Digital Strategy 2018 – 2021

East Staffordshire Borough Council

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Section 1: Background and Vision

Background

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 and banking, the proliferation in the use of mobile phones and tablets and the advent of social media has resulted in increased expectations that the Council can and/or should deliver its services online.

The way in which the public interact with organisations is changing. 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

The table below shows the 5 most popular services on our website and the total number of page views.

Service	2015	2017
Planning	912,387	911,552
Meadowside Leisure Centre	230,241	257,338
Uttoxeter Leisure Centre	176,923	176,896
Bins and Recycling	79,987	137,826
Council Tax	63,049	89,377

More people now access the Council's website through a mobile or tablet than via a desktop PC or a laptop and the Council has made significant steps in providing services digitally.
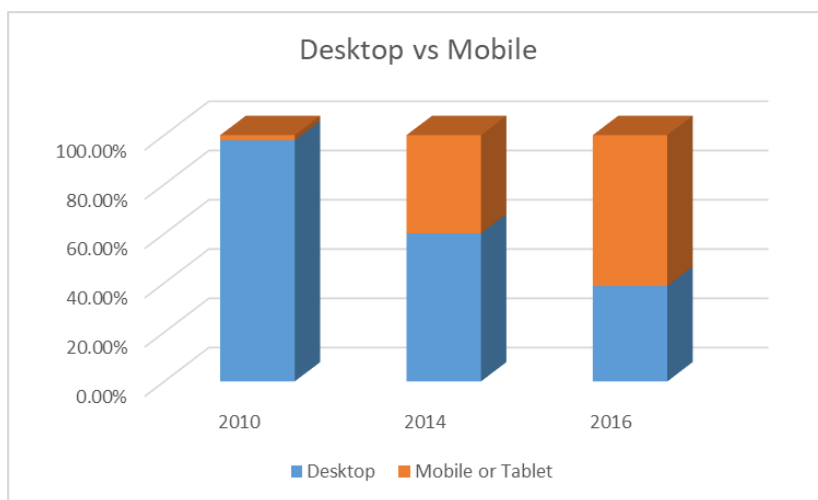
Digital technology can, where appropriate, offer a way to both reduce the more expensive methods of service delivery and create efficiencies internally, altering the way in which services are delivered. The Council has proactively adopted this approach over a number of years.

Over recent years 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.

Digital change is constantly evolving and the Council has been proactive in providing services, both informative and transactional, on any device, at any time of day, mirroring the experiences users have with banking and retail.

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.

Vision

This strategy aims to describe a clear and logical approach to digital services and how the Council will continue to make use of technology to improve our services where appropriate.

The strategy will highlight the work that has already been undertaken and will outline how the Council will move forward with its digital approach.

This strategy will underpin the Council's approach to integrating digital within services across the Council, only procuring goods and making financial outlays where there is real added public value and a return on investment.

Our strategy describes how we will use modern technology and tools to change how the Council serves customers and how we will embrace new technologies to help continue to deliver services to our residents.

Not all services are suitable to digital channels alone and some residents are unable to interact with the Council digitally. The Council will be pushing digital channels but will be open to the needs of all our residents and the services they require.

Therefore 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."

Section 2: Influences on this strategy

<u>Supporting the Delivery of the Corporate Plan</u>

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 of:

- Value for Money Council Services – protecting your money
- Promoting Local Economic Growth – to benefit local people by turning aspiration into reality
- Protecting and Strengthening Communities – love where you live

<u>Other Internal Influences</u>

The Council's ICT Framework is an integral component to the success of this strategy. Having a robust and secure service allows the Council to expand on its digital aspirations and create more public value through the services offered to residents.

The Procurement Strategy details the procedure the Council must follow if any goods or services are to be procured. It's also important that in any future procurement activities that there is a consideration to digital.

The Council's Marcomms Strategy, adopted and delivered between 2012 - 2015, detailed how the Council would improve its digital presence including how the Council would use social media, ensuring the website was responsive to mobile and tablet devices and reducing the more traditional methods of communicating with the public where appropriate.

The Burton Town Centre Regeneration Programme encapsulates improvements to be made to Burton Town Centre. As part of these improvements, there is likely to be some digital influence.

In order to deliver its vision of in-house innovation it's important that the Council continues to support officers with their training needs.

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. Recent planning guidance suggests that planning policies and decisions should support the expansion of electronic communications networks and although not included in the current local plan, the Council may decide to include relevant policies, when the Council reviews the plan in the future.

<u>External Influences</u>

This document provides a long term strategic overview of the Council's approach to digital and will be used to help guide the Council in meeting various regulatory measures throughout the lifespan of the strategy.

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.

Section 3: What is Digital?

Digital can be viewed and defined in a number of different ways. Digital could be defined as a new way of engaging with customers, or the technology that underpins customer service and internal procedures. It is important that a clear definition and understanding of digital is defined as part of this strategy in order to understand what digital means to East Staffordshire Borough Council.

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.

The diagram below illustrates what digital means to the Council and how it can be used to meet various objectives and priorities.

Technology and Organisation Processes

Responding to community need

Corporate Plan and Objectives

Digital

Improved service for residents and businesses

Digital Opportunity

Section 4: The Council's Recent Digital Journey

Over recent years the Council embarked upon various strategic steps which has 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.

There has been a wide of range of digital initiatives implemented across Council services. The Waste Management fleet now transmits real time data to back office systems, allowing for enhanced customer service. The introduction of Microsoft Dynamics has provided the platform for end-to-end self-service in waste management and environmental health. Residents can now access their council tax account online and make online applications for housing benefit and council tax reduction. Payments made for planning application submissions via the planning portal are now automatically processed to the Council.

The work the Council has undertaken has resulted in national recognition. In 2013, the Programmes and Transformation Team were awarded LGC 'Team of the Year'. Elements of the team's work consisted of redesigning processes and creating, designing and implementing a new website in-house using open source technology.

The Council's IT team were shortlisted at the LGC awards in 2016 and the Council has been shortlisted in the top 10 'Digital Council of the Year' category in the Digital Leaders 100 awards the past two years.

The Council's Digital Maturity Index

An organisation must ensure that five key elements: strategy, technology, process, people and security, are in place in order for the business to move towards digital maturity.

The Digital Maturity index is an adaption of a variety of e-government models including Gartner's *5 Levels of Open Digital Government Maturity*[1], *Hiller and Belanger's five stage model*[2] *and E-Consultancy's Digital Maturity Framework* . It highlights the different stages of an organisations digital maturity and describes the environment that must exist in order for an organisation to achieve this level. Digital is now what e-government represented in the early 2000s.

Following the work already undertaken the Council can calculate its digital maturity. The Council has clearly surpassed the emergent stage and has reached the managed level and demonstrates various elements of optimised.

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[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, VA7 Pricewaterhouse Coopers Endowment for the Business of Government.*

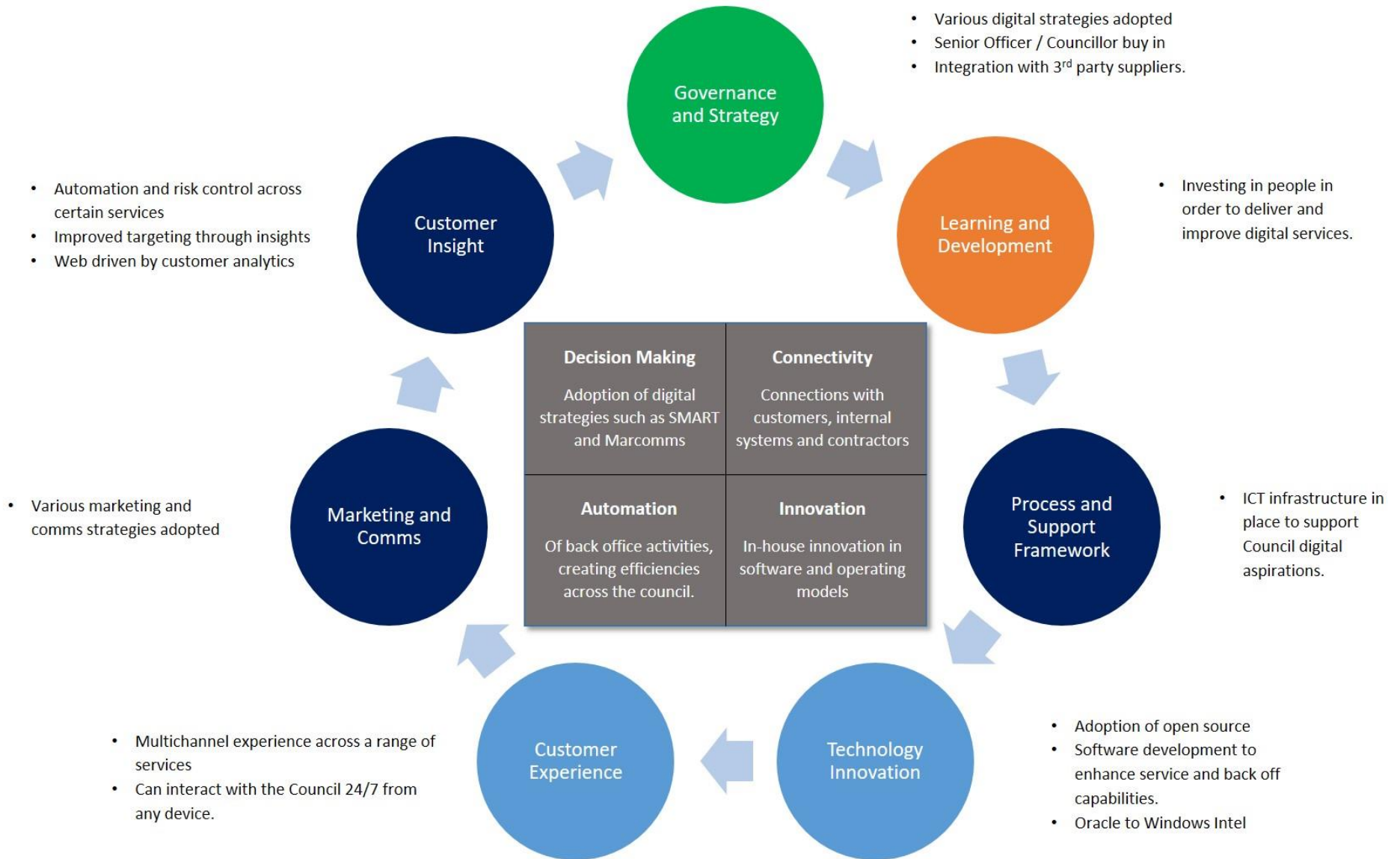# Path to digital maturity

	Emergent	Managed	Optimised
Strategy	Digital service or capability not part of organisation's strategy for service delivery.	Digital vision and strategies for the authority begin to be implemented.	The strategies are delivered through leadership and the services themselves. Approach is adaptive, and agile to changing technologies.
ESBC Examples			Numerous digital strategies and approaches adopted over recent years. Delivered ICT Policy, Marcomms and SMART approach.
Technology	Basic data sources, legacy platforms and technology, basic digital customer service.	Joined up data, multi customer service channels available, and some integration between systems.	Joined up and real time data for front line staff, integrated digital forms, synchronisation between offline and online, real-time decision making. Innovative use of technology. Automation in use. End to end process.
ESBC Examples		Variety of customer service channels available including web, telephone, email and social media. Integration of Dynamics and open source website.	Real-time data fed from waste collection cabs to back office system. Some digital forms integrated with back office systems creating an end-to-end process.
People	Rigid structure with no knowledge or job sharing. Lack of relevant skills.	Specialists and general tech skills. Some interoperability between officers	Deep knowledge within the organisation, shared knowledge and fluidity for multiple roles. An agile and innovative culture
ESBC Examples		Shared roles and knowledge within departments across the organisation.	Innovative culture in different areas of the organisation. From a technical perspective the Council has embraced open source web technologies and in-house development.

Process	Rigid process, independent from other services, inward facing	Some links between services and awareness of other teams. Process is part of service delivery mapping	Interoperability between systems, agile processes, data sharing.
ESBC Examples		Links between planning, elections, waste and back office systems using Unique Property Reference Numbers. Digital is a now a consideration in all service delivery.	Agile development of solutions including Dynamics CRM implementation. Consistent data in waste, planning, elections and LLPG ensures interoperability and greater accuracy.
Security	Little or no control over data access, low levels of security to ensure "the job gets done" by someone, systems in a largely unknown and differing state.	Some controls of data access applied, software updates applied infrequently, occasional audits	Strong end to end authentication and encryption, all access provided based on identified needs, all software and systems kept up to
ESBC Examples			Audited annually against the PSN Code of connection requirements that dictate levels of security, logging and patch management. controls are in place to ensure all access is appropriate, authorised and reviewed, systems are kept up to date with suppliers patches and upgrades, automatically applied policies are in place to ensure each endpoint is secured and only has access to the systems required to perform the relevant job function. Antimalware and antivirus protection is automatically deployed and updated on a continuous basis.

Figure 3 – End to End digital process for ESBC digital customer service

- Various digital strategies adopted
- Senior Officer / Councillor buy in
- Integration with 3rd party suppliers.

Governance and Strategy

Learning and Development

- Investing in people in order to deliver and improve digital services.

Customer Insight

- Automation and risk control across certain services
- Improved targeting through insights
- Web driven by customer analytics

Decision Making

Adoption of digital strategies such as SMART and Marcomms

Connectivity

Connections with customers, internal systems and contractors

Automation

Of back office activities, creating efficiencies across the council.

Innovation

In-house innovation in software and operating models

Marketing and Comms

- Various marketing and comms strategies adopted

Process and Support Framework

- ICT infrastructure in place to support Council digital aspirations.

Customer Experience

- Multichannel experience across a range of services
- Can interact with the Council 24/7 from any device.

Technology Innovation

- Adoption of open source
- Software development to enhance service and back off capabilities.
- Oracle to Windows Intel

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Section 5: Programme Plan

This section details the main components within this strategy and the future works that the Council will be undertaking as part of its Digital Strategy. These components are:

- Strategy
  - Adopt 'Beyond Social Media – A Policy to make the most of Communications'.
- Technology
  - Corporate Website
  - Online Self Service and integration of payments
  - Intranet
  - Democratic Engagement Software
- Process
  - Local Land and Property Gazetteer
  - Automation and Artificial Intelligence
  - Positional Accuracy Improvement

ESBC Digital Strategy – Strategy	Expected Start:	Expected End:	Component Lead:
1. Strategy - Adopt 'Beyond Social Media – A Policy to make the most of Communications'.	November 18	March 19	Programmes and Transformation

Brief Description:

As part of the Marcomms strategy the Council implemented social media across the organisation which led to the creation of social media profiles for various teams to compliment the pre-existing corporate Facebook and Twitter profiles.

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.

Key Milestones & Timescales:	Key Outcomes & Benefits:	Key Performance Measures:
• Adoption of a Social Media Policy (March 19)	• Will provide framework for better management of social media • Greater engagement with social media users	• The Social Media Policy is approved and adopted.

Component Dependencies:	

Contribution to Corporate Objectives:	• Value for Money Council Services • Promoting Local Economic Growth • Protecting and Strengthening Communities

ESBC Digital Strategy – Technology		Expected Start:	Expected End:	Component Lead:
2. Technology - Corporate Website		November 18	Ongoing	Programmes and Transformation

Brief Description:

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, contributing to the objectives outlined above and 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.

Key Milestones & Timescales:	Key Outcomes & Benefits:	Key Performance Measures:
• Review of website analytics and discussions with teams regarding content and structure (December 18) • Implementation of revised content and structure where appropriate (March 19) • Go live with redesigned pages (March 19) • Meet and uphold WCAG 2.1 accessibility standards across websites (September 2020)	• Improvements to service delivery • Increase in % of users using web channel.	• Reduction in the % of face to face/telephone interactions. • Meet WCAG 2.1 accessibility standards

Component Dependencies:	• Reliance on website editors to keep their pages up-to-date and current • Reliance on monitoring to ensure that WCAG 2.1 is met and then upheld
Contribution to Corporate Objectives:	• Value for Money Council Services • Promoting Local Economic Growth • Protecting and Strengthening Communities

ESBC Digital Strategy- Technology		Expected Start:	Expected End:	Component Lead:
3. Technology – Self Service Forms		Quarter 1 2019/2020	Ongoing	Programmes and Transformation

Brief Description:

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.

The Council will explore the feasibility of providing additional self-service forms across various services including waste management, revenues and benefits and licensing. A list of end-to-end self-service forms that are currently available on the website is available at appendix 2 – self-service forms.

Key Milestones & Timescales:	Key Outcomes & Benefits:	Key Performance Measures:
• Initial review of all web forms used across the Council and identification of new self-service forms (July 19) • Improvements made to existing forms (Dec 19) • Investigate feasibility of incorporating payments into digital forms. (Apr 19 – Dec 19) • Begin programme to launch new self-service web forms. Dec 19	• Improvements to service delivery • Increase in % of users using web channel.	• Web forms are responsive to mobile devices • Feasibility study of integrating payments with online forms conducted • Reduction in the % of face to face/telephone interactions.

Component Dependencies:	• Reliance on the user friendliness of web forms • Positive ROI or public value from incorporating payments within digital form process
Contribution to Corporate Objectives:	• Value for Money Council Services

ESBC Digital Strategy – Process		Expected Start:	Expected End:	Component Lead:
4. Technology – Intranet Development		Quarter 1 – 2018/19	Ongoing	Programmes and Transformation

Brief Description:

The Council's Intranet was developed and launched in-house using open source software in 2016 and currently provides information and links to various departments, policies and software.

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. This could include budget information from Agresso, officer working arrangements and much more.

Key Milestones & Timescales:	Key Outcomes & Benefits:	Key Performance Measures:
• Ability for users to create their own individual dashboards (Quarter 2 18/19) • Explore possibility of integrating back office data onto the intranet (Quarter 3 18/19)	• More relevant information provided to officers in a central location	• Individual dashboard created for each user • Review into back office integration

Component Dependencies:	• Training for in-house development • Reliance on officers using the dashboard on the intranet • Reliance on the back office systems having the technical capabilities to connect and transmit data from.
Contribution to Corporate Objectives:	• Value for Money Council Services

ESBC Digital Strategy – Technology	Expected Start:	Expected End:	Component Lead:
5. Technology - Democratic Engagement Software	October 18	March 21	Electoral Services

Brief Description:

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.

Key Milestones & Timescales:	Key Outcomes & Benefits:	Key Performance Measures:
• Implement findings from review to use engagement software to increase voter demographics (March 21)	• Raise awareness of elections and democratic. • Increase engagement with hard to reach audiences.	• Method to increase engagement identified and implemented

Component Dependencies:	• Reliance on a method for digital engagement being identified
Contribution to Corporate Objectives:	• Value for Money Council Services • Protecting and Strengthening Communities

ESBC Digital Strategy – Process	Expected Start:	Expected End:	Component Lead:
6. Process - Local Land and Property Gazetteer	November 18	Ongoing	Programmes and Transformation

Brief Description:

It's important that the Council improves and maintains the quality and accuracy of the Council's 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 currently 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. In order to reduce errors and officer time, the Council will explore the feasibility of automatically linking the data in the LLPG with other council systems using the Unique Property Reference Number.

Key Milestones & Timescales:	Key Outcomes & Benefits:	Key Performance Measures:
• The Council's Land and Property Gazetteer to be rated as silver – March 19 • Initiate feasibility to study to explore automatic linkages between LLPG and other Council systems	• Greater confidence in the quality of our address data • Reduction in officer time manually updating address information in different systems • Provides a platform for future works that require address data	• Achieve silver standard for LLPG by March 19

Component Dependencies:	• Officers able to update the LLPG sufficiently • Benefits highlighted in feasibility study are satisfactory
Contribution to Corporate Objectives:	• Value for Money Council Services • Protecting and Strengthening Communities

ESBC Digital Strategy – Process	Expected Start:	Expected End:	Component Lead:
7. Process – Automation and Artificial Intelligence	November 18	Ongoing	Programmes and Transformation

Brief Description:

Over recent years automation and artificial intelligence (AI) have become more prevalent in decision making and customer service. In local government, AI can be used to increase efficiency, enhance customer service and use data insight to drive better decision making.

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. This will enable low risk applicants to be automatically processed leaving officers to handle those applications that are deemed medium or high risk.

As outlined in other action statements, the Council will investigate the possibility of linking various back off systems, reducing the requirement for manual intervention when sharing data.

Key Milestones & Timescales:	Key Outcomes & Benefits:	Key Performance Measures:
• Explore the possibility of introducing AI to the housing benefit application process. • Examine the feasibility of automated data sharing between back office systems	• Create efficiencies in the back office • Improved customer service	• Feasibility study complete on the possibility of implement AI in housing benefits.

Component Dependencies:	• Reliance on software capability for AI and back office integration • Does AI and back office integration produce a ROI or generate public value
Contribution to Corporate Objectives:	• Value for Money Council Services

ESBC Digital Strategy – Process	Expected Start:	Expected End:	Component Lead:
8. Process – Positional Accuracy Improvement (PAI)	November 18	Ongoing	Programmes and Transformation

Brief Description:

Positional Accuracy Improvement (PAI) is used to improve the absolute accuracy of positional data on geographic software. Ordnance Survey has conducted a programme to increase the accuracy of features in relation to the Ordnance Survey National Grid. This work led to increased map accuracy for semi-rural and rural areas and became known colloquially as POST-PAI.

The Council has historically worked on PRE-PAI maps which has meant that when adding and plotting spatial data in rural and semi-rural areas there have been slight discrepancies. The Council will undertake a programme of works to increase the spatial accuracy of historic data and moving forward will use POST-PAI mapping.

Key Milestones & Timescales:	Key Outcomes & Benefits:	Key Performance Measures:
• Implement Post-PAI mapping data across its mapping software. • Undertake an exercise to automatically shift historical data so that it's plotted correctly to the new maps. • Manually shift the data that was not successfully moved during the automation process.	• Greater confidence in the quality of our address data • Greater accuracy of both historic and new data • Improved interoperability between systems.	• Implement POST-PAI mapping • Shift historical spatial data so that it is plotted correctly to the new base mapping.

Component Dependencies:	• Automation process in place to be able to shift historical spatial data
Contribution to Corporate Objectives:	• Value for Money Council Services