

POLICY, FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE

12 APRIL 2017

REPORT OF STRATEGIC DIRECTOR

DIGITAL STRATEGY

1.0 PURPOSE

- 1.1 To raise awareness of the future direction of digital and to adopt in principle a Phase 1 Digital Strategy that incorporates the Local Government Digital Standard.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 **Note the intention of working towards a full Digital Strategy in 2018/19 and the likely intended content;**
- 2.2 **Approve in principle the Phase 1 Digital Strategy and note the intention to report back in July 2017 with a more detailed roadmap and resourcing plan; and**
- 2.3 **Approve Councillor Sheldon as a Lead Member for Digital to champion the Strategy and work appropriately with officers moving forward.**

3.0 KEY ISSUES

- 3.1 Opportunities provided by digital technologies have long been at the heart of the Council's customer focussed approach, much of which is documented in the Council's Service Strategy for Customers. In recent years the Transformation Programme has been seeking to provide better customer services at lower costs by maximising the uses of technology and data. To date this has generated significant six figure annual financial benefits to the Council and work is continuing to drive further productivity and customer improvements.
- 3.2 However, the digital revolution that is affecting much of our everyday lives continues apace and it is vital for the Council to recognise this and put digital right at the heart of everything that we do. True digital transformation of the Council will require ongoing changes to business processes, employee and leadership skills/behaviours and ultimately to the corporate culture. The Council is not starting from scratch and is already on a digital transformation journey, but does now need to recognise the importance of this agenda moving forward. Over the next five to ten years there is potential for everything to change in terms of how services are delivered, how outcomes are achieved, how people engage with the democratic processes and how councils are organised and run. As a member of the Leicestershire ICT Partnership there will also be a need to talk with partners regarding their digital aspirations.
- 3.3 As well as progressing further to become a digital organisation, the Council also needs to consider the impact of digital on the broader corporate plan priorities. It will be vital for future economic growth that the Borough has in place the best possible digital infrastructure. This will include both superfast broadband and mobile telecommunications infrastructure. Without such an infrastructure it is likely that businesses will find it difficult to be competitive in the modern world and will either seek re-location or never invest in the first place. Just as important will be ensuring that people living in the Borough are suitably skilled to take advantage of the many benefits that digital will continue to generate, including being work ready where appropriate..

- 3.4 As the Council moves forward it will be important to embed digital thinking and ways of working throughout the organisation. It will mean focussing on making things better for users, internal as well as external, at every level of the organisation. There will need to be a focus on leadership and the Council will need to develop a conversation about what effective digital leadership really looks like in a digital age and what specific changes need to happen. The Strategic Director will continue to take a lead at officer level but it would be appropriate in these circumstances to formally identify a member lead for digital.
- 3.5 At this point in time, it is important to raise awareness of what a future digital strategy might need to cover. Attached at Appendix A is a discussion document that outlines some of the high level issues that might need to be covered in building a full digital strategy. This will give members a feel for the scope and range of issues that need to be considered.
- 3.6 Central Government utilises an 18 point Government Digital Standard to help departments create and run good digital services. LocalGovDigital is a sector led grouping of local authorities who have developed a local government version of this, which is attached at Appendix B. The Council should look to sign up to the spirit of this document and work towards it wherever possible as it represents good practice and will help to continue to drive productivity and customer improvements.
- 3.7 In order to ensure that the Council is moving forward, a Phase 1 Strategy has been developed and is attached at Appendix C. This Phase 1 Strategy has incorporated the Local Government Digital Standard within it. The intention is that officers will continue their work on digital services and start work on the roadmap identified within the Strategy and will look to put more detail together in terms of how we intend to move issues forward over the next 12 months, including the identification of any resourcing issues, and report back to the July 2017 Committee. This report can also look at the broader issues for moving towards the full Digital Strategy in 2018/19.

4.0 POLICY AND CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 Digital has the potential to impact significantly on all aspects of how the Council works.

5.0 FINANCIAL AND OTHER RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Initially it is anticipated that the work until July will be met from existing resources. There will be a full review of resource requirements needed for Phase 1 implementation during this period. There will need to be a similar exercise as part of moving to a full Digital Strategy. In general, there is a reasonable level of resources in place but there are also frustrations within the organisation that at times the Council cannot progress fast enough. This needs to be addressed.
- 5.2 It will not be possible for the Council to achieve everything working on its own and it will need to maximise the use of influence with partner organisations to achieve outcomes. This will be particularly the case for the full Digital Strategy when developed.

6.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS/POWERS

- 6.1 There may be legal issues that will need to be addressed as part of implementation, such as security of data.

7.0 COMMUNITY SAFETY

- 7.1 The use of digital is likely to have a revolutionary impact upon how the Council and partners will tackle community safety issues in the future, quite possibly in ways that are currently difficult to envisage or imagine.

8.0 EQUALITIES

8.1 There will be particular challenges to ensure that digital benefits everyone and that is the overriding spirit of developing this Digital Strategy. An EIA will be considered at the July meeting.

9.0 RISKS

9.1 Failure to adopt and implement a digital strategy could have severe detrimental impacts on both the organisation and the community. Risks will also go back to the July meeting.

10.0 CLIMATE CHANGE

10.1 Digital developments could have significant environmental benefits, such as reducing the need for journeys.

11.0 CONSULTATION

11.1 Strategic Management Team and appropriate internal staff.

12.0 WARDS AFFECTED

12.1 All wards are affected.

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Date: 30 March 2017

Appendices: Appendix A – Future Digital Strategy Headings
Appendix B – Local Government Digital Standard
Appendix C – Phase 1 Digital Strategy

Background Papers:

Reference: X: C'tees, Council & Sub-C'tees/PFA/2016-17/12-04-17KA-Digital Strategy