme from the Revenue Budget
 - The repayment of borrowing and the receipt of income from investments
 - Expenditure, income and savings resulting from capital investment.
- 3.4. The Council updates its Budget forecasts at 3, 6 and 8 month (forming the basis of the Revised Budget) intervals.
- 3.5. In terms of uncertainty or risk, in addition to the inherent uncertainty related to the Local Government Financing Regime, there is the added uncertainty related to COVID-19 and changes to the Planning system.
- 3.6. It is important to note that the Government has delayed all of the proposed changes to the Local Government Finance Regime related to New Homes Bonus, further Business Rates retention and the Fair Funding Review by a further year until 2022/23.
- 3.7. However, at this stage, it is unclear whether the Business Rates reset element of the reviews where business rate growth is redistributed within the sector based on need (as reflected in the MTFS), will still be implemented in 2021/22 or whether a further New Homes Bonus payment will be made for 2021/22 (see para 3.29 to 3.32).
- 3.8. To assist in understanding the level of uncertainty or risk present we allocate a MTFS risk rating to each financial year:
 - **Low** – all significant components of the Local Government Funding Regime are known and understood. The impact of COVID-19 is generally understood and mainly mitigated by Government Support.
 - **Medium** – all significant components of the Local Government Funding Regime are known. However there is some uncertainty around how specific elements will operate. The impact of COVID-19 is partially understood and partially mitigated by Government Support.
 - **High** – there is uncertainty around all significant components of the Local Government Funding Regime. The impact of COVID-19 is not fully understood and mitigation through Government Support is uncertain.

The projected impact of COVID-19 on Lichfield District and Support Provided

- 3.9. The Government has provided financial support to the Council to support businesses and individuals with a list of policy announcements or where there have been updates since 1 September 2020 is shown at **APPENDIX A**.
- 3.10. In addition to the key policy announcements provided to the Committee on 1 September 2020, a further announcement was made in relation to the Test and Trace Support Scheme.
- **Test and Trace Support scheme** - the government has announced that from 28th September 2020, individuals who are told that they must self-isolate by NHS Test and Trace will be entitled, subject to certain criteria, to a fixed support payment of £500. The scheme is in 2 parts, main and discretionary. Government is providing full funding for the main scheme, however the discretionary grant funding is limited. The Council have been allocated **£33,000**; equivalent to assisting **66** applicants with discretionary payments. The Council has also been awarded **£24,500** to administer the new scheme.
 - **Grants to support business, the clinically extremely vulnerable and contain the outbreak** due to the 2nd national lockdown from 5 November to 2 December 2020.
- 3.11. An update on policy announcements announced to support Lichfield District is provided below:

	Allocation/ Estimate	Actual 31/08/2020	Actual 30/09/2020	Actual % 30/09/2020
Hardship Fund	£562,910	£435,580	£447,907	80%
Business Improvement Districts	£9,650	£9,650	£9,650	100%
Business Rates Relief for retail, Hospitality, Leisure and Nurseries	£13,244,306	£14,070,667	£14,156,982	107%
Small Business Grant Funding and Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Grant Fund	£19,396,000	£18,590,000	£18,605,000	96%
Discretionary Grant Fund	£951,000	£410,000	£951,000	100%
Reopening High Street Safely Funding	£92,501	N/a	£20,713	22%
Test and Trace Support Scheme	£33,000	N/a	£0	0%
Additional Restrictions Grant	£2,095,120	N/a	N/a	N/a
Business Grants for closed businesses	£1,470,384	N/a	N/a	N/a

Updates on the projected impact of COVID-19 on Lichfield District Council

- 3.12. The updates to budgetary support to Local Government since the meeting on 1 September 2020 are:
- **Grant support** – a further tranche of funding of £0.9bn was announced on 12 October 2020 with the Council receiving a further (**£100,000**). The Council's total allocation to date is (**£1,313,710**) with **£12,550** utilised in 2019/20 and therefore (**£1,301,160**) is available in 2020/21.
 - In addition, £100m has been allocated from the original £1.0bn to support Council run Leisure Centres through a bidding process to the Department of Digital, Cultural and Media and Sport (DCMS) with details on the process awaited at the time of writing.
 - **Income losses scheme** – this scheme is for 2020/21 only and is related to income from sales, fees and charges from delivering services. The draft guidance indicated that the calculation was to be based on the overall budget however the final guidance was based on individual income streams. Therefore losses of less than **5%** can be excluded and this change has increased the claim from (**£454,000**) to (**£557,000**). Further claims will be made during 2020/21.
- 3.13. The Cabinet Report on 7 July 2020 projected an impact from COVID-19 of between **£1,281,260** and **£4,541,260**.
- 3.14. The current projections for 2020/21 only based on the information submitted in the latest MHCLG return including the first claim for support from the income losses scheme is shown at **APPENDIX B**.

	Low	31/07/2020	31/08/2020	30/09/2020	30/10/2020	High
Projected Financial Impact	£1,281,260	£2,357,900	£2,579,430	£2,543,180	£2,452,950	£4,541,260
Impact in 2020/21	£1,096,260	£1,267,900	£1,514,430	£1,675,180	£1,547,950	£2,692,260
Impact in later years	£185,000	£1,090,000	£1,065,000	£868,000	£905,000	£1,849,000

How has the MTFS progressed since the meeting on 1 September 2020?

The Approved Revenue Budget

- 3.15. The updated Funding Gap or transfer to general reserves was provided to the Committee at its meeting on 1 September 2020. There has been a number of further updates since that meeting that have been approved by Cabinet and Council.
- 3.16. The impact of these updates (with income or savings shown in brackets) on the Funding Gap or transfer to general reserves is shown below:

	Cabinet or Decision Date	2020/21 £000	2021/22 £000	2022/23 £000	2023/24 £000	2024/25 £000
LEVEL OF UNCERTAINTY / RISK		MEDIUM	HIGH	HIGH	HIGH	HIGH
Funding Gap (transfer to General Reserves) at 1 September 2020		(546)	501	798	1,386	1,776
3 months Money Matters Report	08/09/2020	(8)	19	19	19	19
Removal of Investment in Property	06/10/2020	87	278	467	658	658
Removal of ICT Cloud	06/10/2020	30	100	150	150	150
Earmarked reserve for ICT Cloud	06/10/2020	(30)				
Impact of the 2020/21 Pay Award (+0.75%)	06/10/2020	82	84	85	87	89
Approved Funding Gap (transfer to General Reserves)		(385)	982	1,519	2,300	2,692

- 3.17. In terms of the Approved Revenue Budget, it is income projections that have the highest level of uncertainty from both the Local Government Finance regime and COVID-19.
- 3.18. The key assumptions are detailed in **APPENDIX C** and the Approved income Budgets are below:

Total Income	2020/21 £000	2021/22 £000	2022/23 £000	2023/24 £000	2024/25 £000
LEVEL OF UNCERTAINTY / RISK	MEDIUM	HIGH	HIGH	HIGH	HIGH
Council Tax	7,029	7,350	7,722	8,093	8,356
New Homes Bonus	1,771	911	680	300	200
Retained Business Rates	3,020	1,780	1,836	1,872	1,884
Sales, Fees and Charges	8,519	8,624	8,682	8,716	8,753
Total Approved Budget	20,339	18,664	18,919	18,981	19,193

- 3.19. Sales, fees and charges budgets with assessed level of uncertainty are shown at **APPENDIX C** and below:

Uncertainty	2020/21 £000	2021/22 £000	2022/23 £000	2023/24 £000	2024/25 £000
HIGH	4,794	4,877	4,909	4,918	4,934
MEDIUM	1,742	1,765	1,788	1,812	1,831
LOW	1,983	1,981	1,985	1,986	1,988
Total	8,519	8,624	8,682	8,716	8,753

The Approved Capital Programme

- 3.20. There has been a number of further updates to the Capital Programme since the meeting on 1 September 2020 and their impact (budget reductions are shown in brackets) on the Capital Programme is:

	Cabinet or Decision Date	2020/21 £000	2021/22 £000	2022/23 £000	2023/24 £000	2024/25 £000
LEVEL OF UNCERTAINTY / RISK		MEDIUM	HIGH	HIGH	HIGH	HIGH
Capital Programme at 1 September 2020		31,239	13,636	18,821	4,051	0
3 months Money Matters Report	08/09/2020	(23,232)	23,232			
3 months Money Matters Report	08/09/2020	29				
Removal of Investment in Property	06/10/2020		(33,500)	(11,500)		
Removal of ICT Cloud	06/10/2020	(91)				
Approved Capital Programme		7,945	3,368	7,321	4,051	0

- 3.21. It important to note there will likely be further updates to Approved Budgets in the six and eight month Money Matters Reports and through Cabinet reports that are approved with financial implications.

What stage have we currently reached with the MTFS?

3.22. There are a number of activities currently taking place and these are summarised below:

- Cabinet and Leadership Team have reviewed submissions made through the Service and Financial Planning process and those that have support are included in this report.
- Three scenarios (optimistic, central and pessimistic) are being produced for income from Council Tax, New Homes Bonus, Business Rates and Sales, Fees and Charges.

Service and Financial Planning Submissions

3.23. The revenue budget growth bids identified for inclusion in the MTFS are explained at **APPENDIX D** with the financial implications (figures in brackets are income or savings) summarised below:

Details	2020/21 £000	2021/22 £000	2022/23 £000	2023/24 £000	2024/25 £000
Additional External Audit fees		8	8	8	8
Parks management - establish a sinking fund	20	20	20	20	20
Parks management - additional contract income	(20)	(20)	(20)	(20)	(20)
Community governance review		50			
Tenancy sustainment officer	33	34	34	35	36
Less: Bromford funding	(33)	(34)			
Community safety additional resource		21			
Development Management Team	25	5	6	6	6
Earmarked reserve	(25)				
Developing the visitor economy	15	10	10	10	10
Arboriculture Team	1	4	4	4	5
Sports and Leisure Team	49	0	0	0	0
Total Growth Bids	65	98	62	63	65

3.24. The proposals to reduce the funding gap identified for inclusion in the MTFS (figures in brackets are income or savings) are detailed below:

Details	2020/21 £000	2021/22 £000	2022/23 £000	2023/24 £000	2024/25 £000
Residual Budget from the former Director Posts	(139)	(149)	(152)	(155)	(158)
Internal Audit shared service		(25)	(25)	(25)	(25)
Treasury Management - further Pooled investment		(50)	(50)	(50)	(50)
New Finance System - Business Case		(20)	(40)	(40)	(40)
Burntwood LC - early repayment of capital investment	979	(140)	(140)	(140)	(140)
Funding to be finalised (see below)	(979)				
Governance Team	23	(3)	(3)	(3)	(3)
Cessation of the Shared Economic Development Team		(35)	(35)	(35)	(35)
Transfer of Burntwood Parks to the Town Council			(28)	(55)	(83)
Garden Waste - additional take up		(45)	(45)	(45)	(45)
Total Funding Gap Measures	(116)	(467)	(518)	(548)	(579)

3.25. The early repayment of the capital investment at Burntwood Leisure Centre funded by external borrowing is an 'invest to save' project that will result in annual savings in Minimum Revenue Provision.

3.26. The funding to enable this option to be implemented is still being finalised, however it is likely to be related to available capital receipts, earmarked reserves and any further windfall gains from the Local Government Settlement such as an additional New Homes Bonus payment not already assumed in the MTFS.

3.27. The capital bids identified for inclusion in the MTFs are explained at **APPENDIX E** with the financial implications (figures in brackets are income or savings) summarised below:

Details	Assessed Score	2020/21 £000	2021/22 £000	2022/23 £000	2023/24 £000	2024/25 £000
<u>Financial Information System</u>	76		50			
External Funding			(50)			
<u>Energy Insulation Programme</u>	65					10
External Funding						(10)
<u>Disabled Facilities Grants</u>	60					906
External Funding						(906)
Council Funding			(308)	(44)	(44)	
<u>Home Repair Assistance</u>	57					15
External Funding						(15)
Beacon Park Pathway	46	30				
Dam Street Toilets	45	40				
<u>Bin Replacement</u>	43					150
Existing Revenue Budgets						(150)
Equipment Storage	42	100				
Spend		170	(258)	(44)	(44)	1,081
External Funding		0	(50)	0	0	(931)
Existing Revenue Budgets		0	0	0	0	(150)
Council Funding		(170)	308	44	44	0

3.28. The capital bids result in a net reduction in Council funding from Capital receipts of **(£226,000)** and at this stage, no additional revenue implications related to these capital bids have been identified.

Income Scenarios

3.29. The headline assumptions used in each of these three scenarios are detailed below:

Central Scenario

- **Council Tax** – lower annual property growth, a **30%** increase in working age Council Tax support in 2021/22 reducing to **10%** in 2024/25 and **£5** Band D Council Tax increases to 2023/24 followed by **1.99%** thereafter.
- **New Homes Bonus** – legacy payments paid until 2022/23, no new payment in 2021/22 and no replacement scheme from 2023/24.
- **Business Rates** – negative Revenue Support Grant is abated in 2021/22 and then forms part of funding regime from 2022/23 with no transitional arrangements. Business Rate Growth is retained in full in 2021/22 and then an element is retained from 2022/23. The Council is part of the Business Rates Pool in 2021/22.
- **Sales, Fees and Charges** – a risk based (high **100%** impacted, medium **80%** impacted and low **60%** impacted) headline reduction of **7.5%** in 2021/22 reducing to **1%** in 2024/25.

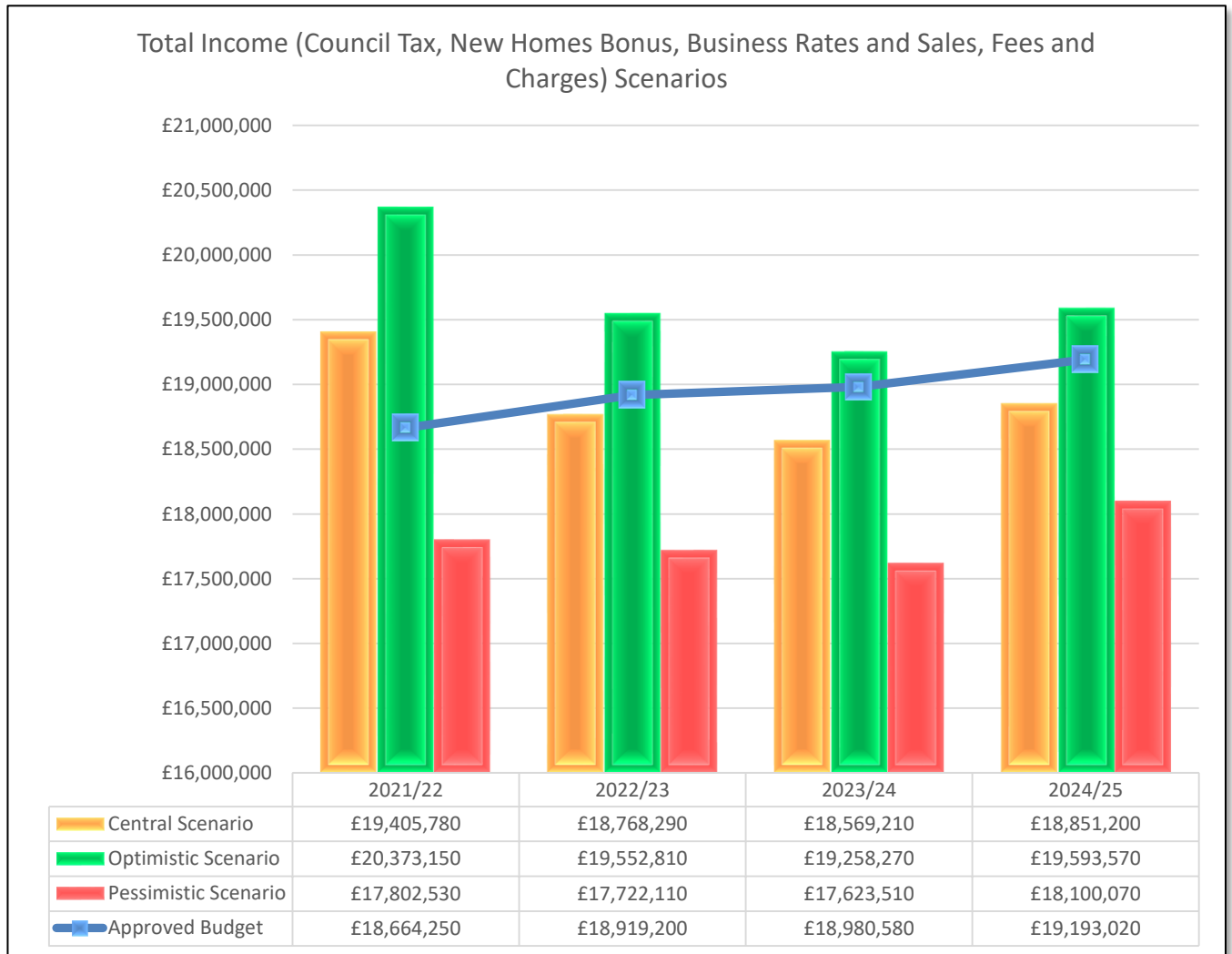
Optimistic Scenario

- **Council Tax** – lower annual property growth, a **30%** increase in working age Council Tax support in 2021/22 reducing to **0%** in 2024/25 and **£5** Band D Council Tax increases in all years.
- **New Homes Bonus** – legacy payments paid until 2022/23, a new payment in 2021/22 estimated to be **(£366,000)** and a replacement scheme from 2023/24 with an annually reducing income commencing at **(£300,000)**.
- **Business Rates** – negative Revenue Support Grant is abated in 2021/22 and then forms part of funding regime from 2022/23 with no transitional arrangements. Business Rate Growth is retained in full in 2021/22 and then a larger element is retained from 2022/23. The Council is part of the Business Rates Pool in 2021/22.
- **Sales, Fees and Charges** – a risk based (high **50%** impacted, medium **30%** impacted and low **10%** impacted) headline reduction of **1.5%** in 2021/22 reducing to **1%** in 2024/25.

Pessimistic Scenario

- **Council Tax** – lower annual property growth, a **100%** increase in working age Council Tax support in 2021/22 reducing to **10%** in 2024/25 and **1.99%** Band D Council Tax increases in all years.
- **New Homes Bonus** – legacy payments paid until 2022/23, no new payment in 2021/22 and no replacement scheme from 2023/24.
- **Business Rates** – negative Revenue Support Grant is abated in 2021/22 and then forms part of funding regime from 2022/23 with no transitional arrangements. No Business Rate Growth is retained from 2021/22. The Council is not part of the Business Rates Pool in 2021/22.
- **Sales, Fees and Charges** – a risk based (high **100%** impacted, medium **100%** impacted and low **60%** impacted) headline reduction of **10%** in 2021/22 reducing to **2.5%** in 2024/25.

3.30. The current outcomes of these three scenarios together with the Approved Budget are shown below:



3.31. This modelling provides an indication of the range of outcomes for income compared to the Approved Budget. A comparison of each scenario to the Approved Budget is summarised below (higher income compared to the Approved Budget is shown in brackets):

	2021/22 £000	2022/23 £000	2023/24 £000	2024/25 £000
Central v Approved Budget	(742)	151	411	342
Optimistic v Approved Budget	(1,709)	(634)	(278)	(401)
Pessimistic v Approved Budget	862	1,197	1,357	1,093

3.32. It would also be prudent with the level of uncertainty to set aside an element of ‘windfall’ income from the Local Government Finance settlement for 2021/22 into a contingency budget. This budget would be used to manage the risk of additional costs, lower income or to provide funding for recovery activities.

The Draft MTFS (Revenue Budget, Capital Programme and General Reserves)

3.33. The **draft Revenue Budget** with submissions and income scenarios (income or savings are in brackets) together with their impact on the Funding Gap or transfer to General Reserves is summarised below:

	2020/21 £000	2021/22 £000	2022/23 £000	2023/24 £000	2024/25 £000
LEVEL OF UNCERTAINTY / RISK	MEDIUM	HIGH	HIGH	HIGH	HIGH
Approved Funding Gap (transfer to General Reserves)	(385)	982	1,519	2,300	2,692
Revenue Growth Bids	65	98	62	63	65
Funding Gap Proposals	(116)	(467)	(518)	(548)	(579)
Changes in Income - central scenario					
Council Tax		152	171	166	132
New Homes Bonus		0	0	300	200
Retained Business Rates		(961)	(397)	(244)	(66)
Negative Revenue Support Grant		(493)	0	0	0
Sales, Fees and Charges		561	377	189	76
Sub Total	0	(742)	151	411	342
Risk or Recovery contingency budget		129	0	0	0
Funding Gap (transfer to General Reserves) - central	(436)	0	1,214	2,226	2,520
Funding Gap (transfer to General Reserves) - optimistic	(436)	(1,709)	580	1,949	2,119
Funding Gap (transfer to General Reserves) - pessimistic	(436)	862	2,411	3,583	3,613

3.34. The projection of no Funding Gap in 2021/22 assumes that in the Local Government Finance Settlement, negative Revenue Support Grant is abated and the Council is able to retain Business Rate growth.

3.35. The **draft Capital Programme** including capital bids is detailed at **APPENDIX F** and is summarised below:

	2020/21 £000	2021/22 £000	2022/23 £000	2023/24 £000	2024/25 £000
LEVEL OF UNCERTAINTY / RISK	MEDIUM	HIGH	HIGH	HIGH	HIGH
Approved Capital Programme	7,945	3,368	7,321	4,051	0
Capital Programme Bids - spend	170	(258)	(44)	(44)	1,081
Draft Capital Programme	8,115	3,110	7,277	4,007	1,081

3.36. The **draft General Reserves** (assuming at this stage, the minimum level remains at **£1,600,000**) based on the projections contained in this report are summarised below:

	2020/21		2021/22 £000	2022/23 £000	2023/24 £000	2024/25 £000
	Original Budget £000	Revised Budget £000				
LEVEL OF UNCERTAINTY / RISK	LOW	MEDIUM	HIGH	HIGH	HIGH	HIGH
Available General Reserves Year Start	4,792	4,792	4,851	5,132	4,145	1,980
(Funding Gap) / transfer to General Reserves	462	436	0	(1,110)	(2,009)	(2,187)
COVID-19 Revenue Budget Impact		(1,548)				
COVID-19 Council Tax Collection Fund			(130)	(157)	(156)	
COVID-19 Business Rates Collection Fund			(4,571)	(146)	(145)	
Business Rates Volatility Reserve			4,571	146	145	
New Homes Bonus in excess of the 'Cap'	1,171	1,171	411	280	0	0
Available General Reserves Year End	6,425	4,851	5,132	4,145	1,980	(206)
Minimum Level	1,600	1,600	1,600	1,600	1,600	1,600
Total General Reserves - central scenario	8,025	6,451	6,732	5,745	3,580	1,394
Optimistic scenario	8,025	6,451	8,608	8,725	7,533	6,675
Pessimistic scenario	8,025	6,451	5,870	3,687	164	(3,115)

What are the next stages in developing the MTFS?

3.37. The next meeting of the Committee will take place on 27 January 2021 and the Council should then be in a more informed position with the development of the MTFS that includes:

- The detail of the Local Government Finance Settlement for 2021/22 including the treatment of negative Revenue Support Grant, New Homes Bonus and Business Rate Growth will become clearer in early December 2020.
- Any further outcomes from the Service and Financial Planning process and the impact on the MTFS will be identified.
- Further information on the financial implications of COVID-19, the Council's budgetary position and any further funding support to Local Government to inform the MTFS.
- The outcomes of the Budget Consultation will be available.

3.38. This information plus other updates such as Reports approved by Cabinet and the outcome of reviewing the base budgets will be included in the next version of the MTFS for the Committee to review.

Alternative Options	Where alternative options exist, they are identified within the background section of the report.
Consultation	A Budget Consultation exercise is currently taking place in line with the recently approved engagement strategy to inform the MTFS. The results of the consultation will form part of the report to this Committee on 27 January 2021.
Financial Implications	These are included in the background section of the report.
Contribution to the Delivery of the Strategic Plan	The report directly links to overall performance and especially the delivery of Lichfield District Council's Strategic Plan and beyond.
Equality, Diversity and Human Rights Implications	These areas are addressed as part of the specific areas of activity prior to being included in Lichfield District Council's Strategic Plan.
Crime & Safety Issues	These areas are addressed as part of the specific areas of activity prior to being included in Lichfield District Council's Strategic Plan.
Environmental Impact	These areas are addressed as part of the specific areas of activity prior to being included in Lichfield District Council's Strategic Plan.
GDPR/Privacy Impact Assessment	These areas are addressed as part of the specific areas of activity prior to being included in Lichfield District Council's Strategic Plan.

	Risk Description	How We Manage It	Severity of Risk
Strategic Risk SR1 - Non achievement of the Council's key priorities contained in the Strategic Plan due to the availability of finance.			
A	Implementation of the Check, Challenge and Appeal Business Rates Appeals and more frequent revaluations	To closely monitor the level of appeals. An allowance for appeals has been included in the Business Rate Estimates.	Likelihood : Yellow Impact : Yellow Severity of Risk : Yellow
B	The review of the New Homes Bonus regime	Not all of the projected New Homes Bonus is included as core funding in the Base Budget. In 2021/22 £500,000 is included and this is then being reduced by £100,000 per annum.	Likelihood : Red Impact : Yellow Severity of Risk : Yellow
C	The increased Localisation of Business Rates and the Fair Funding Review in 2022/2023	To assess the implications of proposed changes and respond to consultations to attempt to influence the policy direction in the Council's favour.	Likelihood : Red Impact : Red Severity of Risk : Red
D	The affordability and risk associated with the Capital Strategy	An estates management team has been recruited to provide professional expertise and advice in relation to investment in property and to continue to take a prudent approach to budgeting.	Likelihood : Yellow Impact : Yellow Severity of Risk : Yellow
Strategic Risk SR3: Capacity and capability to deliver / adapt the new strategic plan to emerging landscape.			
E	The financial impact of COVID-19 is not fully reimbursed by Government and exceeds the reserves available resulting in a Section 114 notice	The use of general and earmarked reserves to fund any shortfall	Likelihood : Green Impact : Red Severity of Risk : Yellow
F	The Council cannot achieve its approved Delivery Plan for 2020/21	There will need to be consideration of additional resourcing and/or reprioritisation to reflect the impact of the pandemic.	Likelihood : Yellow Impact : Yellow Severity of Risk : Yellow
G	The resources available in the medium to longer term to deliver the Strategic Plan are diminished	The MTFS will be updated through the normal review and approval process	Likelihood : Yellow Impact : Yellow Severity of Risk : Yellow
H	Government and Regulatory Bodies introduce significant changes to the operating environment	To review all proposed policy changes and respond to all consultations to influence outcomes in the Council's favour	Likelihood : Green Impact : Yellow Severity of Risk : Yellow

Background documents

- CIPFA Code of Practice for Treasury Management in the Public Services.
- The Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities.
- Money Matters: Medium Term Financial Strategy (Revenue and Capital) 2019-24 – Cabinet 11 February 2020.
- Money Matters: Medium Term Financial Strategy (Revenue and Capital) 2019-24 – Council 18 February 2020.
- Money Matters: 2019/20 Review of Financial Performance against the Financial Strategy – Cabinet 2 June 2020.
- The Medium Term Financial Strategy and the projected financial impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic – Cabinet 7 July 2020.
- Money Matters: 2019/20 Review of Financial Performance against the Financial Strategy – Cabinet 8 September 2020.
- Medium Term Financial Strategy 2020-25 – Cabinet 6 October 2020.

Relevant web links

Policy Announcements and Updates since 1 September 2020

Funding	When Announced	Allocation	Notes
Income loss scheme for sales, fees and charges	16 July	£557,000 in first claim	The is based on sales, fees and charges income incurred in delivering services and therefore excludes other types of income such as commercial income. Further details are still awaited, however it will be based on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updated – now based on individual income budgets (those with losses of less than 5% can be excluded). • The first 5% of income loss will be the Council's responsibility • Income losses in excess of 5% will be shared 25% Council and 75% Government
Test and Trace Support Scheme - support	28 September	£33,000	The government has announced that from 28th September 2020, individuals who are told that they must self-isolate by NHS Test and Trace will be entitled, subject to certain other criteria, to a support payment of £500. The Department for Health and Social Care (DHSC) has sent Local Authorities an implementation guide that confirms the eligibility for the payments, the application process and reporting requirements.
Test and Trace Support Scheme - administration	28 September	£24,500	
Additional Funding 4 th Tranche £0.9bn	12 October	£100,000	Based on the distribution basis used for the third funding tranche that takes account of spend, population, deprivation and the cost of providing services in each area. All Councils received a minimum allocation of £100,000.
Cold Weather Payments £10m	13 October	TBD	For councils to help support rough sleepers, an additional £2m is also available for faith and community groups who work with rough sleepers
Support to Council run Leisure Centres £100m from the 4 th tranche funding of £1.0bn	22 October	TBD	This is a bid process to the Department of Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS).
Support for Clinically Extremely Vulnerable People	2 November	TBD	£32m provided to upper tier Councils in England to support clinically extremely vulnerable people who need it during the 28 day period the restrictions are in force. It is essential that upper tier Councils provide sufficient resources to lower tier authorities to carry out any responsibilities that they are asked to undertake.
Additional Restrictions Grant to Support businesses	2 November	£2.095m	One off funding of £1.1bn to Councils in England, distributed on the basis of £20 per head, to enable Councils to support businesses over the coming months more broadly, who are a key part of the local economy.
Business Grants for closed businesses	2 November	£1.470m	The Government will provide funding to Councils in England so that grants worth up to £3,000 per month can be distributed to business premises forced to close due to the restrictions in the retail, hospitality and leisure sectors. Properties with a rateable value of £15,000 or less = £1,334 per four weeks, Properties with a Rateable Value of over £15,000 and below £51,000 = £2,000 per four weeks and those over £51,000 = £3,000 per four weeks.
Backdated cash grants for businesses in local Covid alert levels "high" and "very high"	2 November	TBD	Businesses in hospitality, leisure and accommodation sectors that have seen reduced demand due to local restrictions will receive backdated grants to 1 August and up to 5 November at 70% of the value of closed grants up to a maximum of £2,100 per month for this period. Properties with a rateable value of £15,000 or less = £934 per four weeks, Properties with a Rateable Value of over £15,000 and below £51,000 = £1,400 per four weeks and those over £51,000 = £2,100 per four weeks.
Contain Outbreak Management Fund	2 November	N/a	Upper tier Councils in England will receive a one off payment of £8 per head to support local, test, trace and contain activities.

The current COVID-19 projections for 2020/21 only

(Including Tranche 4 funding allocation)

Details	October	Comments
Support for Leisure Partner	£407,700	Current Projection
Housing and Homelessness Support	£80,580	
Additional Hardship / Discretionary Housing Payments	£0	Rent protection now extended therefore shown in What If scenarios
Additional costs of Waste Collection	£166,810	
ICT Support Costs for Remote Working	£109,890	Current support to end of December
Additional Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), Building Cleaning and Other Costs	£31,560	
Bank Charges for Grant Processing	£2,990	
Transport for food deliveries	£12,030	
Project costs	£29,720	Delays in some projects result in additional costs.
Other costs	£94,860	Potential costs for agency/casual/overtime for essential workers, savings and other
Total additional Costs	£936,140	
Reduced commercial rents, Investment Income and other Contributions	£170,000	An element is now shown under sales, fees and charges
Reduced Sales, Fees and Charges	£1,430,420	Car Parking income is the highest risk.
Total excluding What if Scenarios	£2,536,560	

What if scenarios:	October
Projected reductions in Council Tax (LDC & Parishes 13%) are included (will impact in later years)	£470,000
Projected reductions in Business Rates (LDC 40%) are included (will impact in later years)	£435,000
Hardship / Housing Payments extends for 12 months	£226,000
Support for the Leisure Partner extends for 12 months	£643,550
Total of all What if scenarios	£1,774,550
Total including What if Scenarios	£4,311,110
Government Support in 2020/21 + Earmarked Reserve	(£1,301,160)
Income Guarantee Estimate	(£557,000)

Total potential financial impact	£2,452,950
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Impact in 2020/21	£1,547,950
Impact in later years	£905,000

Approved MTFS Key Assumptions

Council Tax	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
Band D Equivalent Properties	45,337	45,337	45,337	45,337	45,337
Annual Band D Equivalent Growth	517	692	918	869	517
Discounts and exemptions	(3,816)	(3,816)	(3,816)	(3,816)	(3,816)
Local Council Tax Support	(2,613)	(2,613)	(2,613)	(2,613)	(2,613)
Provision for non-collection	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%
Council Tax increase	£5.00	£5.00	£5.00	£5.00	1.99%
Approved Budget	£7,029,000	£7,350,000	£7,722,000	£8,093,000	£8,356,000

New Homes Bonus	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
Change in Housing Supply in Band D equivalents	717	528	707	938	888
Affordable Housing	268	109	146	193	183
Baseline level	176	182	185	187	191
National average Band D Council Tax	£1,750	£1,750	£1,750	£1,750	£1,750
Approved Budget	£1,771,000	£911,000	£680,000	£300,000	£200,000

Business Rates	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
Total Rateable Value	£89,866,000	£89,866,000	£89,866,000	£89,866,000	£89,866,000
Gross Rates Payable	£44,037,000	£44,478,000	£44,914,000	£45,355,000	£45,800,000
Mandatory and Discretionary Reliefs	(£5,495,000)	(£5,552,160)	(£5,663,623)	(£5,776,396)	(£5,891,484)
Empty Properties Relief (4%)	(£1,787,000)	(£1,805,000)	(£1,841,000)	(£1,878,000)	(£1,916,000)
Provision for non-payment (0.9%)	(£321,000)	(£321,000)	(£321,000)	(£321,000)	(£321,000)
Appeals (4.7%)	(£1,707,000)	(£1,724,000)	(£1,737,000)	(£1,751,000)	(£1,765,000)
Non Domestic Rating Income	£34,605,000	£34,953,840	£35,229,377	£35,506,604	£35,784,516

Approved Budget - Baseline Funding Level	£2,117,000	£1,691,000	£1,720,000	£1,749,000	£1,784,000
Approved Budget - Projected Retained Growth	£903,000	£88,600	£115,500	£123,000	£100,000

Sales, Fees and Charges	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
Sales, Fees and Charges	£7,838,090	£7,913,060	£7,971,110	£8,004,990	£8,042,430
Commercial Rents	£680,820	£710,590	£710,590	£710,590	£710,590
Approved Budget	£8,518,910	£8,623,650	£8,681,700	£8,715,580	£8,753,020

Sales, Fees and Charges Assessed level of Uncertainty

Fees and Charges	Pricing Objective	Uncertainty	2020/21 £000	2021/22 £000	2022/23 £000	2023/24 £000	2024/25 £000
Planning pre application advice	Cost recovery	HIGH	(£40)	(£40)	(£40)	(£40)	(£40)
Building Regulations	Cost recovery	MEDIUM	(£915)	(£933)	(£951)	(£969)	(£988)
Local Land Charges - LDC	Cost recovery	MEDIUM	(£294)	(£299)	(£305)	(£310)	(£310)
Bulky Waste Collection	Cost recovery	LOW	(£67)	(£67)	(£67)	(£67)	(£67)
LOPS - Invest to Save	Cost recovery	HIGH	(£55)	(£57)	(£59)	(£60)	(£61)
Housing Options & Homelessness	Cost recovery	LOW	(£42)	(£44)	(£45)	(£47)	(£49)
Other	Cost recovery		(£145)	(£162)	(£164)	(£167)	(£166)
Sub Total			(£1,558)	(£1,603)	(£1,631)	(£1,661)	(£1,681)
Other	Deminimus		(£5)	(£0)	(£2)	(£1)	(£1)
Sub Total			(£5)	(£0)	(£2)	(£1)	(£1)
Lichfield Car Parks	Fair charging	HIGH	(£2,056)	(£2,056)	(£2,056)	(£2,056)	(£2,056)
Garden Waste Service (Both Councils)	Fair charging	LOW	(£1,403)	(£1,403)	(£1,403)	(£1,403)	(£1,403)
Grounds Maintenance	Fair charging	LOW	(£202)	(£202)	(£202)	(£202)	(£202)
Street Cleansing	Fair charging	LOW	(£86)	(£86)	(£86)	(£86)	(£86)
Other	Fair charging		(£39)	(£39)	(£39)	(£39)	(£39)
Sub Total			(£3,785)	(£3,785)	(£3,785)	(£3,785)	(£3,785)
Trade Waste Collection - Charges	Full commercial	HIGH	(£320)	(£320)	(£320)	(£320)	(£320)
Trade Waste Collection - Recycling	Full commercial	HIGH	(£78)	(£79)	(£80)	(£80)	(£81)
Beacon Park	Full commercial	MEDIUM	(£96)	(£96)	(£96)	(£96)	(£96)
Freedom Leisure Commercial Bid	Full commercial	HIGH	(£89)	(£124)	(£151)	(£155)	(£171)
Other	Full commercial		(£36)	(£36)	(£36)	(£36)	(£36)
Sub Total			(£619)	(£654)	(£683)	(£687)	(£704)
Planning Applications	Statutory	HIGH	(£903)	(£903)	(£903)	(£903)	(£903)
Parking Enforcement	Statutory	HIGH	(£84)	(£84)	(£84)	(£84)	(£84)
Waste Shared Service - 4 Ashes	Statutory	MEDIUM	(£60)	(£60)	(£60)	(£60)	(£60)
Waste Shared Service - Recycling	Statutory	MEDIUM	(£331)	(£331)	(£331)	(£331)	(£331)
Corporate Debt Recovery	Statutory	HIGH	(£206)	(£206)	(£206)	(£206)	(£206)
Licensing	Statutory	HIGH	(£177)	(£177)	(£177)	(£177)	(£177)
Environmental Protection	Statutory	LOW	(£20)	(£20)	(£20)	(£20)	(£20)
Other			(£38)	(£38)	(£38)	(£38)	(£38)
Sub Total			(£1,819)	(£1,819)	(£1,819)	(£1,819)	(£1,819)
Other			(£52)	(£52)	(£52)	(£52)	(£52)
Total Sales, Fees and Charges			(£7,838)	(£7,913)	(£7,971)	(£8,005)	(£8,042)

Investment Properties - Rents	Fair charging	HIGH	(£265)	(£265)	(£265)	(£265)	(£265)
Other Land & Buildings - Rents	Fair charging	HIGH	(£416)	(£445)	(£445)	(£445)	(£445)
Total Commercial Rents			(£681)	(£711)	(£711)	(£711)	(£711)

Total			(£8,519)	(£8,624)	(£8,682)	(£8,716)	(£8,753)
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Revenue Growth Bids

Initiative	Need Assessment	Community Benefit	Impact and benefits if approved	Risks or alternative options if not approved
Tenancy sustainment officer	Essential	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Homelessness Reduction Act (HRA) significantly increased the work of the housing options team and in 2019/20, the number of homelessness applications was 110% higher than in 2017/18 before the HRA was introduced. Since lockdown there has been on average per month, a 14% rise in enquiries and a 10% rise in homelessness applications compared to the last financial year and we expect a further increase once the eviction moratorium ends and the recession and effects of Covid-19 impact. Government has indicated it will look at sustainable funding in the spending review to address the impact of the Homelessness Reduction Act. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Flexible Housing Support Grant (FHSG) reserve pot is an option, however we will need this to ensure adequate housing options staff to manage demand and also to continue the housing first rough sleeper outreach service from 2021/22.
Development Management (DM) Technical Support Team	Essential	Yes (improved process and less complaints)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Technical Support Team is busy and has important tasks to complete to ensure the effective and timely registration & validation of all applications submitted under the Town & Country Planning Act and that planning decisions and the committee administrative process are progressed effectively, for example. If the tasks are not undertaken effectively they have serious implications for the team i.e. serious legislative errors and/or can impact on the ability of the planning case officer work and their capacity. The recent pandemic lockdown and also more recent sickness absence within the team, has also highlighted resilience and capability issues within the team. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If we were to continue 'as is' there would be continued on-going back log in the validation and registration process; lack of resilience within the team when members of the team are on leave/absent; continued mistakes and lack of expertise within the team; and the provision of poor support to the wider DM team/planning officers (placing undue resource implications on more senior officers) and also a reduced customer service/increase in complaints as a result. Do nothing therefore is not an option. Less fundamental changes to the current structures have been considered as well as filling vacant posts. These options have been discounted given the nature of the concerns over the performance of the existing team and the need to have the right people in suitable posts.
Community safety	Essential	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The additional resource will enable community safety to respond to the increased demand and shift in focus 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Options have been explored with the police to use the newly appointed vulnerability co-ordinator to provide additional support but due to the current and anticipated demands of

APPENDIX D

Initiative	Need Assessment	Community Benefit	Impact and benefits if approved	Risks or alternative options if not approved
			<p>towards outcomes around effective safeguarding, reducing vulnerability and risk.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The district has a small number of complex individuals whose challenging behaviour has consumed a massive amount of council officer and partner time without generally resolving the issues. This increased capacity will offer the opportunity for early intervention and give greater likelihood of achieving some resolution. Indirect cost savings would be made through reduced officer engagement in issues associated with cases. In addition to Community Safety this includes officers in Connects, Revenue & Benefits, Environmental health and Leadership Team in general. 	<p>this post this is not an option in the short to medium term. The Hub was traditionally organised and supported by Police resources but these were diverted to support the MARAC leaving LDC to pick up this workload.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There has been a significant increase in Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) complaints during the Covid-19 pandemic.
Community governance review	Essential	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Required to be carried out as developments take place and at the request or parish/wards. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Statutory requirement that must be conducted on a regular basis to ensure it is effective.
Sports and Leisure Team	Essential	No	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Resolves a number of legacy issues – unfunded team growth and reliance on precarious and unachieved income – have created a significant and ongoing salary pressure within the Sport and Leisure Team. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A growth bid to sustain the existing structure could be developed. However this would reflect an approximately £80k budget pressure, which would be difficult to justify. Rather than cost saving this bid avoids overspend.
External Audit Fees	Essential	No	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The External Auditor provides an independent assessment of the Council’s financial statements including the Annual Governance Statement. Additionally External Audit provide a value for money assessment “In all significant respects, the audited body takes properly informed decisions and deploys resources to achieve planned and sustainable outcomes for taxpayers and local people. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is little to no discretion given the reporting requirements of the Financial Reporting Council (FRC). In the event additional budget is not agreed it is very likely that the Council would overspend its budget allocation.
Parks management - sinking fund	Desirable	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This will provide support for maintenance activities to support the long-term sustainability of our assets. A full 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not completing the work will create a backlog and accumulated liabilities that would ultimately need

APPENDIX D

Initiative	Need Assessment	Community Benefit	Impact and benefits if approved	Risks or alternative options if not approved
			<p>schedule of activities will follow, but examples include lake dredging and statue waxing.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An established reserve may present an opportunity to match-fund external funding applications to enhance resources. • The avoidance of large unbudgeted costs. 	<p>addressing. Without which standards may drop to a point where there are safety and reputational risks.</p>
Developing the visitor economy	Desirable	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This campaign would support the recovery of the Visitor Economy of Lichfield District. • Its aim is to attract visitors back to the district, raise the profile of the District as a great place to visit, shop, dine and enjoy, as well as highlight the Districts unique tourism offer. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An alternative option is not to undertake any marketing activity, which could be very detrimental to our area.
Arboriculture Team	Desirable	No (direct benefit)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increasingly applications involving trees and landscaping are becoming more complex and require a high degree of knowledge and expertise to deal with. Arboriculture by its nature is very technical subject with a need to fully understand the science and put this in the context of development. • During the next two years it is anticipated that the current workload will increase with strategic sites coming forward for detailed/reserved matters consideration as well as other major applications coming forward. This is likely to exceed resources even on a purely reactive work programme. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whilst we could seek to retain two Band I posts this would not address the structural issues highlighted about not having a service lead and responsibility for developing the service and playing in to new, important agendas re. Green Infrastructure and response to Climate Change. • It would also not address the issue of day to day management issues and the relationship with the Head of Service. • Consideration has been given to an additional junior post to supplement that of the two existing posts (or to complement a principal and senior role). This would involve additional costs over and above existing budgets (more so with the proposal to introduce a principal role). Whilst a junior role could assist with administrative tasks and contribute towards certain aspects of the workload, it is thought that the service needs at this time are such that more experienced and skilled officers are required. • Temporary or fixed term posts would not be appropriate given the on-going nature of the service demands.

Capital Programme Bids

Capital Programme Bid	Assessed Score	Spend £	Council Funding £
Financial information system - the Council approved the inclusion of £250,000 in the Capital Programme based on estimates from soft market testing. We now have more detailed costing information and this budget will need to be increased to £300,000 and will include an integrated debtors system. Therefore it is considered appropriate that the additional £50,000 funded is from a Revenues and Benefits earmarked reserve "New Burdens funding".	78	£50,000	£0
Energy insulation programme for 2024/25 - EIP grants supports the delivery of the council's Warmer Homes, Greener District initiative, which focuses on addressing fuel poverty and cold homes. The grant will be available to the project to provide match funding for domestic heating, hot water and insulation measures to low income households who are unable to fully or partially fund these.	65	£10,000	£0
Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) for 2024/25 and reduced Council funding - DFGs provide adaptations for older and disabled people within our communities to enable them to remain living independently in the community for longer. The Council has a statutory duty to provide DFGs.	60	£510,000	(£396,000)
Home Repair Assistance for 2024/25 - HRA grants are available for emergency repairs to domestic properties to reduce the likelihood of occupants coming to harm by lessening or removing an identified hazard from the home.	57	£15,000	£0
Beacon Park pathway - to enhance the network of paths around Beacon Park to create a jogging route.	46	£30,000	£30,000
Dam Street Toilets - to improve the standard and DDA compliance of the Dam Street Toilets.	45	£40,000	£40,000
Bin replacement for 2024/25 - To fund the purchase of new bins, to replace existing damaged bins, new bins for new developments and additional recycling bins for residents who request them.	43	£150,000	£0
Equipment storage - to develop a storage structure for Parks and Grounds Maintenance equipment in Beacon Park.	42	£100,000	£100,000
Total		£905,000	(£226,000)

Draft Capital Programme

Project	Draft Capital Programme						
	(R=>500k, A=250k to 500k and G=<250k)						
	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	Total	Corporate
£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	
Gym Equipment at Burntwood Parks	34	0	0	0	0	34	0
New Build Parish Office/Community Hub	92	0	0	0	0	92	0
Armitage with Handsacre Village Hall storage container	6	0	0	0	0	6	0
Re-siting/improvement of Armitage War Memorial	120	0	0	0	0	120	0
Canopy and installation of artificial grass at Armitage	3	0	0	0	0	3	0
Burntwood LC CHP Unit	223	0	0	0	0	223	0
King Edwards VI School	101	0	0	0	0	101	0
Friary Grange - Short Term Refurbishment	640	0	0	0	0	640	0
Replacement Leisure Centre	195	189	2,349	2,260	0	4,993	0
St. Stephen's School, Fradley	22	0	0	0	0	22	0
Beacon Park Pathway	30	0	0	0	0	30	30
Accessible Homes (Disabled Facilities Grants)	1,100	1,649	906	906	906	5,467	0
Home Repair Assistance Grants	36	15	15	15	15	96	0
Decent Homes Standard	147	0	0	0	0	147	0
Energy Insulation Programme	48	10	10	10	10	88	0
DCLG Monies	212	0	0	0	0	212	0
Unallocated S106 Affordable Housing Monies	684	0	0	0	0	684	0
Enabling People Total	3,693	1,863	3,280	3,191	931	12,958	30
Darnford Park	13	0	0	0	0	13	0
Canal Towpath Improvements (Brereton & Ravenhill)	36	0	0	0	0	36	0
Loan to Council Dev Co.	675	0	0	0	0	675	116
Lichfield St Johns Community Link	35	0	0	0	0	35	0
Staffordshire Countryside Explorer	44	0	0	0	0	44	0
Equity in Council Dev Co.	225	0	0	0	0	225	0
Vehicle Replacement Programme (Waste)	0	0	3,190	75	0	3,265	75
Vehicle Replacement Programme (Other)	54	327	142	202	0	725	57
Bin Purchase	150	150	150	150	150	750	0
Dam Street Toilets	40	0	0	0	0	40	40
Upper St John St & Birmingham Road (S106)	7	0	0	0	0	7	0
Stowe Pool Improvements (S106) (Jul 2012)	50	0	0	0	0	50	5
The Leomansley Area Improvement Project	3	0	0	0	0	3	0
Cannock Chase SAC	51	25	0	0	0	76	0
Shaping Place Total	1,383	502	3,482	427	150	5,944	293
Multi Storey Car Park Refurbishment Project	300	0	0	0	0	300	0
Birmingham Road Site - Coach Park	1,475	0	0	0	0	1,475	418
Birmingham Road Site - Short Term Redevelopment	222	0	0	0	0	222	0
Car Parks Variable Message Signing (S106) (Jul 2012)	32	0	0	0	0	32	0
Old Mining College - Refurbish access and signs (S106)	13	0	0	0	0	13	0
St. Chads Sculpture (Lichfield City Art Fund)	5	0	0	0	0	5	5
Developing Prosperity Total	2,047	0	0	0	0	2,047	423
Property Planned Maintenance	229	150	180	215	0	774	774
Depot Sinking Fund	0	11	0	0	0	11	11
Equipment Storage	100	0	0	0	0	100	100
New Financial Information System	150	150	0	0	0	300	250
IT Infrastructure	154	35	15	0	0	204	204
IT Innovation	280	50	50	0	0	380	275
ICT Hardware	4	161	160	174	0	499	499
District Council House Repair Programme	50	188	110	0	0	348	310
Good Council Total	967	745	515	389	0	2,616	2,423
Draft Capital Programme	8,090	3,110	7,277	4,007	1,081	23,565	3,169

APPENDIX F

Funding Source	Draft Capital Programme					
	2020/21 £000	2021/22 £000	2022/23 £000	2023/24 £000	2024/25 £000	Total £000
Capital Receipts	1,251	695	515	308	0	2,769
Capital Receipts - Statue	5	0	0	0	0	5
Revenue - Corporate	182	0	0	213	0	395
Corporate Council Funding	1,438	695	515	521	0	3,169
Grant	2,043	1,674	931	931	931	6,510
Section 106	1,361	25	0	0	0	1,386
CIL	180	0	0	0	0	180
Reserves	2,500	377	72	145	0	3,094
Revenue - Existing Budgets	150	150	150	150	150	750
Sinking Fund	223	0	0	0	0	223
Leases	0	0	3,260	0	0	3,260
Total	7,895	2,921	4,928	1,747	1,081	18,572
External Borrowing	195	189	2,349	2,260	0	4,993
Grand Total	8,090	3,110	7,277	4,007	1,081	23,565

Capital Receipts	2020/21 £000	2021/22 £000	2022/23 £000	2023/24 £000	2024/25 £000	Total £000
Opening Balance	(2,673)	(1,624)	(1,466)	(961)	(664)	(2,673)
Repayment of Loan to Development Company					(675)	(675)
Sale of land at Netherstowe and Leyfields		(527)				(527)
Right to Buy Receipts	(197)					(197)
Other Receipts	(10)	(10)	(10)	(11)	(9)	(50)
Utilised in Year	1,256	695	515	308	0	2,774
Closing Balance	(1,624)	(1,466)	(961)	(664)	(1,348)	(1,348)
RTB Receipts element	(197)	(197)	(197)	(197)	(197)	(197)

Procurement Strategy (including a Local Procurement Code)

Cabinet Member for Finance, Procurement, Revenues & Benefits and Customer Services

Date:	19 November 2020
Agenda Item:	6
Contact Officer:	Anthony Thomas
Tel Number:	01543 308012
Email:	Anthony.thomas@lichfielddc.gov.uk
Key Decision?	YES
Local Ward Members	Full Council



**Strategic
(Overview and
Scrutiny)
Committee**

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 The Council procures and commissions significant levels of goods, works and services from third parties and the aim is to achieve best value for money.
- 1.2 This means that procurement decisions need to take account, as appropriate, of quality and all of the costs whilst also remaining compliant with all legal, regulatory and constitutional requirements.
- 1.3 The Procurement Strategy is intended to move the Council from where it currently is to where it wants to be in terms of Procurement. The strategy takes account of the new Strategic Plan, latest regulations and provides greater clarity regarding the role of the procurement process.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 The Committee is requested to provide their views on the Draft Procurement Strategy.

3. Background

What is Procurement?

- 3.1. Procurement is the process of acquiring goods, works and services from third parties. In other words, it covers the purchasing of everything from paperclips to major infrastructure schemes.
- 3.2. Commissioning is usually about securing services (rather than acquisition of goods or works) and is a cycle of activities that includes procurement and contract management.
- 3.3. The aim is to achieve best value for money. In the HM Treasury publication Managing Public Money value for money is defined in the following way:

‘It means securing the best mix of quality and effectiveness for the least outlay over the period of use of the goods or services bought. It is not about minimising upfront prices.’
- 3.4. This means that procurement and commissioning decisions need to take account, as appropriate, of quality and all of the costs that will be incurred by the Council throughout the life of the asset or contract period not simply the initial price.
- 3.5. The best results are obtained by engaging with the market before advertising an opportunity (to be sure the Council’s approach will get a good response from suppliers) and focusing on contract management to ensure the Council gets what it is paying for.
- 3.6. There are also compliance issues which cannot be ignored and every Council adopts Contract Procedure Rules. These are the council’s own procurement rules and they form part of a broader set of arrangements the Council makes locally for procurement and project management, including measures to prevent fraud and corruption.

- 3.7. Procurement and commissioning must be carried out in compliance with the public contract regulations 2015 and including currently EU procurement directives, related case law and other legal requirements including the best value duty and requirements relating to staff transfers (TUPE, pensions), health and safety, equalities and social value etc.
- 3.8. The UK also has rules on lower value procurements including an obligation on councils to publicise advertised opportunities and awards worth **£25,000** or more on the Government's Contracts Finder website.
- 3.9. Public procurement law is complex and the Council has recently recruited a procurement team and also has access to legal advice from the South Staffordshire Legal Service to navigate the rules.

What is the Procurement Process?

- 3.10. The key stages of the procurement cycle are shown in the diagram below:



- 3.11. There are a number of critical success factors related to procurement including the involvement of senior management, early involvement of procurement and other professional advisors, a focus on delivering the right outcomes, good preparation and planning, stakeholder engagement and ongoing risk management.

How are Contracts and Relationships Managed?

- 3.12. It is during the contract management phase that the benefits the Council is paying for are actually delivered (or not) and a 'let and forget' approach is never acceptable.
- 3.13. The foundations for success in contract management are laid during the procurement process and include the identification of a contract manager, continuing management of risks, control of costs including contract variations and management of performance shortfalls.

What is Category Management?

- 3.14. Every Council needs good visibility of what it is spending and with whom and this will involve breaking down expenditure into categories such as professional services or vehicles.
- 3.15. Category management focusses on improving value for money and can involve challenging the need to purchase the goods or services or carry out the project at all, at the current time or in the way proposed.
- 3.16. In Local Government, professional buying organisations such as the Eastern Shires Purchasing Organisation (ESPO) are a vehicle for collaboration on the acquisition of common goods and services through the use of framework agreements with the aim of improving value for money.
- 3.17. Councils also have the option of using the framework agreements and other arrangements put in place by the Crown Commercial Service.

How is 'Social Value' Delivered?

- 3.18. Councils have always used their purchasing power to obtain social, economic and environmental benefits for their communities.
- 3.19. The Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012 enshrines this in law to a certain extent.
- 3.20. Under the Act, any Council proposing to award a service contract or framework agreement above a financial threshold in the EU rules must consider how what they propose to procure will improve the economic, social and environmental wellbeing of the area.
- 3.21. The Council must also consider how it will act to secure the improvement when undertaking the procurement.

Developing a Procurement Strategy

- 3.22. The process for developing a procurement strategy will be focussed on:
- Understanding where the Council currently is in terms of Procurement.
 - Identifying where the Council wants to be with Procurement.
 - Determining how the Council plans to get there "the Procurement Strategy".

An Assessment of where the Council currently is and where it wants to be with Procurement

- 3.23. The Local Government Association (LGA) has developed a toolkit to support delivery of the National Procurement Strategy for Local Government in England 2018.
- 3.24. Its purpose is to help Councils, to set objectives in relation to the levels in each of the key areas and to assess their own progress against those objectives.
- 3.25. The Council's current assessment using this toolkit is shown in detail at **APPENDIX A**.

3.26. The key themes of the National Procurement Strategy, a summary of the current assessment and the next level showing where the Council wants to be is:

- **Showing Leadership**
 - **Engaging Councillors** – Current **Minimum** next level is **Developing**
 - **Engaging Senior Managers** – Current **Developing** next level is **Mature**
 - **Working with Partners** – Current **Developing** next level is **Mature**
 - **Engaging Strategic Suppliers** – Current **Minimum** next level is **Developing**
- **Behaving Commercially**
 - **Creating Commercial Opportunities** – Current **Minimum** next level is **Developing**
 - **Managing Contracts and Relationships** – Current **Minimum** next level is **Developing**
 - **Managing Strategic Risk** – Current **Developing** next level is **Mature**
- **Achieving Community Benefits**
 - **Obtaining Social Value** – Current **Minimum** next level is **Developing**
 - **Local Small Medium Enterprises (SMEs) and Micro-Businesses Engagement** – Current **Minimum** next level is **Developing**
 - **Enabling Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) Engagement** – Current **Developing** next level is **Mature**

3.27. Internal Audit have also recently undertaken a review of procurement and provided a limited assurance level. This level of assurance indicates there are some weaknesses in controls that will need to be addressed as part of the development of the procurement strategy.

The Procurement Strategy

3.28. The Council has approved additional resources over the last few years to improve procurement initially through the partnership with Wolverhampton City Council and latterly following the withdrawal of Wolverhampton City Council, the recruitment of a small in-house procurement team.

3.29. The assessment compared to the LGA toolkit shows there is room for improvement in procurement however we must be realistic in terms of setting priorities with a relatively small team.

3.30. The initial focus must be on ‘getting the basics right’ because currently we are operating at the minimum level in a number of assessment areas.

3.31. Therefore priorities will need to be focussed on achieving or consolidating at the minimum level and then moving to the higher levels based on the capacity and resources available.

3.32. The draft Procurement Strategy is shown at **APPENDIX B** and is summarised below:

- The Strategic context in terms of the Strategic Plan 2020-2024 and values.
- The procurement guiding principles.
- A procurement action plan.

Alternative Options	The Council could decide that it does not need a Procurement Strategy or could develop one that is different in the outcomes it would like to achieve.
Consultation	The Committee is being consulted to provide their views to the Cabinet.

Financial Implications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The average annual procurement spend over the last three years is £11m. With vehicle hire, agency staff and IT licenses being the largest spend areas. The average local spend with suppliers in the district (on a post code basis) over the last three years is 10%, with 2019/20 at 12%. The average budgeted annual spend for the next three years is £13m. The replacement waste fleet, the works to the coach park, recycling disposal costs and vehicle hire are the largest spend areas over the next three years. There is an annual procurement savings target of c1% or £84,000 assumed in the Medium Term Financial Strategy. This will reviewed once a forward looking procurement plan has been completed.
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Contribution to the Delivery of the Strategic Plan	<p>Effective procurement can contribute to the achievement of Strategic Plan outcomes primarily in relation to developing prosperity and being a good Council.</p> <p>The development and approval of a Procurement Strategy (including a Local Procurement Code) is an action in the 2020/21 Delivery Plan.</p>
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Equality, Diversity and Human Rights Implications	An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed.
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Crime & Safety Issues	No specific implications.
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Environmental Impact	Environmental impact can be considered as part of procurement exercises.
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GDPR/Privacy Impact Assessment	No specific implications.
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	Risk Description	How We Manage It	Severity of Risk (RYG)
A	The Council's procurement ambitions have not been articulated and agreed	The Procurement Strategy will articulate where the Council wants to be and how it plans to get there	Likelihood : Red Impact : Yellow Severity : Yellow
B	Local suppliers are not provided with the opportunity to bid for Council procurements	Procurement opportunities will be part of a forward looking plan and will also be communicated more widely to provide greater opportunities	Likelihood : Yellow Impact : Yellow Severity : Yellow
C	Procurement performance is not monitored and transparent	There will be a suite of Key Performance Indicators that will be regularly monitored	Likelihood : Yellow Impact : Yellow Severity : Yellow
D	Non-compliance with legal, regulatory and constitutional requirements	The new Procurement Team will be able to ensure compliance and this will also will be monitored by Internal Audit	Likelihood : Yellow Impact : Yellow Severity : Yellow
E	Procurement savings/value for money are unrealised	The new Procurement Team will be able to establish greater rigour in the Procurement process	Likelihood : Green Impact : Yellow Severity : Yellow
F	Procurements are reactive rather than planned and therefore do not achieve value for money	The procurement team will engage with service areas to minimise reactive procurement	Likelihood : Red Impact : Yellow Severity : Yellow

Background documents

A Councillors Guide to Procurement 2019 edition produced by the LGA

National procurement Strategy for Local Government in England 2018 Delivering the Ambition produced by the LGA

Procurement Service Improvement – Cabinet 4 September 2018

Ernst and Young Report Getting the basics right in procurement

A number of other Councils Procurement Strategies

Equality Impact Assessment

Relevant web links

National Procurement Strategy for Local Government in England 2018 – Delivering the ambition

Showing Leadership			
Key Area	Current Assessment of where the Council is	The Next Level and where the Council wants to be	How do we get there?
Engaging Councillors	Minimum Councillors regard procurement and commercial issues as purely operational matters	Developing The Council is exploring the best approach to Councillor engagement in procurement and commercial matters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Councillors receive regular reports on procurement activities. • Councillor training and development programme to include procurement and commercial elements to develop understanding for better policy development and scrutiny.
Engaging Senior Managers	Developing The Council is exploring the best approach to obtaining procurement and commercial input into decision making	Mature Senior managers engaged with procurement and commercial issues routinely taking advice at key decision points	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Procurement Strategy is reviewed and refreshed. • Senior manager training and development programme to include procurement and commercial elements. • Requirement to engage with procurement for whole life cost based procurements of £10,000 or higher.
Working with Partners	Developing Council acknowledges the business case for a cross-council approach to design and implementation of solutions and is seeking to encourage this	Mature Designing and implementing solutions as a single team in high value/high risk projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Structured approach to project management for major procurements is introduced. • Training and development programme covering partnership working are developed and implemented.
Engaging Strategic Suppliers	Minimum Firefighting. Ad hoc engagement with important suppliers, usually when there is a problem to be resolved	Developing Acknowledges Business Case for improved strategic supplier management and is piloting engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop criteria to identify strategic suppliers. • Evaluate options and pilot engagement with a strategic supplier. • Produce a procurement plan. • Pilot early market engagement on at least one major project.

Behaving Commercially

Key Area	Current Assessment of where the Council is	The Next Level and where the Council wants to be	How do we get there?
Creating Commercial Opportunities	<p>Minimum Focused on business as usual and compliance</p>	<p>Developing Some high value/high profile acquisitions examined for creating commercial opportunities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forward planning is undertaken in some procurements. • Opportunities to create new revenue streams are investigated. • Options appraisals are undertaken for major procurements. • Market and supplier research and analysis is undertaken for major procurements. • Procurement is involved in tenders at the planning stage. • Innovation is considered in tender evaluations. • Plain language is used in tender documentation. • Performance reporting includes social benefits as well as savings on specific procurements. • Leadership Team receive regular reports on procurement activities. • Post contract reviews are undertaken on specific procurements.
Managing Contracts and Relationships	<p>Minimum Compliance driven. Reactive approach to contract and relationship management</p>	<p>Developing Identified the need to change and improve. Basic policies, procedures and systems in place.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A full up to date contract register is in place with viewing and searching capability. • A change control policy is in place to capture variations made to certain contracts and standard documentation is in place and is used. • Structured approach to early engagement of suppliers in financial difficulties. • A formal approach is in place to capturing savings and accruing benefits from contracts. • Contract and relationship management is recognised in job roles where this is a significant element of the role. • Training and development programme covering general contract management is developed and implemented.
Managing Strategic Risk	<p>Developing Good awareness of issues involved and potential threats with basic systems in place to manage should they occur</p>	<p>Mature Taking a proactive approach to strategic risk management with all vulnerable areas identified and mitigating policies and plans in place</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proactive approach to financial loss and fraud for supplier payments. • Risk areas for fraud and financial loss identified. • A risk register with mitigating actions is in place. • Expenditure categories/contracts with potential for modern slavery identified and basic checks made. • Actively identifying and reviewing contracts where data issues could occur.

Achieving Community Benefits

Key Area	Current Assessment of where the Council is	The Next Level and where the Council wants to be	How do we get there?
Obtaining social value	<p>Minimum Compliant. Doing just enough to meet the conditions of the Act.</p>	<p>Developing Compliant but only proactively seeking social value in a few contracts only</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Social value policy is developed and approved. • A senior officer is given a direct reporting responsibility for social value. • Measuring some limited form of social value. • Social value is taken into account in larger contracts and tenderers asked for social value commitments.
Local small medium enterprises (SMEs) and micro business engagement	<p>Developing SME organisations are engaged in a few key contracts only.</p>	<p>Mature Taking a proactive approach to integrating SME organisations into procurement and commissioning.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A SME policy is developed and approved. • Engagement events and communication channels are developed. • Dedicated support and contact point for SMEs. • Dynamic purchasing systems (DPS) used in certain areas of the Council. • All procurement opportunities are published to increase the opportunities for SMEs. • Contract management includes sub-contracting relationships. • SME spend is captured and analysed.
Enabling voluntary, community and social enterprise (VCSE) engagement	<p>Developing VCSE organisations are engaged in a few key contracts only.</p>	<p>Mature Taking a proactive approach to integrating VCSE organisations into commissioning and procurement processes.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engagement events and communication channels are developed. • Dedicated support and contact point for VCSEs. • Prior engagement with VCSEs prior to publishing procurement opportunities. • All procurement opportunities are published to increase the opportunities for SMEs. • Procurement processes adapted to reflect the capacity and capability of VCSEs. • Contract management includes sub-contracting relationships. • VCSE spend is captured and analysed to determine how it might be improved.

Procurement Strategy

Our Strategic Plan

Every four years we put together a strategic plan. Our current strategic plan describes the high level outcomes we want to achieve for our community from 2020 to 2024. Our plan helps us to focus on what is important locally and to direct our resources and budget where they will have the most benefit:

Enable people to

- help themselves and others
- collaborate and engage with us
- live healthy and active lives

Shape place to

- keep it clean, green and safe
- preserve the characteristics
- make sure sustainability and infrastructure needs are balanced

Develop prosperity to

- encourage economic growth
- enhance the district for all
- invest in the future

Be a good council that is

- financially sound
- transparent and accountable
- responsive and customer focused

Our Values

We have developed a set of values that all our staff work together to achieve in all that we do and are relevant to this procurement strategy.

Our values are set out in our strategic plan and are:

Put customers first

- We are passionate about our customer service.
- We always listen and work with our customer to meet their needs.
- We take responsibility for things we can change and improve and encourage our customers to do the same.

Improve and innovate

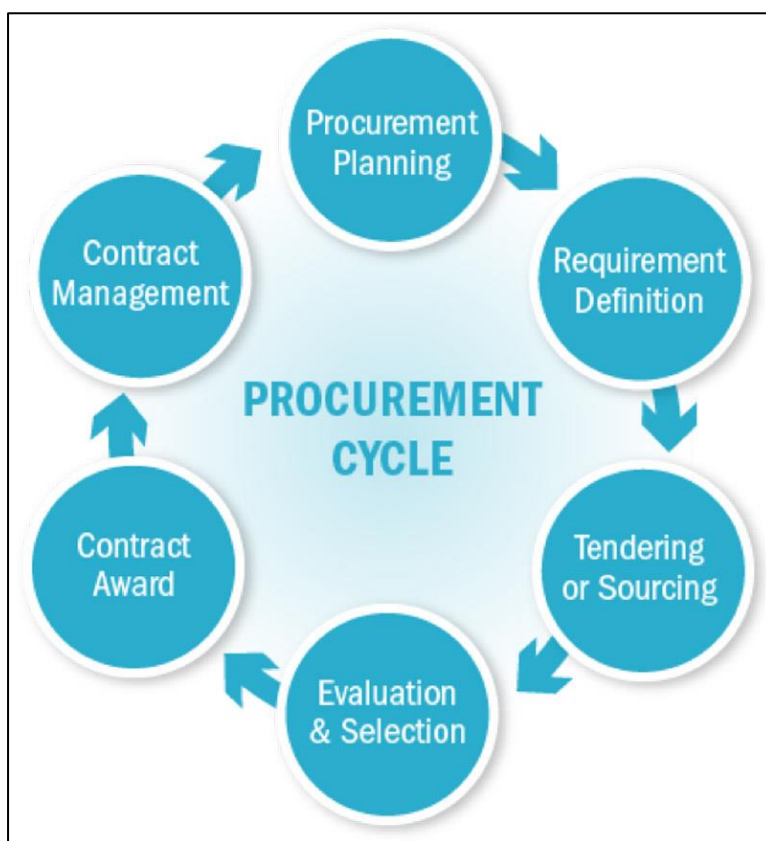
- We challenge each other to look for ways to do things better.
- We listen to feedback and learn from it so we can improve.
- We welcome change and move forward with confidence.

Have respect for everyone

- We listen to one another and understand each other's views and pressures.
- We appreciate each other and trust our colleagues to do a good job to the best of their ability.

Our Procurement guiding principles

These outcomes and values will be reflected in the key stages of the procurement cycle shown below:



Our primary focus on sustainable procurement supports the overarching aim and guiding principles of the procurement service:

“To deliver the Council’s strategic objectives and best value through a straightforward, professional and focussed approach to procurement”

- **straightforward:** To eliminate unnecessary burdens arising from the procurement and to make procurement and payment processes more effective through e-procurement
- **professional:** To ensure procurement and contract management skills are well embedded and distributed across the Council
- **focused:** To use sound procurement practices and innovative procurement solutions to promote sustainability and best value, in particular supporting the best use of resources agenda and making use of collaboration and partnership opportunities

The purpose of this strategy is to ensure that sustainability is an integral part of all stages of our procurement processes and that our procurement activities support the delivery of our outcomes whilst achieving value for money. In particular we want to ensure our procurement contributes to a strong local economy and leads us to make intelligently green procurement choices – i.e. those that have a positive environmental impact and generate financial or community benefits such as:

- Supporting local jobs
- Supporting local skills
- Local sourcing of goods
- Energy efficiency
- Increasing use of renewable energy
- Minimise waste
- Sustainability of materials and products

Therefore we will:

- take a long term strategic view of our procurement needs while continually assessing, reviewing and auditing our procedures, strategy and objectives
- require that a proper business case is produced to support all significant procurement decisions and expect contracting activity to be as a result of competition
- assess all procurement proposals against a criteria that includes effectiveness, efficiency, best value, sustainability and on the basis of whole life costs, providing this does not prejudice service delivery
- measure outcomes rather than outputs where appropriate
- be a pragmatic and intelligent customer maximising the benefits offered by joint procurements, developing partnerships, embracing technology and harnessing economies of scale through consortia
- actively manage our supplier portfolio, in line with all requirements local government
- support, encourage and develop our staff, ensuring equality of opportunity for all and ensure those that procure through procurement have the same principles
- ensure social value principles become embedded in procurement and contract management processes.
- comply with any legislation, corporate policies or other requirements relevant to our activities, ensuring that all officers responsible for procurement and contract management are aware of and adhere to the requirements of all relevant law, the Council's contract procedure rules, financial procedure rules, required standards and best practice and ensure those we procure also comply where applicable
- require services to programme and manage their procurements in accordance with Governance timetables
- ensure that risk is identified, assessed and managed at all stages of the procurement process
- ensure that every procurement is led and managed by an appropriate officer, is allocated a suitable contract manager and that records are properly maintained, decisions recorded and clear audit trails exist to ensure openness, propriety and probity
- have regard to all aspects of sustainability including environmental sustainability and climate change as well as supporting our Climate Change Pledge.
- participate in partnerships and shared services where these can deliver overall service improvements and provide value for money
- Where appropriate key contractors are required to have safeguarding policies, procedures and training in place, in addition to providing confirmation of compliance with the Modern Slavery Act 2015

Monitoring the Procurement Strategy

The Procurement Strategy will be monitored using a balanced scorecard of indicators initially identified as:

Strategic		Financial	
Indicator	Baseline	Indicator	Baseline
% of spend in Lichfield District ¹	12%	Financial savings achieved in total	£0
% of spend with Small Medium Enterprise (SMEs) in Lichfield District	N/m	Annual financial savings achieved	£0
% of spend with Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSEs) in Lichfield District	N/m		
Number of tenders with Social Value criteria	N/m		
Operational		Compliance/Risk	
Indicator	Baseline	Indicator	Baseline
% of suppliers paid within 30 days – target 90% ²	86.15%	Number of waivers to Contract Procedure Rules ³	10
% of procurement opportunities published	N/m	Number of legal challenges	N/m
Service area satisfaction with procurement	N/m		

¹ The 2019/20 financial year based on post codes

² As at 31 March 2020 and Reported to Cabinet and Strategic (Overview and Scrutiny) Committee

³ Relates to 2018/19 financial year and Reported to Audit and Member Standards Committee

Procurement Action Plan

	What we plan to achieve	What we plan to do	Who we will work with
Professionalise Procurement	A fully staffed trained procurement team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recruit to permanent roles Support Chartered Institute of Purchasing and Supply training and appropriate legal courses 	Human Resources Team
	Enhance procurement knowledge in the Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify gaps in knowledge and develop additional training courses 	Officers with budget responsibility
	A flexible and responsive procurement team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undertake engagement with customers through a feedback survey 	Heads of Service and Managers in all service areas
	High performing procurement function	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a series of Key Performance Indicators 	Cabinet Member and Leadership Team
Systems and Processes	A fully populated electronic contracts register	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Update with information received. Continue to support the embedding of self-service 	Heads of Service and Managers in all service areas
	To move towards LDC requests for quotation and invitations for tenders to be run via electronic tendering system ⁴	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Training programme for staff Procurement team to utilise the system on behalf of officers as required 	Heads of Service and Managers in all service areas
Visibility and Data	A fully populated forward looking work plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Update with information received and procurement initiation form content. Regular engagement with officers and managers. Regular Procurement updates to officers 	Heads of Service and Managers in all service areas
	Improve visibility of Procurement opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Future work plan to be published on website in form of anticipated procurement opportunities All current procurement opportunities to be published 	Heads of Service and Managers in all service areas
	Publish and monitor expenditure with suppliers, SME's, and VSCE in Lichfield District	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitoring spend through the new Finance System 	Finance Team
Suppliers and Social Value	Recognise and embed Social Value (potentially adopt National TOMs (Themes, Outcomes and Measures) Framework 2019 for social value measurement)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a Social Value Policy and guide for officers Consider the inclusion of social value criteria in each relevant procurement 	Heads of Service and Managers in all service areas
	Environmental sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop criteria for environmental sustainability for inclusion in procurement 	Heads of Service and Managers in all service areas
	Improve engagement with Local suppliers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a selling to the council guide and publish on website Attendance at any relevant meet the buyer event 	Economic growth team Local suppliers

⁴ Does not include those via frameworks or other public buying organisations as they often use proprietary processes.

	What we plan to achieve	What we plan to do	Who we will work with
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Widen advertising of relevant contract opportunities to include Social Media. Identify local suppliers and encourage them to register on electronic tendering system. Identify demand for a 'how to tender' workshop in advance of any significant procurements, and/or general workshop. 	
Compliance	All relevant contracts are advertised on Contracts Finder	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regular monitoring process 	Heads of Service and Managers in all service areas
	All procurements with a value of over £10,000 are agreed with procurement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regular monitoring process 	Heads of Service and Managers in all service areas
	Ensure the procurement elements of the Contract Procedure Rules remain fit for purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To review the procurement elements of the Contract Procedure Rules 	Heads of Service and Managers in all service areas
	"Procurement Information" Transparency Code 2015 requirements are met	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regular monitoring process 	Heads of Service and Managers in all service areas
Collaboration	Ensure opportunities for collaboration are explored	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completion of all relevant surveys from buying organisations 	Buying organisations
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Representation at Heads of Procurement Networks 	Other local authorities
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Host or attend knowledge transfer meetings with neighbouring authorities to share forward looking work plans. 	Other local authorities
	Maximise opportunities for collaboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Approach local authorities when a new procurement is initiated to understand scope for collaboration 	Other local authorities
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitor all major procurement buying organisations (PBO's), align relevant opportunities to forward work plan. Disseminate relevant opportunities to key officers 	External organisations. Heads of Service and Managers in all service areas
Contract Management	Improve post contract award and commercial outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development of a Contract Management guide for Officers Support Key officers in commercial negotiations and continuous improvement activities. 	Heads of Service and Managers in all service areas

DIGITAL INNOVATION STRATEGY 2020-2024

Cabinet Member for Innovation, Commercialisation and Corporate Services



Date:	19 November 2020
Contact Officer:	Kim Rennie – Interim Head of Corporate Services
Tel Number:	07929 835481
Email:	Kim.Rennie@lichfielddc.gov.uk
Key Decision?	NO
Local Ward Members	ALL

STRATEGIC OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 A Digital Strategy for Lichfield District Council has been developed based on experience to date and following a review of good practice in relation to digital approaches amongst Councils.
- 1.2 The Strategy focuses on the needs of the Council’s customers, and how engagement can be increased, and customer needs and expectation met, through the use of innovation, digital channels and technology.
- 1.3 The Strategy proposes activities under four work streams, E-Services and Engagement, Technology, Infrastructure, and Capability to deliver the Council’s aims in this area.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That the Committee consider and comment on the Strategy and recommend that Cabinet adopt it, subject to any agreed comments.

3. Background

- 3.1 Councils across the country are increasingly adopting digital strategies to guide investment in technology, to improve customer experience and further improve value for money for taxpayers.
- 3.2 This Strategy is presented following a review of local experience, literature and current practice, and seeks to provide a four-year framework for decisions and activity in relation to the digitisation of services.
- 3.3 The Strategy sets out an aim of delivering “the best possible services to our customers by harnessing technology effectively”.
- 3.4 It helps to take forward the Council’s strategic aspirations to work collaboratively to Enable People, Shape Place and Develop Prosperity across Lichfield District and supports being a Good Council. It is a sister strategy to the recently agreed Engagement Strategy 2020-2024 and complements and supports this.
- 3.5 There are four objectives that provide a means to monitor progress and outcomes within four work streams, building on past success, including our 4-star rated (Socitm) website.

- 3.6 The Strategy will be delivered over a four-year period, and some activity has already started. In year one it is intended that the focus will be on customer insight and understanding where further digitisation and the streamlining of customer journeys could improve services. In addition, there will be work to further improve the website and intranet and promote the Council's online services to our customers, whilst developing new skills in the workforce. A first-year action plan is proposed and set out at pages 13-15 of the strategy attached.
- 3.7 The Strategy is aspirational, and its speed of delivery and scope will be dependent on the ability to invest in the strategy, within affordability. We will monitor our performance and report on this annually. We have identified a series of potential measures that can help us obtain a baseline of the current position, while also allowing us to shape the impact of the Strategy.
- 3.8 The Strategy sets out a whole Council approach which recognises the importance of consistency and working together to achieve success.

Alternative Options	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Council choose not to have a digital innovation strategy. However, this is likely to lead to a lack of clear direction and is not considered to be good practice.
Consultation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. During the production and consideration of this strategy, consultation has been undertaken with key Officers and Members and the Leadership Team. 2. The Strategy is to be considered by Strategic Overview and Scrutiny Committee before being considered by Cabinet.
Financial Implications	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Whilst the Strategy can be largely advanced within existing resources, to deliver it to the level it is anticipated to meet Member and Officer expectation going forward, there may be a need to identify further resources in due course and any budget request will be subject to the normal process. 2. Year one of delivery is estimated to require a one off budget of £40,000 which can be funded from underspends, and a reserve no longer needed, from within the Central Services budget. The work undertaken will assist in improving the efficiency and customer focus of services delivered digitally across the Council.
Contribution to the Delivery of the Strategic Plan	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Strategy supports and indeed underpins the delivery of the Strategic Plan as highlighted in paragraph 3.4 above.
Equality, Diversity and Human Rights Implications	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. There are no perceived negative Equality, Diversity and Human Rights Implications. All moves to on line transactions and access by customers will be in accordance with the existing national guidance and standards on accessibility for all.
Crime & Safety Issues	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. There are no perceived negative Crime & Safety Issues Implications. The strategy, and planned actions will assist in mitigating the risks of cybercrime.
Environmental	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. There are no perceived negative Environmental Impacts. Remote working will

Impact	be supported by technical development and this will reduce need for travel and reduce carbon emissions. The use of the Cloud reduces demand for power to support servers and again reduces carbon footprint. Any innovation which reduces the need for customers to visit the office to transact with us further reduces the carbon footprint.
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GDPR/Privacy Impact Assessment	1. There are no perceived negative GDPR/Privacy Impact Assessment Implications.
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	Risk Description	How We Manage It	Overall Rating
A	Additional resources may be required beyond year one to meet the needs and expectations of our Customers	We will mitigate this using best practice and value for money tools and raise specific business cases to ensure funding is planned and manageable	Yellow (material) (Likelihood – medium; Impact – significant)
B	SR6*- Failure to innovate and build on positive experience of Covid -19 in terms of technological solutions to remote working and good customer service	Corporate reinforcement of a culture of innovations using virtual meetings and committees. Businesses cases to support individual projects. The introduction of this strategy.	Yellow (material)(Likelihood – medium; Impact – medium)
C	SR7* - Threat of cyber attack	Use of firewalls and virus protection; strong access level controls, including remote access, training and regular briefings for staff controls.	Green (Likelihood – low; Impact – medium)
	*These are risks in the Council's Strategic Risk register, and the descriptions SR6 and SR7 relate to the numbering in this register.		

Background documents
None.

Relevant web links
None.

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Digital Innovation Strategy 2020-2024

Lichfield District Council

November 2020

Foreword

I am delighted to be providing the Foreword to this vital strategy for the District. In this day and age, given their key role in communities, Councils need to be pushing forward improvement using the technological tools available. We are all used to being able to order and buy our shopping with one login, and often just a few clicks, and whilst I am proud that this Council compares well to others in the sector (our website is rated amongst the best in the country for example), there is still a long way to go if we are to seek to mirror the experience customers get from the best businesses. Whilst, as for all Councils, finding the money to innovate in these difficult times is a challenge, ambition and a can-do attitude goes a long way.

This strategy is not about which bit of kit to buy or which software to use. It is about ensuring that we are continuously improving services by using technology effectively, increasing automation where this will result in a better customer experience, streamlining the way we do things to increase end to end processing; to reduce the double handling of information and to make services more efficient. It is about making sure we are using the technologies we have already invested in to effectively engage with our customers and staff, whilst exploring affordable innovation to do this even better.

This is a win-win – providing more services at first point of contact, communicating with our customers about these, and generating efficiencies that can then be used to do more.

This strategy will support the inclusion of all our communities – because we know that for some, using technology for everything is just not the way they want to receive services. But we also want to embrace the opportunities for service improvement and efficiency that technology provides, the lessons we have learnt through the Covid19 pandemic, and encourage the use of technology, by making it easy to use our services this way.

I am extremely keen to ensure that this strategy does not stop at just being a strategy. This is why a very important part is the governance side of the strategy. Having regular governance meetings to track progress, including identifying how we can improve and automate complete end to end processes is fundamental to its success.

The strategy covers a four year period, 2020-2024, and will be reviewed annually to make sure we are on track, and that the actions planned remain current in a fast moving world.

I look forward to being able to share our progress with you after the first annual review.

**Councillor Andy Smith, Cabinet Member for
Innovation, Commercialisation and Corporate Services**

Introduction

Technology continues to be of increasing importance in our day-to-day life. Office of National Statistic (ONS) figures in 2019 showed that 91% of adults in the UK had recently used the internet and only 7.5% of adults had never used the internet. More recent data from McKinsey Digital shows that the use of digital services has jumped significantly as a result of the Covid19 crisis, with an 11% jump in the number of people using at least one digital service in the six months to May 2020. This is borne out by data that the Council gathers, which demonstrates a significant increase in the number of residents engaging with the Council digitally over the last six months.

It is also clear that this is not a temporary trend, with many new users across all sectors confirming that they will continue to use digital services going forward, although a lower percentage currently say they will continue to use online services via public service websites (64% compared to 70% in other sectors) primarily because they find them harder to use, with fewer services on offer. (McKinsey Digital report, 24 July 2020).

There remains a “digital divide”, with virtually all adults aged 16 to 44 years in the UK having used the internet in 2019 (99%), compared with 47% of adults aged 75 years and only 78% of disabled adults (ONS 2019). Locally, in 2017 10.3% of adults were aged over 75, compared to 8.2% nationally, suggesting that the digital divide could be greater in this District than in general. In addition, nationally, it appears that of those classified as being digitally excluded, 37% are social housing tenants. This is particularly concerning given that 80% of government interactions are with the poorest 25% of the UK population. While the gap is closing, there is clearly more to do.

There is also a significant issue for Small to Medium Enterprises (SMEs), as prior to Covid19 it was estimated that 1 in 3 did not have a website and two thirds did not market themselves online. In areas such as Lichfield, with some of the highest numbers of SMEs and new start-ups in the country, this could be something that needs particular attention.

Our Digital Journey

In 2015, the Government estimated that local Councils across the country could save up to £5bn by adopting better digital technologies. This was supported by the Society for Innovation, Technology and Modernisation (Socitm) and the Local Government Association (LGA) in 2019 who suggested that the business case for digital investment could be evidenced through reduced costs associated with digital interactions.

The result has been a marked shift to online service provision and digital engagement by all Councils, including our own. Residents can interact with almost every service on line and through the provision of information on our website, digital data gathering via online forms, and digital communications by way of our social media platforms.

In terms of our strengths, the Council has introduced a customer account approach, and invested significant sums in up-to-date systems, enabling customers to apply for benefits online for example, or receive electronic bills. There is now no need for a paper benefits form, customers fill the form in on line, and the information then populates the benefits system, so there is no re-keying of information – quicker, more efficient and more accurate. People can view agendas and forward

plans for committee meetings on-line, and watch meetings live on YouTube. Our website has been rated as 4* by Socitm, and our customers can now pay for the garden waste service on-line, receiving an automated joining pack, or make a planning application for example. As a Council we have made great strides towards remote working, prompted by the need to do so during the Covid19 crisis, and these new ways of working open up the opportunity both for increased productivity and efficiencies, for example through a reduced need for office space.

Like many Council's however, we have not digitized all our services, and there would be benefit in investing further time streamlining and automating our processes and service delivery, where this is cost effective.

There is an opportunity to continue to develop the systems we have already invested in (including in our planning, regulatory and environmental systems, our administrative and committee systems) to make the most of the capability here. The Council has made a move towards Cloud solutions to reduce the need for capital investment, and the work involved in maintaining systems, and there is potential to explore the further use of these. Whilst the Council has successfully introduced a degree of remote working at speed during Covid19, it would now make sense to see how this can be extended and formalised, so that we never return to previous ways of working – moving many of our meetings online, automating more processes and supporting, and encouraging customers to move to digital approaches, reducing the need to make telephone calls or a long trip into Frog lane for a face to face discussion.

While we want to capitalise on these opportunities, we are also aware of the threat of cyber-attacks, and the importance of data security, together with the fact that distance working and on-line services do not work for everyone. Our approach must therefore be flexible, and recognise that recruiting the staff with the right skills to deal with today's digital complexity can be a challenge – “growing our own” will therefore be a key part of our strategy.

We will also have an eye to the future of local government – as Government has indicated that it may want to change the pattern of Councils in the country, and we will want to make sure that investment going forward is future proofed.

In summary, whilst the Council has a good track record on digital innovation, we know we can do even better. In particular there is an opportunity for a greater understanding, and use of, the systems and data we already have, to co-ordinate investment and development better going forward.

The Digital Future

It is clear that current trends will continue and that the future will be reliant on digital solutions, that improve services and deliver efficiencies. More than this, successful organisations will improve user engagement, encouraging self-service transactions on websites and via apps on mobile devices, offering personalisation of services at scale, and making our interfaces intuitive, by understanding the needs and expectations of our customers.

We will need to innovate in order to meet the financial challenge and growing demographic demands for our services, making digital change a priority. This is not simply about implementing more online interfaces, a new website or more software solutions, but a broad programme of initiatives, including; becoming more agile, ensuring ongoing infrastructure security, optimising data

use, improving processes, providing a seamless customer experience, and developing user competence.

The issue of competence is significant as a deficiency in ICT skills can lead to increased demand on ICT services, removing resources from more innovative and essential activities. Therefore, the development of competence and ensuring our staff all have a minimum level of digital ability is just as important as the deployment of technology.

We need to focus innovation on what matters, improving the customer experience and making services more efficient. All too often, innovation is based on novelty, but novelty can wear off, and as such the effort to innovate can be lost within a relatively short time. Instead, innovation must lead to disruptive change, bringing in something new that makes a difference, whether this is by making things easier, quicker or cheaper, there has to be a benefit to outweigh any costs.

This is most notable in the development of SMART technologies, some of which are clearly a novelty while others are becoming an essential part of our daily lives. Voice interfaces, once perceived as a novelty, have become refined to such an extent that they are beginning to play an integral part in the future of conveying information and delivering services. This can improve the customer experience in providing a faster services, but is also particularly helpful to those who may have difficulty interacting with physical devices, therefore improving accessibility.

The fundamental technologies within voice interfaces include, artificial intelligence and machine learning, both of which are becoming embedded within emerging technology. The ability to teach technology to undertake tasks and analyse data could be invaluable in the future. Not only could it embrace the trends in retail of providing bots to answer queries or accept service request, but it can also ensure that the information we have is collated, assessed and used to inform decision making.

The power of technology to process data so quickly will allow us to understand our communities in ways we have never been able to do previously, and help add value to the work we do through; identifying issues, analysing trends, tailoring services, improving customer experience, automating processes and driving efficiencies.

While there are things we will need to do alone, there are national programmes and initiatives that will support us, and we must use them to catalyse our own improvements, for example; the Government's roll-out of ultrafast broadband and the implementation of 5G will increase the speed of access thereby allowing more complex front-end interfaces, while the emergence and growth of companies such as Google, Twitter, Facebook, Uber and Airbnb can be used as examples and many of the interfaces replicated or even incorporated to our own solutions to enable more intuitive, cross-platform, positive customer experiences.

Digital Objectives

The aim of our digital innovation strategy is to:

Deliver the best possible services to our customers, by harnessing digital technology effectively.

The strategy will support our strategic plan; enabling people through the provision of intuitive and innovative solutions that simplify service access, and enhance the customer experience. It will also help us to be an efficient Council through the provision of cost-effective solutions that enable

modern ways of working, more effective processes and practices, while also ensuring the safe and secure management of information.

Lichfield District Council already has an agreed strategy for how we will increase and improve two-way engagement with our communities and with our own staff. This Digital Innovation Strategy complements and reflects our engagement objectives, and will play a key role in delivering our ambitions to create new opportunities to engage externally with our customers, deliver more services through digital platforms and also to engage more effectively internally with employees.

We have identified a number of *principles* that will underpin the delivery of this Digital Innovation strategy:

- *Customer focus.* The first principle is to put customers at the heart of our digital strategy. This involves seeking to understand customer's needs, and building their views into design. It means looking at the data we hold, using it better, and developing our approach to customer journey mapping, ensuring process are streamlined and digital from end to end where this can be achieved, in order to speed up and simplify service delivery, and reduce cost. It means developing our customer portal, to provide a single point of access for as many services as possible, one password for many services.
- *Enabling approach.* This means encouraging our customers to use the website and other digital channels as a first choice, providing support to those who cannot yet use the technology or access it. It means ensuring we have the right digital skills in our workforce, providing training where appropriate.
- *Agile.* This principle is about having a presumption in favour of remote working, and digital first, unless to deliver a service effectively requires a mixed or different approach. This has the potential to improve efficiency, enable wider access to services for customers, and enable staff to manage work life balance in post Covid19 times.
- *Optimising the benefit from existing systems.* The principle is to re-use assets, and develop these to their full potential, if this offers best value for money, before a new purchase is made. It means building on what we have already got, and looking to see where we can consolidate and reduce the number of systems in operation to improve efficiency.
- *Co-ordinated.* One Council (corporate) approaches to any new systems will be adopted where this makes sense, and the Leadership Team will set the priorities for operational development each year, supported by the Council's ICT team. This team will play a more defined co-ordinating role within the Council, ensuring that a silo approach to digital development is a thing of the past. We will look for opportunities to share ICT solutions with other Councils and public sector bodies to benefit from economies of scale.
- *"Cloud First"* will be investigated for any new purchases. This approach to meeting any new technology requirements will ensure that the Council achieves best value for money. Cloud technologies remove the need for regular capital investment to replace infrastructure, place more of the cost of security and compliance on the supplier, tend to provide a better remote access experience, and are easier to scale up or down depending on requirements. This will be the primary favoured approach where the business case supports it.
- *Security and compliance,* will be built in to all development and purchases, by design.

To achieve the aim of this strategy, a number strategic objectives that provide a means to monitor progress and outcomes, have been identified. These are to:

- Seek out customer feedback, understand the expectations and use journey mapping to enhance digital channels and **e-services**, making them easy to navigate and simple to use, in order to increase **engagement** and uptake.
- Optimise existing solutions, while investigating emerging **technology**, in order to improve customer experience and deliver efficiencies.
- Create a modern, secure, interoperable **infrastructure** that is adaptable to future needs, in order to consolidate systems, enhance connectivity, and enable insight that can inform decision making.
- Introduce a comprehensive learning experience that develops **capability** and establishes a digitally skilled workforce, who fully utilise and advocate digital technology and solutions, in a way that ensures improves collaboration, mobility and agility.

Strategy in Action

To deliver our strategic objectives we will need a broad range of activities, all individually undertaken yet in a coordinated manner. There are four distinct work-streams, each containing a range of actions:

E-services and Engagement

The key aim of the strategy is to increase the uptake of digital services, or e-services, and engagement with our digital channels. To do this, we will need to enhance our 'digital front door', making more services accessible 24 hours a day and 365 days a year, and promote this more effectively.

We have already done much and done it well, with our website providing information and online forms for almost every service. In addition, we have an ongoing steady increase in new online customer accounts and have removed cash transactions, replacing them with a range of inclusive electronic payment solutions.

Services are increasingly digital, with over 90% of garden waste request being made through this platform. In response to the recent coronavirus crisis, we have done more, with our democratic system becoming increasingly accessible with committee meetings being live-streamed and available to all.

However, we have more to do, turning our data capture forms into a digital experience from end-to-end. To do this we will need to ensure we have an up-to-date overview of our systems architecture in order to ensure that all of our technology can work together (be interoperable) and allow information to flow easily between them. This can be done through existing processes, such as including essential elements into the specification for all new software, while involving ICT expertise from the start.

Whatever our solutions, we will need to become device agnostic and optimise the customer experience, with a focus on mobile technology given it has become the technology of choice. Doing so means more opportunities to promote customer self-service, offer convenience, and reduce demand through permitting self-service and self-help solutions.

Engaging directly with our communities has been made more achievable through digital channels such as social media. Utilising these externally, our aim is to engage directly with larger and more diverse groups, involving them in service design and improvement. In addition, using these technologies internally will allow us to increase collaboration, break down silos and disseminate key messages more effectively.

We will;

- Undertake a *customer insight project* to inform our digital journey, using the views and insights gained to guide prioritisation of digital development.
- Undertake a *futures digitisation project* starting with establishing the current status of digitisation in services, identifying those that are not currently available electronically, and determining a programme for making more services available on a personalised self-service, end-to-end, digital basis. This will involve looking at customer journeys and for opportunities to automate services, driving out human interventions, and double data entry, wherever possible in order to speed up outcomes, reduce errors and lower costs.
- Create an annually reviewed *website improvement plan*, and introduce digital champions in each of our services, to work with the ICT team to ensure the information on the website is easy to read, relevant and up-to-date.
- Continue to develop our approach to *virtual committee meetings*, and explore the options for increasing public engagement in these.
- Introduce and improve *agile working as the norm and use of collaborative tools* within the Council to enhance the experience for staff and members, support our shifting culture, make timely information more readily available, and help to speed up decision making.
- *Promote awareness* of our digital services, on a “click, call, come in” basis so that people choose to use the web first, before considering the phone. Face to face interactions will be moved to an appointment only service, which is a safer and more cost effective approach.

Technology

Successful digital change will be key to us responding to the challenges we face, be this in driving efficiencies, managing customer expectations or meeting statutory and regulatory requirements. In learning from the past, and the experiences of others, it is clear that this change needs to be both coordinated and well governed, thereby; clearly identifying and delivering required outcomes, prioritising activity and resources, maintaining pace, and assuring integration.

We have learned from our past, where we have seen projects being brought forward without clear prioritisation or coordination, leading to competition for resources and a delay in delivery. We have also seen a systems-focused approach, which has led to the introduction of new technology despite having suitable solutions available elsewhere in the organisation.

However, this approach has started to change. We have introduced new projects to deploy full-functionality of existing solutions to enable greater benefits and digitising more services. We introduced user acceptance testing (UAT) in front-facing projects to involve customers, use their feedback and enhance their experience (e.g. on garden waste).

Going forward, we plan to build on this good work, and provide a structure that allows for pace and control. We will introduce a clear framework for delivering transformative and technology-based

change projects, utilising standard project management approaches in a consistent way with an emphasis on agile deployment. This will mean the benefits can be realised at a faster pace and continuous improvement will be seen as the norm. In addition, we will look to ensure that change management has corporate oversight that can ensure prioritisation is based on customer needs and a return on investment, while establishing interoperability and integration as key components to all projects.

Our new digital tools will be enablers for real change with tangible outcomes, and so ownership and acceptance will be needed to embed them and realise the benefits. We will embrace customer-centric design in to all projects to maintain a focus on function and usability. In addition, we will engage with customers to obtain ongoing feedback that will be used to improve services, prioritise delivery and lead innovation.

Keeping changes simple, manageable and replicable (i.e. 'use again approach') will allow us to standardise our approach, minimise systems, reduce duplication, lower costs, deliver at pace, make faster decisions, improve data quality, and consolidate key skills. This approach will see the ongoing automation of simple process in order to refocus resources to adding value.

While improvement can be done with existing digital technology, we will also look to exploit emerging technology, such as artificial intelligence (AI) (e.g. virtual assistants like Amazon's Alexa) in an attempt to showcase innovation, inspire people and futureproof services. This approach will need the courage and culture to accept failure and accept not all projects will be successful, albeit each will provide invaluable learning. We can also learn from others who already use technologies such as auto number plate recognition (ANPR) to automate car parking or use AI to provide a 90% success rate in serving 1.5 million customer questions (Southampton City Council).

We will;

- Introduce a *project office* approach with a consistent, structured approach to project management, with digital leads being seen as senior suppliers where projects require technological inputs, to ensure the requirements are fully understood and prioritised.
- Implement a *customer-centric design* approach by including customers in the design, deployment and testing of all technology solutions, to ensure that the deployment of new digital solutions meet their needs.
- Create *effective governance* arrangements to oversee change and innovation, starting with an Annual Digital Development Plan which will be overseen by the Leadership Team, to ensure resources are prioritised to achieve maximum benefits while establishing capacity to understand, test and deploy emerging technologies.
- Introduce *standards for technology*, and implement these in to existing systems, and for the procurement of new systems, ensuring links between systems are created that reduce inefficiencies and increase automation.
- *Optimise existing systems*, and our website, to be more engaging while seamlessly working with emerging technologies, such as virtual assistants, to enhance the customer experience, increase self-help and self-service and reduce enquiries (failure demand).
- *Pilot emerging technologies* to determine their value, and adopt them where this is proven i.e. the use of artificial intelligence to address enquiries, initiate service requests or provide notifications (e.g. missed bin notifications).

Infrastructure

We will have the right technological infrastructure to enable our systems and services to operate successfully, utilising the most appropriate blend of solutions to meet our ongoing needs. While this will likely be predominantly wireless, and reliant on cloud-based architecture, we will retain flexibility to ensure we can adapt to future opportunities and service needs.

We have learned from the past, where information and reporting were not seen as high a priority as functionality or implementation timescales, and have begun to look at new and innovative ways of using customer information and insight to inform decision making (e.g. as we did on garden waste). As information becomes more important, we have to prioritise the security of it, improving our data processes, monitoring performance and raising awareness. In doing so, we have achieved awards, obtained grants and have a positive reputation. In addition, we have begun to deliver a more agile infrastructure with existing projects to; embed the use of cloud technology to enhance resilience and improve functionality.

No matter what the future solution is, it will have to keep us safe, secure and operational, allowing business continuity and disaster recovery so we can continue to serve those that need us even in the most challenging of situations.

Our people need the right tools to be able to work flexibly, as well as enabling them to deliver services differently. We will embed our proposed hardware replacement programme, delivering flexibility and agility yet offering a consistent experience. We will continually modernise our hardware to make the most of our existing systems and solutions, while ensuring we are ready to utilise innovative emerging technology as it is available.

We will manage and support our devices more effectively, deploy new systems and updates with minimal risk, and reduce the costs in terms of procurement and maintenance.

The Council has a huge amount of data it collects and holds and will utilise new technologies, such as data lakes, artificial intelligence and machine learning, to provide insight to inform decision making while allowing us to proactively identify opportunities and risks. This will be as valuable internally as it is externally, where we will seek to use key performance and user data to plan service improvements, identify and overcome issues, and turn opportunities in to new and exciting projects.

However, there is little value in trying to do this alone but instead, will work closely with others to maximise the value of our data. We will share anonymised data wherever possible (within the scope of GDPR of course) to provide a richer picture of our services, customers and communities and help us identify and solve the future challenges at pace. We will also promote open data in readily usable formats for our customers and stakeholders, thereby ensuring transparency and accountability while also allowing others to help us utilise this valuable resource in much more innovative ways.

As we become more open and agile, we will face many more challenges to the security of our systems and data. We will need to adapt our approach to mitigate these risks and invest in ways to maintain a secure technological infrastructure in a way that does not detract from our need for pace, productivity and flexibility. We will also monitor and introduce best cyber security practices to maintain suitable accreditation and connectivity to essential networks, such as the Public Service Network (PSN), utilising technological solutions wherever possible, be this biometrics or multi-factor authentication, but above all we will rely on our people being vigilant and conscientious.

We will;

- Over time, *migrate systems to the cloud* where this is the most cost effective option, beginning with core systems, where we have already started moving to Microsoft 365.
- *Remove the reliance on physical servers* and infrastructure and move to virtual server practices to improve resilience and decrease future operating costs.
- *Roll out our hardware replacement programme*, delivering a consistent hardware catalogue that meets current needs while enabling future advancements.
- *Improve system connectivity*, through the introduction of an interoperability assessment, ensuring our systems enable end-to-end automation, remove inefficiencies related to data migration, and create a single version of the truth for all.
- *Over time, introduce artificial intelligence* and machine learning tools to optimise data to provide greater insight that informs future decision making.
- Develop stronger *security protocols and practices*, and introduce technological solutions, that allow confidence in regards to information security, while permitting appropriate data sharing across the organisation and with our partners.
- Review our *systems architecture* and create a timetable to create links between systems where possible, consolidate them where beneficial, and replace them where necessary.
- Introduce *effective change management* governance in order to ensure ICT involvement in all technology decisions, and process improvement activity.
- Create a *specification* that supports the procurement or enhancement of systems that ensure our key priorities and requirements are being met e.g. supporting the move to being device agnostic.

Capability

It is clear that people are what makes successful change take place and become embedded, and so it is essential for us to have digitally capable people who have the skills and information, to be able to make use of the tools we make available.

We can learn from the past to inform our future approach. Feedback from individuals and the results of staff surveys have shown that there is room for improvement of the options available to our employees in regards to hardware and software solutions. In addition, training on general IT skills and how to most effectively use the systems and solutions on offer would be beneficial. This is being addressed through a growing internal intranet presence with user-guides, training materials, links to online support and additional e-learning.

Going forward, we will need to attract, retain and grow those with the required knowledge and skills in digital technology, be this general skills for in our services, or professional expertise in our ICT team. We can do this by using appropriate assessment techniques through the recruitment process, by providing internal training ourselves and can also work with partner organisations, looking to benefit from the digital centres of excellence throughout our local economic geography. For those who join us, we must develop and maintain key skills through our learning passport for staff. This will see all our people have regular and ongoing training through a variety of learning mechanisms, including; in person, online and self-help. We will prioritise core skills to ensure everyone works in a consistent way.

This will be combined with effective and engaging communications, to raise awareness of the digital solutions that are available and user guides on how to fully utilise them. Through raising awareness,

we will see better uptake of these tools as well as more insight and innovation through shared learning and user feedback.

While it is possible to engage people through normal organisational structures and communications channels, we want to go much further and harness those that are pushing the boundaries and driving digital change. Therefore, we will use new internal networks, such as our Digital Champions, to capture ideas, identify latent talent, and utilise untapped resources to support change initiatives while acting as a catalyst to inspire positive behaviours.

As we develop our own capability, we will also work collaboratively with key partners in the community and voluntary sector, to promote digital inclusion. As well as creating links to public and private sector initiatives, such as the Department of Work and Pensions and Barclays Digital Eagles, we will actively support the development of basic online skills for all.

We will;

- Work to incorporate *general ICT skills within the learning and development programmes* for our people, so they have the right skills to be able to fully utilise ICT to fulfil their duties and meet organisational expectations.
- *Enhance the information available internally on our intranet* and service desk software to raise awareness of the options available, provide guidance and signpost to existing resources, in order to permit our people to fully utilise the hardware and software available to them.
- *Introduce ICT competencies* in to job descriptions and use new approaches to assessment and recruitment in order to clarify expectations and appropriately assess them to ensure they are met.
- Create clear *ongoing professional development plans* for staff in our ICT team in order to ensure technical skills are maintained and that learning is continuously cascaded across the service to develop skills and introduce best practice.
- *Engage proactively with partner organisations*, and cross-organisational projects, in order to influence their outcomes to meet the needs of the Council, while benefiting from the wider expertise, resources and finances offered through such activity.
- Support services to *actively seek out partnerships* or fresh approaches that support our communities and raise skills in order to increase engagement with the Council's digital channels.

Resources and Results

To deliver our strategy, we will use the resources already available in services, and planned for in the Medium Term Financial Strategy, and where appropriate additional resources will be made available through the annual budgeting process.

We have competent, committed and capable employees at the Council. This is the only way it would have been able to deliver so much in recent years, and most recently through the coronavirus crisis. In addition, staff are innovative and always looking at emerging opportunities to do things

differently, and this passion will be harnessed, by allowing them the flexibility and freedom to try, learn, inspire and innovate.

The results of the strategy will be monitored through the use of key indicators, notably:

- Customer usage data-in relation to the number of phone calls, website hits and face to face interactions recorded
- Costs and savings (return on investment)
- Customer satisfaction (external)
- Customer satisfaction (internal)
- Cyber security score and security incidents
- Flexible working uptake
- Learning and development opportunities
- Network and infrastructure outages
- Project delivery and success
- Service quality and speed
- Staff with basic ICT skills

We will;

- Create and monitor an annual plan to deliver the strategy in order to monitor performance and outcomes.
- Keep our ICT contracts under review, and coordinate ongoing procurement activity in order to ensure our contracts perform well and achieve maximum value for money.
- Establish a baseline for key performance indicators, and monitor them in order to demonstrate progress and provide clear evidence of improvement.

Our Year One Plan

In year one, actions to deliver this strategy will include:

E-Services and Engagement

- Commission and undertakes a series of focus groups, including one involving senior staff, and a mystery shopper exercise as part of our customer insight project to understand what customers think of our digital service offer. (Responsibility: Head of Corporate Services, Target for completion: July 2021).
- Commission and undertake a review of the extent of digitisation in our services, and develop a programme for making more services available on an end-to-end basis. (Responsibility: Head of Corporate Services, Target for Completion: September 2021).
- Develop an annual Website Improvement Plan, and commence delivery of this. (Responsibility: ICT Manager, Target for completion: December 2021).
- Review and refresh the communications plan for promoting on-line services. (Responsibility: Communications and Marketing Manager, Target for completion: March 2021).

- Create a Digital Champions Network, of champions within services to work with ICT to ensure website content is accessible and up-to-date. (Responsibility: Head of Corporate Services/Leadership Team, Target for completion: February 2021).

Technology

- Create and agree an annual ICT development plan to guide day-to day priorities and systems development. (Responsibility: ICT Manager/Leadership Team, Target for completion: April 2021).
- Recruit a new Project Manager to our ICT team, to enable the roll out of the project office approach to the annual ICT development plan. (Responsibility: ICT Manager, Target date: January 2021).
- Implement ICT team structure to support the delivery of the strategy. (Responsibility: ICT Manager, Target date: July 2021).
- Review all existing public facing forms and create a style manual to ensure consistency and takes account of mystery shopper review. (Responsibility: ICT Manager, Target date: October 2021).
- Develop a prototype of one voice enabled skill for Amazon Alexa. (Responsibility: ICT Manager, Target date: December 2021).
- Implement new telephone and contact centre system that supports both digital and traditional channels of communication. (Responsibility: ICT Manager, Target date: December 2021).
- Implement a new software as a service financial system for the Council, to reduce costs, improve efficiency and performance. (Responsibility: Head of Finance and Procurement, Target date: October 2021).

Infrastructure

- Complete the closure of our server room. (Responsibility: ICT Manager, Target for completion: April 2021).
- Complete and report on the review of the potential to move to public cloud hosting. (Responsibility: ICT Manager, Target for completion: April 2021).
- Complete review of all hardware and software life cycles to support efficient and effective operation. (Responsibility: ICT Manager, Target for completion: June 2021).

Capability

- Create and commence implementation of an intranet improvement plan, linked to a wider review of internal communications. (Responsibility: ICT Manager/Communications and Marketing Manager, Target for completion: December 2021).
- Review our internal ICT service desk processes to separate proactive and reactive work and create a measure of time spent on each as the basis for response. (Responsibility: ICT Manager, Target for completion: July 2021).
- Review previous requests for ICT skills from employees, identified through the Personal Development Review process, with view to developing a corporate training catalogue. (Responsibility: ICT Manager, Target for completion: July 2021).

- Pilot the roll out of ICT competencies in job descriptions in the ICT service, linked to the development of a service specific training plan, covering the Council's current and future ICT requirements. (Responsibility: ICT Manager, Target date: July 2021).

Resources and results

- Create a digital "showcase" of different options available for maximising the use of our existing investment. This would include concepts such as GIS digital story maps and tools made available as a result of the move to Microsoft 365. (Responsibility: ICT Manager, Target date: April 2021).
- Consider the centralisation of all expenditure for digital and ICT products and tools across the Council, in order to ensure the most efficient and effective use of the resources available. (Responsibility: Head of Finance and Procurement/Leadership Team, Target date: April 2021).
- Develop guidance for the capture of key performance indicators for use in monitoring this strategy. (Responsibility: ICT Manager, Target date: April 2021).

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