

CABINET	AGENDA ITEM No. 7
10 JULY 2023	PUBLIC REPORT

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Cabinet Member(s) responsible:	Cllr Fitzgerald, Leader of the Council	
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DIGITAL STRATEGY FOR PETERBOROUGH CITY COUNCIL

RECOMMENDATIONS	
FROM: <i>Corporate Leadership Team</i>	Deadline date: <i>N/A</i>
It is recommended that Cabinet approves the Council's Digital Strategy and the related Data, Technology and Cyber Strategies	

1. ORIGIN OF REPORT

1.1 This report is submitted to Cabinet following a referral from CLT on 20 June 2023.

2. PURPOSE AND REASON FOR REPORT

2.1 For Cabinet to approve the Digital Strategy for the Council and the related Data, Technology and Cyber Strategies.

2.2 This report is for Cabinet to consider under its Terms of Reference No. 3.2.9, *'To promote the Council's corporate and key strategies and Peterborough's Community Strategy and approve strategies and cross-cutting programmes not included within the Council's major policy and budget framework.'*

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

The current strategy for Peterborough City Council was agreed in 2019 and was a shared strategy with Cambridgeshire County Council. The vision of that strategy was to 'Simplify, Standardise and Share' with key workstreams around shared IT infrastructure delivered by a single provider, convergence of key business systems and a shared web and digital platform.

In 2019, no one could have predicted the events that were to follow in early 2020. Although the response to Covid presented huge technical, behavioural and time-critical challenges, it also provided opportunities to do and think about things differently.

Post pandemic and in the context of national, regional and local changes and challenges the Council requires a fresh Digital Strategy which is summarised in section 4.2 with additional information in sections 4.3 and 4.4.

The cost implications of the Digital Strategy will be fully worked through as part of the business planning process as the work needs to sit within the affordability of the MTFs. This planning will need to incorporate the ongoing technical move to cloud services and the accompanying move from capital to revenue funding.

4.2 Summary of the Digital Strategy

The Digital strategy sits within the wider Corporate Strategic Framework of the Council. The overall vision is for Digital Services that are **Secure, accessible, modern, and customer-focused to help create a sustainable 21st century council**. The Digital strategy is made up of five themes:

- **Community**
- **Partners**
- **Inclusion**
- **Sustainability**
- **Workforce**

It is critical that the Council help the majority of people to help themselves through digital contact and on-line resolution, enabling the minority of highly vulnerable cases to be dealt with through professional staff supported with the best data and technology to improve their lives. Therefore entwined through the strategy and each of the themes are the common 'golden' threads of Customer Journey and Digital Skills.

As well as the Peterborough City Council Strategic Priorities, the Digital Strategy is informed by and related to other strategies, intelligence, guidance and initiatives. Some of these are national, for instance the 12 digitisation outcomes published by the LGA.

Others are more specific to our area, for example the Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Digital Connectivity Strategy and the Digital Strategy of the Integrated Care System. Links to all related information are included in the appendix of the Digital Strategy.

In addition to these areas the Digital Strategy is underpinned by discrete but complementary Data, Cyber & Technology Strategies. These are summarised briefly in section 4.4 along with links to the full strategies.

The strategy adheres to guiding principles which support best practice, value for money, inclusivity, agility, Cloud first and ease of use. These principles are supported by the [Technology code of practice](#) published by central government.

The actions to support delivery of the vision are captured in a separate document – Digital Strategy Action Plan. These actions may be delivered solely by the IT & Digital Service, jointly with partners or, in some cases, solely by partner organisations.

IT systems are key to delivery of services. An overview of the key systems currently in use by the Council is included as appendix to the Strategy. This includes rag status indicators against the following criteria:

- Contract
- Fitness for Service need
- Technical/Security

4.3 Digital Strategy Themes & Golden' Threads

Within the **Communities** theme, the vision focusses on supporting digital engagement with service users, how this follows through to service delivery teams and the digital infrastructure required to effect positive outcomes for the community.

The next vision, on the theme of **Partners**, looks at how we will engage and collaborate with partners and external organisations. It covers how we will work to common standards and ensure that data is shared safely, securely, and appropriately to enable us all to fulfil our responsibilities, solve problems and deliver services effectively and equitably.

The vision for **Inclusion** is that no one should encounter any barriers to using our digital services. Inclusivity should be built into our systems to ensure that everyone can benefit from them, regardless of ability or disability. It looks ahead to proactively embrace further opportunities to be more inclusive.

The **Sustainability** vision is for a service which uses digital technology to not only make the local economy work for the people of Peterborough but which does this in an environmentally and economically sustainable way. In enhancing Peterborough's digital landscape, we will enable more people to benefit from services without having to travel, reducing inequality, and promoting fairer access. The vision also proposes greater financial and environmental sustainability of IT delivery through, for example, the way we manage licencing and the reduced carbon footprint of storing data in the Cloud.

In the final theme we acknowledge the role that our **workforce** has in the success or failure of our IT systems. We want all employees to have the right equipment and systems to do their jobs and have the confidence and skills to use them. This is essential if we are to reap the full benefits of our IT investment and if we want our organisation to achieve its efficiency savings and reduction in travel. As a provider of services, we value our ITDS staff and we are ensuring that we develop existing talent to its full potential, and future-proof the skill sets we have within the service, so that we have the right IT expertise at the right time.

'Golden' Threads – Customer Journey, Digital Skills & AI and Data

Positive customer experiences and positive outcomes encourage people to use our services. We need to provide customers with a comprehensive and consistent experience, irrespective of channel or status (staff, resident, visitor or partner). Having digitally engaged communities promotes, trust, inclusion and builds strong and invested societies. Opening more channels of engagement encourages underrepresented groups to participate.

Where the customer journey cannot be optimised using internal resources, partnership working is critical. We will support partners to fully utilise digital and technology options and shape and guide the standards/specifications used to provide services.

Customer experience should be so intuitive and accessible that they encounter no barriers to accessing digital services and skills.

For communities to take advantage of our digital offerings and experience a good customer journey, they need the necessary digital skills. Those who lack digital skills have fewer options available to them when using public services or our internal services to staff. Without the confidence and ability to get online, they will become more isolated and less engaged. It is vital that they are provided with the skills to allow them to take full advantage of all the services and information available to them.

That our workforce should be skilled and confident in the use of technology hardly needs stating, but if we want employees to help improve the customer experience, we also need them to be 'digitally aware'. The customer journey may involve multiple internal teams and so we need our employees to have a broad understanding of how the 'whole' fits together and where their service slots into it.

The advancements in Artificial Intelligence have brought about the democratisation and increased accessibility of AI, thereby reducing barriers and making solutions more viable to support our work processes.

The possibility and opportunity of AI weaves through every aspect of themes within this strategy. By leveraging such technologies it will be possible to generate unparalleled insights, enhance operational efficiency, and delivery of personalised experiences.

Data is a core asset and threads through all the themes of the Digital strategy. Understanding, improving, and harnessing data effectively into insight and intelligence supports performance management and efficiencies in operational processes, informs better and more robust decision making and empowers our residents and staff across all aspects of council service design and delivery. A data centric culture will flourish across the organisation enhancing personalisation, prevention, automation and innovation in service delivery while being mindful of information governance, ethics and cyber security.

4.4 Supporting strategies (Data, Technology & Cyber Security)

Data Strategy

Our Data Strategy focusses on the value of data as a core asset. It emphasizes the importance of data maintenance, quality and best practice whilst also promoting data availability and accessibility to those who need it.

It advocates the requirement for services to know their data and how it should be processed so that they can take advantage of speedier business solutions.

It states that the cross-organisational nature of our data is aided and facilitated by shared technology and goes on to highlight the need for interoperability of datasets, facilitated by common standards, to support automation and consistency.

Technology Strategy

The Technology Roadmap uses the themes outlined in the main Digital Strategy and details the proposed technologies that will be delivered to help achieve each theme's vision. It should also be read in conjunction with the Digital Strategy Action Plan.

Cyber Strategy

The aim of the Cyber Strategy is to protect the Council and for it to have cyber resilience at its core.

This means having a holistic approach to cybersecurity that includes preparedness, response, and recovery, and focuses on ensuring that the council can withstand and recover quickly from any cyber security incidents.

The strategy adopts national, government and industry standards and has five cyber objectives: managing risk, protecting against attack, detecting events, minimising impact and developing the skills, knowledge and culture necessary to mitigate the threat.

To support these objectives, the strategy includes a comprehensive set of outcomes. Which not only cover technical themes, but also address the human element, governance and management of our cyber intelligence.

5. CORPORATE PRIORITIES

5.1 How we Serve (Excellence)

- Support Adult Social Care in trialling and implementing digital financial assessments, digitise care assessments (to follow)
- Increase digital self-service and interact with citizens on their terms via digital channels

How we Work (Flexible)

- Improve the availability, performance, and reliability of the IT tools available to our Business and Public Health Intelligence teams. By providing teams with virtual devices to analyse

- data and produce reports we can dynamically assign extra resources as and when they are needed.
- We will ensure the relevant departments and partners have the support they need regarding digital to ensure the success of partnership-based work. For example: - 'Virtual wards' where people can be discharged from hospitals and monitored remotely through technology and virtual stats is an upcoming initiative.

How we Enable (High Performing)

- Work with Connecting Cambridgeshire and other partners we will continue in the provision of fast and reliable internet connectivity across the City and in making public access Wi-Fi available across an increasing number of community locations.
- Focus on the development of digital platforms to improve the process of gathering customer feedback and analyse what services have the most demand. That initiative will lead to service improvements that are based on customer feedback and an increased uptake of those improved digital services.
- Working with Opportunity Peterborough and City College to enable all our citizens and service users to increase their digital skill level in line with the National standards for essential digital skills (publishing.service.gov.uk).

6. CONSULTATION

- 6.1 As part of the preparation of the strategy, engagement and consultation was undertaken with relevant Service leads, in particular colleagues in Place and Economy to ensure the strategy responds to the needs of the community and in particular aligns with the work being undertaken by Opportunity Peterborough as well as partners such as Peterborough Limited and City College.
- 6.2 The strategy has also been considered by the Corporate Leadership Team and Cabinet Policy Forum.

7. ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES OR IMPACT

- 7.1 One outcome of the approval of this report, and the accompanying strategy, is that the action plan will be completed and the necessary work to include those action in the business planning process will commence.

8. REASON FOR THE RECOMMENDATION

- 8.1 For Cabinet to approve the Digital Strategy for the Council and the related Data, Technology and Cyber Strategies.

9. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 9.1 In terms of the Digital strategy, and the decoupling of People Service from Cambridgeshire County Council, the alternative option is to retain the status quo and continue with a strategy of continued and increasing convergence. This option has been rejected due to the need for a Digital Strategy that supports the key priorities of the Council.

10. IMPLICATIONS

Financial Implications

- 10.1 IT underpins almost all the services that the council provides to the people of Peterborough and the IT Strategy is fundamental to the transformation of those services.

All our IT expenditure is expected to deliver financial and business benefits these will be articulated on a case by case basis throughout the course of the Strategy implementation.

The strategic approach outlined in IT and Digital Strategy cannot be delivered without a significant programme of structured work. The Digital Strategy programme of work is set out in the annual

Projects and Programmes schedule. Each project which is identified as part of the annual plan goes through the six gateway approval stages as set out in the Project Management system for the Council. This starts with the scope of the project being outlined and presented to the relevant Financial Board (Capital or Revenue) to allocate budget for the project and reports on delivery against outcomes and benefits as defined in the Project Document.

The Cost implications of the Digital Strategy will be fully worked through as part of the business planning process as the work needs to sit within the affordability of the MTFs. This planning will need to incorporate the ongoing technical move to cloud services and the accompanying move from capital to revenue funding.

Legal Implications

- 10.2 The procurement of equipment, IT systems and services that may be required under the strategies will be undertaken in compliance with the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 and the Council's Contract Rules.

Equalities Implications

- 10.3 One of the themes of the strategy is inclusion and the vision of that theme is that no one encounters any barriers which prevent them from successfully accessing and using digital services.

This will involve making technology and digital solutions accessible and usable for all individuals, regardless of their abilities, disabilities or method of access.

This theme strives to promote diversity, equity, and inclusiveness in the design, development, and implementation of IT and digital solutions, ensuring that everyone can participate in and benefit from the digital world.

This will require the Council to look not just at current barriers and how to tackle them but also actively look for further opportunities to be more inclusive.

Specific equality Impact Assessments (EQIA) will be completed for all projects undertaken as part of the strategy.

Carbon Impact Assessment

- 10.4 The strategy will decrease the energy use for the council and/or communities through the move to cloud services.

The strategy will reduce waste generated by the council as devices for staff will be rationalised and reduced. Cloud services inherently produce less waste and can be scaled down as well as up to ensure the Council only consumes what is absolutely necessary.

Specific Carbon Impact Assessments will be completed for all projects undertaken as part of the strategy.

11. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

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

- 11.1 None.

12. APPENDICES

- 12.1 Appendix 1 - Digital Strategy
Appendix 2 - Digital Strategy Action/Delivery Plan
Appendix 3 - Data Strategy
Appendix 4 - Technology & Systems Strategy
Appendix 5 - Cyber Strategy