

GROWTH, ENVIRONMENT AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE	AGENDA ITEM No. 7.
6 JANUARY 2022	PUBLIC REPORT

Report of:	Sue Grace, Director of Customer Services & Digital	
Cabinet Member(s) responsible:	Cllr Marco Cereste – Cabinet Member for Digital Services & Transformation	
Contact Officer(s):	Sam Smith - Assistant Director, I.T. and Digital Services	Tel. 07795 092974

PORTFOLIO PROGRESS REPORT - FOR THE CABINET MEMBER FOR DIGITAL SERVICES AND TRANSFORMATION

RECOMMENDATIONS	
FROM: Cllr Marco Cereste – Cabinet Member for Digital Services and Transformation	Deadline date: N/A
It is requested that the Growth, Environment and Resources Scrutiny Committee note the contents of this report.	

1. ORIGIN OF REPORT

1.1 This report is provided to update the Growth, Environment and Resources Scrutiny Committee on the progress of IT which is under the responsibility of the Cabinet Member for Digital Services and Transformation.

2. PURPOSE AND REASON FOR REPORT

2.1 The report is being presented by Cllr Cereste at the request of the Growth, Environment and Resources Scrutiny Committee. The report will provide and update on the progress of the IT & Digital Strategy.

2.2 This report is for the Growth, Environment and Resources Scrutiny Committee to consider under its Terms of Reference Part 3, Section 4 - Overview and Scrutiny Functions, paragraph No. 2.1 Functions determined by Council:

- 1. City Centre Management – to be presented at a future scrutiny meeting
- 8. Partnerships and Shared Services – to be presented at a future scrutiny meeting
- 9. Digital Services and Transformation – IT and Digital Services to be presented today

2.4 This report sets out the progress of the IT & Digital Strategy which supports all of the Corporate Priorities and the Sustainable Community Strategy.

3. TIMESCALES

Is this a Major Policy Item/Statutory Plan?	NO	If yes, date for Cabinet meeting	N/A
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4. BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES

4.1 **Background and Context**

At the Scrutiny meeting on 10th March 2021 the key aspects of this IT strategy were set out for review along with a summary of the work done to date. The following is an update on activity since that meeting.

In 2022 the intention is to review and update the IT strategy as it was initiated and approved in 2019 and much has changed since then. Many of the elements of this strategy have been or are in the process of being delivered and there has been a huge change in how the Council uses IT as a result of the pandemic, which presents a different strategic context.

4.2 **Digital Capabilities and the response to Covid 19**

The IT & Digital Strategy, approved in 2019, included a strong focus on ways of working and increasing the Digital capability across the Council. As reported in March 2021, this focus supported the response of the Council to the Covid-19 outbreak in 2020 and continues to support the further recovery work for Public Health and the wider Council.

Covid 19 Recovery support

The Public Health England national system for recording and managing Covid-19 case data changed in the summer of 2021 and the IT systems used by Peterborough City Council & Cambridgeshire Council for Outbreak Management, Contact Tracing and Isolation Support were upgraded to accommodate this change, enabling the automation of data from the national system to our local system.

After the success of the Peterborough and Cambridgeshire Isolation Support team using new contact centre technologies the Contact Tracing team moved to using the same telephony system, enabling the service to have one number for each Council. This meant staff could share their resources more effectively across the different organisations supporting the service, and gain better insights and improve the management of the service whilst preserving the discrete identity of each Council.

Work has also been underway to support the staff return to offices. We have developed a workspace booking app and are trialling approaches to Hybrid meetings - meetings with a mix of virtual and in person participants.

4.3 **The IT & Digital Strategy included these specific workstreams:**

- Office 365 – more than just email;
- Shared Digital approach;
- Shared IT Infrastructure;
- Converged Business Systems;
- Shared Data to inform decision making;
- An organisational Structure for 2020 and beyond.

Office 365 – more than just email

As reported previously, this element of the strategy has been very successful and has supported the move of Council staff to remote working with an exponential uptake in the use of tools such Teams for video conferencing and collaboration during 2020/21. This platform continues to support the Council in remote working with tools such Teams now being embedded in everyday use. As well as underpinning the fundamental work of the Council, the 365 platform is now being utilised more fully to provide more digital solutions, including the new Freedom of Information system (referenced below).

Shared Digital approach

All elements of the IT & Digital Strategy underpin and support the wider digitisation of Council services but there are also workstreams around specific Digital initiatives looking at key areas. Since the last report the following Digital initiatives have been completed:

- ‘My Peterborough/Fix my street’ which allows citizens to use cameras on their phones and other devices to report a problem and has aerial photography and integration into

the business systems used by services such as Waste & Highways. There have been many recent updates to this digital solution, in particular integration with the systems used by Aragon. That means it is now possible in some areas (e.g Fly-tipping and Graffiti) to send information automatically between My Peterborough and Aragon for both initial reports and updates. The look and feel of the mobile app has been improved and more updates are planned in several areas, including bulky waste collection.

- The procurement and implementation of new system for **Household Waste Centre (HWC)** permits which is completely electronic and replaced the paper-based system used prior to Covid-19.
- The replacement of the system used to manage the tracking and response to Freedom of Information requests for the Council. The legacy system was replaced with one developed internally using Microsoft 365 technology. This not only leverages the Council's investment in that software but streamlines the process for managing this statutory requirement and ensures that information is available to the public in a timely and appropriate manner.
- The Council now has a digital signatures system (**Esignatures**) which means that documents requiring signature approval can be sent to 3rd parties enabling them to sign digitally, this can be used to reduce costs in many teams across the Council.

Shared IT Infrastructure

As reported in March 2021, several areas of work are being progressed under this workstream. The most notable of these is the move of the Cambridgeshire County Council and partner IT systems from Shire Hall to Sand Martin House which allows for future convergence of infrastructure as well as an income for Peterborough City Council from the hosting charges. This work was completed successfully in November 2021.

The next major project which begins in December is the replacement of the Storage Area Network (SAN) for both Councils. As part of the strategy of moving towards shared infrastructure this replacement will be a joint project and solution utilising the appropriate technologies.

Business Systems

In line with the IT & Digital Strategy and the wider sharing of front-line services in People & Communities, the two Councils now use the same IT Systems for Adult's social care and Children's social care. Additional functionality for each system is being progressed and these initiatives will support efficiencies within the service and in some cases with 3rd parties. A significant programme of work to review the systems used within Education is now underway and will continue into 2022.

Other areas of progress include:

- The migration of the aging HR & payroll system for Peterborough City Council to a Cloud solution which provides a better and more efficient service overall that can be accessed from home as well as the office.
- The licencing and case management system for the regulatory areas of Peterborough City Council (Licencing, Housing and Trading Standards) are in the process of being migrated from the legacy system to a new system.

Shared Data to inform decision making

The implementation of modern and powerful reporting tools (building on the Microsoft 365 platform) continues with emphasis on the migration of existing reports through to the new platform. This work provides really powerful and accessible reporting for services.

An organisational Structure for 2020 and beyond.

As noted in the previous report, this part of the strategy is fundamental to the ensuring that the IT & Digital services provided to Peterborough City Council supports both the current and future needs of teams, staff, Members and citizens. Building on the work done as part of the exit of

the Serco Managed ICT contract in October 2020 and the appointment of the Assistant Director of IT & Digital Services in November 2020, the creation of a consolidated management structure is now complete with the Heads of Service confirmed in post. The next stage, consolidating the remaining team structure, is underway.

4.3 **Financial sustainability and scrutiny.**

As with all services provided by the Council, IT budgets (both revenue & capital) are being reviewed in as part of the budget preparation for next financial year (2022/23). This activity is receiving detailed scrutiny via the cross-party budget review group, and the full budget scrutiny meetings ahead of the full council meetings.

As part of this process there has been significant scrutiny of both in-year and future year investment in IT and Digital Services with all investment assessed against a set of criteria to ensure that only essential investment is retained. As a result, some initiatives have been withdrawn, the scope of others reduced and the ones that remain are meet the essential requirements of the Council.

5. **CONSULTATION**

5.1 Not Applicable - this is an update report for information.

6. **ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES OR IMPACT**

6.1 It is anticipated that the Growth, Environment and Resources Scrutiny Committee will note the content of this report and any comments will be fed back to aid in future improvements to the services delivered.

7. **REASON FOR THE RECOMMENDATION**

7.1 To allow scrutiny of the Portfolio of the Cabinet Member for Digital Services & Transformation.

8. **ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

8.1 The alternative option was to not present this report to the Growth, Environment and Resources Scrutiny Committee. This option was not taken forwards as it was important to allow clear and transparent scrutiny of these services.

9. **IMPLICATIONS**

Financial Implications

9.1 This report is to give an overview / progress update. The finances that support this activity are already confirmed in the budget or are part of the current business planning process for 2022/23. as such there are no financial implications.

Legal Implications

9.2 This report is to give an overview / progress update and as such there are no direct legal implications. As regards specific projects, legal advice has been and will be sought on a case by case basis

Equalities Implications

9.3 This report is to give an overview / progress update as such there are no anticipated equality implications although the IT & Digital Strategy is underpinned by a commitment to improve access to services, data and information.

Rural Implications

9.4 This report is to give an overview / progress update as such there are no rural implications.

Carbon Impact Assessment

9.5 This report does not contain any decisions that will have an impact on Carbon Dioxide emissions.

10. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Used to prepare this report, in accordance with the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

10.1 None

11. APPENDICES

11.1 There are no appendices to this Report.

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