



Scrutiny Board

30 June 2015

Report title	Digital Strategy	
Cabinet member with lead responsibility	Councillor Andrew Johnson Resources	
Wards affected	All	
Accountable director	Keith Ireland, Managing Director	
Originating service	Information and Communication Technology (ICT)	
Accountable employee(s)	Andy Hoare Tel Email	Head of Service, ICT 01902 554044 Andy.Hoare@wolverhampton.gov.uk
Report to be/has been considered by	Strategic Executive Board Executive Team Cabinet	19 May 2015 01 June 2015 16 September 2015

Recommendation(s) for action or decision:

The Scrutiny Board is recommended to:

1. Approve the Council's Digital Strategy 2015 – 2018 to go forward to Cabinet on 16 September 2015.

Recommendations for noting:

The Scrutiny Board is asked to note:

1. This item is being considered as pre-decision scrutiny and will therefore not be available to call-in once a decision is made by the Executive.

1.0 Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to gain approval for the Council's Digital Strategy for the forthcoming three years. The Council's Digital Strategy will bring together the various digital strategies that are being pursued within the Council. It will align the digital services and engagement strategy that is defined in the ICT Strategy, the Wolverhampton Digital Inclusion Strategy which is one of the strands of the Welfare Reform Programme, Wolverhampton Homes Digital Inclusion Strategy, the EU Smart City framework which comprises of six categories of projects and initiatives, the broadband voucher scheme, the Black Country Local Broadband demand stimulation plan and the Universal Services Framework (Appendix A).
- 1.2 Following approval of the strategy the presentational appearance of the strategy will be aligned with council branding guidelines and the agreed format for associated strategies, such as the Customer Services Strategy, before final publication.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 We live in a digital age and this new environment offers huge potential for the Council to interact with citizens more effectively and make a step change in levels of efficiency. It also offers huge potential to the individual in terms of job searches, social engagement and service convenience. Most UK citizens use and benefit from digital services:
 - 79% of the UK population is now using the internet, up from 59% in 2005
 - 92% of the population (70% for aged 65 or over) have a mobile phone, with 45% possessing a smartphone
 - Levels of trust are high with only 47% of people having concerns about entering credit card details online with only 24% read online terms and conditions
 - Over 63% of the UK population use online banking services
- 2.2 Digital is important, transformative and positively disruptive. But digital is not the panacea for resolving all problems. Digital works best when it is deeply embedded in the organisation's culture and when the customer journey and business processes are part of the design thinking. Sometimes, particularly where there are complex social problems to solve, the best customer journey is not digital at all.
- 2.3 Creating a digital strategy that looks three to five years ahead is an unrealistic expectation. Technology is advancing too fast and the Council's strategy needs to be agile and flexible enough to accommodate these advances. Equally, accurate budgeting is difficult when the landscape is evolving at such a rapid rate. A digital strategy therefore has to take a different approach. Thus this strategy will focus more on creating policies, priorities and a workforce (people) who can be trusted to make the right decisions as new technologies emerge, rather than defining everything up front.

3.0 Discussion

- 3.1 This strategy is not an ICT strategy although ICT is a key enabler of the Digital Strategy. This strategy is a strategy for transformation and for supporting transformational aspiration in the Council, the City of Wolverhampton, the Black Country, the combined authority and potentially nationally through the delivery of digitalisation.

- 3.2 Digitalisation offers key benefits by enabling the Council to:
- Redefine customer relationships using information and knowledge as an asset to understanding their customers' needs better and meet them in the most cost efficient manner.
 - Access online transactional services and self-service portals which make life simpler and more convenient for customers.
 - Create channels to collaborate and share information with other customers, businesses and partners.
 - Be innovative in new ways of delivering services supporting transformations.
 - Achieve savings in service delivery.
- 3.3 The Council's ambition is for all services that can be efficiently delivered digitally as self-service solutions to be thus delivered. The use of digital services will be promoted through marketing, publicity and existing contact channels to improve take up. Access for disabled people and excluded groups is an integral part of the approach, and will be delivered through working with libraries, community hubs and partner organisations. All council services will be digital by design and mobile responsive.
- 3.4 Wolverhampton's City Strategy overall goal is 'prosperity for all', by creating opportunities that encourage enterprise, empower people and re-invigorate the City. Broadband infrastructure is specifically mentioned under encouraging enterprise and business, and its impact can be felt across the planned results and key themes taken from the Council's Digital Inclusion Strategy.
- 3.5 Universal Credit will require claimants to apply for and manage their account online, receive their payments monthly in arrears and pay their rent direct to their landlord. Some residents will require additional support, for example if they do not have internet access or lack the skills and capability to get online. Both the digital services (digitisation) and the digital inclusion strategies will support these digital customers.
- 3.6 Both the Smart City Framework and the Broadband Voucher scheme aim to make the City of Wolverhampton a more attractive place to live, work and invest in. The Smart City Framework aims to position Wolverhampton as a city that has an economically advantageous offer and comparative competitiveness due to its investment in technology, while the Broadband Voucher scheme aims to provide superfast broadband to key business areas such as Wolverhampton City Centre, Stafford Road Technology Corridor, Bilston and Wednesfield who currently don't have access to it.
- 3.7 Increasingly important to the take-up and success of digital services and digital transformation is the use and growth of social media channels. The Council will champion the extended use of social media along with technology and processes to control and manage the digital identity and authentication of our customers.
- 3.8 The digital transformation in Wolverhampton will be led by the council, aligning the Digital Strategy to the Corporate Plan and priorities and being a confident capable digital council.

4.0 Financial implications

- 4.1 The Digital Strategy is part of the Future Works work stream. The C3 programme is intended to deliver transformation, improve efficiency and the increase the quality of services and will, therefore, directly contribute towards the delivery of the Medium Term Financial Strategy, including challenging savings requirements.
- 4.2 There will be financial implications from the future investment in digital initiatives. These investments will be subject to the Council's procurement and governance arrangements.

[GE/27052015/I]

5.0 Legal implications

- 5.1 There are no legal implications in implementing the recommendations in this report. Future investments in digital initiatives will need to be considered by Information Governance in relation to the impact on policies, information risk, information security and information sharing protocols and statutory legislation concerning the storing, processing and disclosure of data and information.

[Legal Code: TS/27052015/J]

6.0 Equalities implications

- 6.1 An initial equality analysis has been carried out. There are no equalities implications.

7.0 Environmental implications

- 7.1 There are no environment implications in implementing the recommendations in this report.

8.0 Human resources implications

- 8.1 There are no HR implications in implementing the recommendations in this report.

9.0 Corporate landlord implications

- 9.1 There are no direct implications in implementing the recommendations in this report. The Digital Strategy supports the rationalisation of the council's property assets.

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