DRAFT

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 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 help make improvements. For example; the Government's roll-out of ultrafast broadband and the implementation of 5G will increase the speed of access to the internet, 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 current 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 to accept that 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 artificial intelligence (AI) to answer 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 continue to use anonymised data (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 across our service areas, 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 leaning 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 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:

<u>E-Services and Engagement</u>

- 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, and investigate other innovations as resources allow. (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).