



EAST STAFFORDSHIRE BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT COVER SHEET

Title of Report:	Digital Strategy 2018 – 2021
Meeting of:	Cabinet
Date:	Monday 15 th October 2018
Is this an Executive Decision:	NO
Is this a Key Decision:	NO
Is the Report Confidential:	NO
If so, please state relevant paragraph from Schedule 12A LGA 1972:	N/A
<p>Essential Signatories:</p> <p>ALL REPORTS MUST BE IN THE NAME OF A HEAD OF SERVICE</p> <p>Monitoring Officer: Angela Wakefield</p> <p>Date Signature</p> <p>Chief Finance Officer: Sal Khan</p> <p>Date Signature</p>	

EAST STAFFORDSHIRE BOROUGH COUNCIL

Report to Cabinet

Date: Monday 15th October 2018

REPORT TITLE: Digital Strategy 2018 - 2021

PORTFOLIO: Leader of the Council

HEAD OF SERVICE: Sal Khan

CONTACT OFFICER: Daniel Arnold Ext. No. 1626

WARD(S) AFFECTED: All

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1. To provide an overview of the Council's proposed Digital Strategy 2018 – 2021 (Appendix 1).

2. Contribution to Corporate Priorities

- 2.1. The Digital Strategy directly contributes to delivery of all three Corporate Priorities of Value for Money Council Services, Promoting Local Economic Growth and Protecting and Strengthening Communities.

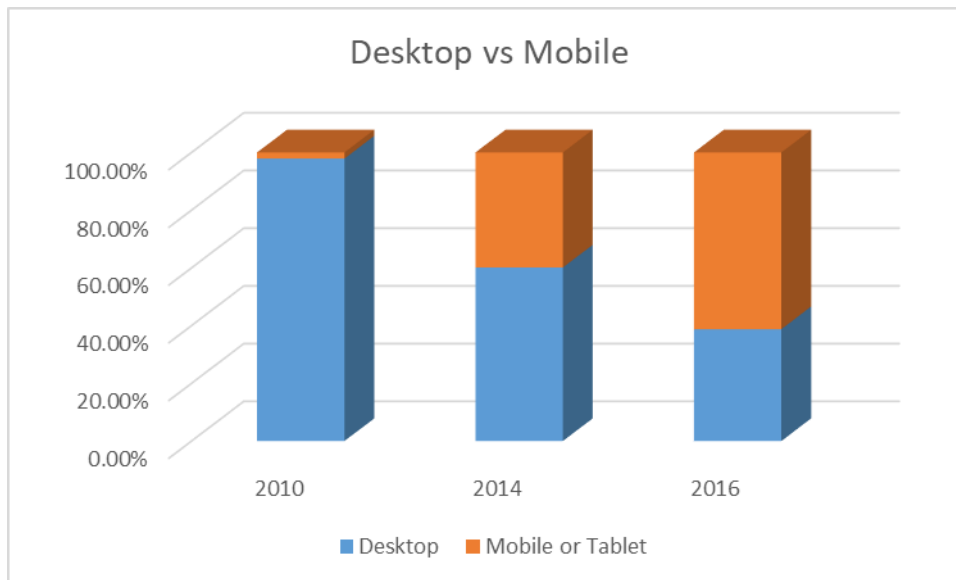
3. Digital Strategy

3.1. Section 1 - Background and Vision

- 3.2. The internet and the rapid rise in digital technologies has changed the way in which people and businesses expect to be able to interact with one another. The increase in online shopping, banking and other services has coincided with the proliferation in the use of mobile phones and tablets and social media.
- 3.3. Over recent years there has been a significant increase in the number of visits to the Council's website.

Year	Page Views
2010	1,208,905
2014	1,701,940
2016	2,306,378
2017	2,389,105

3.4. More people now access the Council’s website through a mobile or tablet than via a desktop PC.



3.5. Digital technology can, where appropriate, offer a way to both reduce the more expensive methods of service delivery and create efficiencies internally, altering the way in which services are delivered. The Council has proactively adopted this approach over a number of years.

3.6. The Council has made significant steps in ensuring that online services are an essential component in service delivery and is well placed to continue in this approach.

3.7. Digital change also means improving internal procedures and services and how officers and members work. Over recent years, the Council has made significant investment in its ICT infrastructure to enable remote and home working, which has allowed the Council to rationalise office accommodation and have greater flexibility in how it manages its officers and assets.

3.8. The overall vision of the strategy is:

“To consider digital in all aspects of the Council and maintain our culture of in-house innovation, embrace new technologies and invest where it can be demonstrated that there is added public value and a real return on investment, whilst ensuring that our residents can still access Council services through traditional channels where appropriate.”

3.9. Section 2 - Influences on the strategy

- 3.10. This strategy helps and supports the delivery of the Council's Corporate Plan. The Council's approach to digital will help deliver a number of corporate objectives and assist in meeting the Council's priorities.
- 3.11. The Council's ICT Framework is an integral component to the success of this strategy and the Procurement Strategy details the procedure the Council must follow if any goods or services are to be procured.
- 3.12. The Council's Marcomms Strategy, adopted and delivered between 2012 - 2015, detailed how the Council would improve its digital presence. Digital is also likely to be involved in aspects of the Burton Town Centre Regeneration Programme.
- 3.13. In order to deliver its vision of in-house innovation it's important that the Council continues to support officers with their training needs.
- 3.14. Whilst there is no statutory requirement to include high speed broadband as part of new planning developments, a number of Neighbourhood Plans have policies requiring new developments to be connected to superfast broadband. The Council may decide to include relevant policies when it reviews the local plan in the future.
- 3.15. The Government Digital Service (GDS) is part of the Cabinet Office and works for the digital transformation of government. The GDS provides guidance on building simple and effective public services and has a variety of platforms such as gov.uk verify and has a key influence on public open data.

3.16. Section 3 - What is Digital?

- 3.17. Digital can be defined in numerous ways but it's important that a clear definition is described in order to understand what digital means to the Council.
- 3.18. Rather than viewing digital as hardware, software or a policy, the Council defines digital as its methodology for increasing public value using technology to improve services and deliver the Council's corporate objectives.

3.19. Section 4 - The Council's Recent Digital Journey

- 3.20. Over recent years the Council embarked upon various strategic steps which have led to consistent improvements to our digital approach. Our ICT Policy, the adoption, delivery and completion of the Marcomms Strategy and Service Commissioning Strategy as well as the ongoing SMART approach has led to a gradual evolution in digital services.
- 3.21. This approach has led to a number of initiatives and achievements including:
- Real time data transmission from waste fleet to back office.

- Introduction of Microsoft Dynamics leading to end-to-end self-service in waste and environmental health.
- Residents can access their council tax bill online and make an online application for housing benefit and council tax reduction.
- The P&T team were awarded the LGC 'Team of the Year' in 2013
- The ICT team were shortlisted at the LGC awards in 2016
- The Council was shortlisted in the top 10 public sector category in the last two Digital Leaders award.

3.22. The work already undertaken by the Council has meant that the organisation has made significant progress in its digital maturity.

3.23. A Digital Maturity Index is presented on page 10 and 11 of the Digital Strategy. Adapting *Gartner's 5 Levels of Open Digital Government Maturity*¹, *Hiller and Belanger (2001) five stage model*² and *E-Consultancy's Digital Maturity Framework*, the index provides examples of how ESBC has achieved a 'managed' level and in some instances, examples of how the Council has achieved the 'optimised' level.

3.24. Programme Plan

3.25. The programme plan outlines the future works of that the Council will be undertaking as part of the Digital Strategy.

3.26. The programme plan will continue to enhance the Council's approach to digital, providing benefits to both residents and the Council.

3.27. The programme has been divided into three sections: Strategy; Technology and Process.

3.28. Programme Plan – Strategy

3.29. Adopt 'Beyond Social Media – A Policy to make the most of Communications'.

Since the implementation of the Marcomms strategy, social media has evolved and its influence on people and business is far greater than ever imagined.

Initially, social media was predominantly viewed as a communications tool and a way to engage with hard to reach audiences. More recently, social media has now become a customer service tool for many organisations and there is an expectation that any queries raised through social media will be handled quickly and efficiently.

The adoption of a social media policy will formally outline officer responsibilities, how the Council will use and manage social media and will provide an instruction on how to engage effectively.

¹ di Maio, Andrea. *Gartner Launches Open Government Maturity Model*. Gartner.com (June 28, 2010).

² Hiller, J., & Belanger, F. (2001). *Privacy strategies for electronic government*. Arlington, VA: Pricewaterhouse Coopers Endowment for the Business of Government.

3.30. Programme Plan – Technology

3.31. Corporate Website

The Council's website is constantly changing and adapting to meet the needs of both its customers and the Council. As such, it's important that the content on the website is regularly reviewed to ensure that it's current, concise and accurate.

As part of the refresh, the Programmes and Transformation team will use analytics and feedback from individual teams to ensure that the site is structured correctly, making information easy to find and located in areas that users will expect to find it. The site will also undergo a mini redesign, ensuring that the website maintains the modern look and feel of a corporate website.

The Council is committed to providing an accessible website and strives to ensure that the website meets accessibility requirements where possible. The EU web accessibility directive will soon be transposed into law in the UK and it is expected that existing public sector websites will need to meet WCAG 2.1 criteria by September 2020.

3.32. Online self-service and integration of payments

To ensure that residents and businesses can continue to interact with the Council through digital channels, the Council will continue to make improvements to its website and other self-service software where appropriate and where there is added value in doing so.

Improvements will range from redesigning web forms so they are concise and responsive to a user's device, adding new forms and investigating how online payments could be incorporated within our digital forms.

3.33. Intranet Development

To ensure that the intranet continues to be used and that it provides relevant information to officers, an individual dashboard will be created for each user. This will allow individual users to favourite key documents and services that they use on a regular basis.

The Council will maintain the individualisation theme by exploring the possibility of integrating with back office systems to display key information to users.

3.34. Democratic Engagement Software

Whilst democratic engagement rates across the borough are generally very good the Council recognises that, with the emergence of new technology, more could be done to increase voter awareness across all demographics. As part of this approach, the Council will investigate the use of digital engagement software for Electoral registration and implement ways in which to engage with the public digitally.

3.35. Programme Plan – Process

3.36. Local Land and Property Gazetteer (LLPG)

The LLPG is the Council's central and definitive address database and can be used to underpin other systems and provide key insights into geographical areas for other services.

The quality of data is reviewed nationally by GeoPlace who rate the information we supply. In order to be confident that data within the LLPG is accurate, the Council will aim to achieve a silver level by March 19.

The LLPG is used as the primary address reference in the Council's elections, planning, waste management and Microsoft Dynamics system. The Council will explore the feasibility of automatically linking the data in the LLPG with other council systems using the Unique Property Reference Number.

3.37. Automation and Artificial Intelligence

The practical application of AI across local government is still in its infancy however the Council will begin to explore the possibility of using AI to automate housing benefits applications to identify the risk associated with the application.

As outlined elsewhere, the Council investigate automatic data sharing between various back office systems, reducing the requirement for manual data sharing.

3.38. Positional Accuracy Improvement

Positional Accuracy Improvement (PAI) is used to improve the absolute accuracy of spatial data on geographic software. Following work undertaken by Ordnance Survey to improve the accuracy of its rural and semi-rural maps, the Council is required to undertake a programme of works to adjust the slight discrepancies in the spatial data that have been created as a result.

3.39. Details of each component, including key milestones and timescales, can be found in the strategy at Section 5: Programme Plan.

4. Financial Considerations

This section has been approved by the following member of the Financial Management Unit: Lisa Turner

4.1. There are no direct financial implications arising from this report. However as individual proposals within the programme at 3.24 are developed any financial implications against the approved budget will be brought forward on a case by case basis.

5. Risk Assessment and Management

5.1. The main risks to this Report and the Council achieving its objectives are as follows:

5.2. **Positive** (Opportunities/Benefits):

5.2.1. Enhance the quality and increase the number of digital services on offer.

5.2.2. Reduce costs associated with service delivery and increase public value.

5.3. **Negative** (Threats):

5.3.1. Potential to alienate members of the public who are unable to access digital channels. This risk will be mitigated against through the programme.

5.4. The risks do not need to be entered in the Risk Register. Any financial implications to mitigate against these risks are considered above.

6. **Legal Considerations**

*This section has been approved by the following member of the Legal Team:
Linda Durham*

6.1. There are no significant legal issues arising from this Report.

7. **Equalities and Health**

7.1. **Equality impacts:** The subject of this Report is a policy, strategy, function or service that is new or being revised. An equality and health impact assessment is provided at Appendix 3.

7.2. **Health impacts:** The outcome of the health screening question does not require a full Health Impact Assessment to be completed.

8. **Human Rights**

8.1. There are no Human Rights issues arising from this Report.

9. **Sustainability** (including climate change and change adaptation measures)

9.1. Does the proposal result in an overall positive effect in terms of sustainability (including climate change and change adaptation measures) N/A

9.2. Please detail any positive/negative aspects:

9.2.1. Positive (Opportunities/Benefits)

9.2.2. Negative (threats)

10. **Recommendation(s)**

10.1. To approve the Digital Strategy.

11. **Appendices**

11.1. Appendix 1: Digital Strategy

11.2. Appendix 2: Self Service Forms

11.3. Appendix 3: Equality and Health Impact Assessment