

WEST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE COUNCIL CABINET

12TH JULY 2022

**CABINET MEMBER RESPONSIBLE FOR HR & CORPORATE SERVICES:
COUNCILLOR MIKE HALLAM**

Report Title	Digital, Technology & Innovation Strategy 2022 - 2025
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List of Appendices

Appendix A – DTI Strategy

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1. This report sets out the final Digital, Technology & Innovation (DTI) Strategy for West Northamptonshire Council, for the period 2022-2025.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 Our DTI Strategy has been developed to realise a vision of West Northamptonshire Council as a leader amount local authorities in the use of technology to deliver transformed public services:

serving residents, businesses, and council staff by giving them the tools, support and information they need to thrive.

- 2.2 To ensure we continue to meet the needs and expectations of our residents, we must continue to offer a greater range of public services at ever-higher quality, whilst using our resources as efficiently and effectively as we can and doing so in a timely manner. We see technology as a key to achieving this, and our strategy lays out how we will employ it to do so.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1 It is recommended that Cabinet approves the Digital, Technology & Innovation Strategy 2022-2025 and supports its implementation across the Council.

4. Reason for Recommendations

- 4.1 The Strategy allows us to align the use of technology and digital with the wider Council vision and priorities, including our Corporate Plan.
- 4.2 Adopting the Strategy ensures that we have a clear mandate and objectives with which to commission projects and programmes of work that deliver organisational transformation through technology. It also gives us a clear a framework within which we can design our internal digital, technology and innovation capabilities to meet those objectives.

5. Report Background

- 5.1 As a newly established unitary council, we need to set a clear strategy for the use of technology that both consolidates what we have inherited from our predecessor councils and ensures that we invest our efforts and resources in the right systems, tools and methods to fulfil our Corporate Plan and better meet the needs of our residents.
- 5.2 The Council has inherited four separate sets of systems from its predecessor authorities. Whilst these continue to serve our staff and customers post-Vesting Day, they also entrench divisions in the way our staff work and serve our customers, as well as increase our management overheads.
- 5.3 Much of the technology we have inherited reflects design choices made at the time – in some cases, many years previously. Consequently, many of our systems and technologies are not in line with modern standards in infrastructure, interoperability, user design, security and architecture. These increase running costs and inhibits our capacity to react more flexibly to the needs of our residents as they evolve.
- 5.4 Following the Health and Care Act (2022), the Council is required to support the creation and development of an Integrated Care System within Northamptonshire. This includes building links between our systems and those of other partner public sector organisations.

6. Issues and Choices

- 6.1 We must consolidate our inherited estate of separate systems into singular WNC systems that allow our staff to work as united WNC teams. This will reduce the overhead of managing multiple

processes and make sure that customers are treated equally, no matter what part of West Northamptonshire they hail from.

- 6.2 To use the Council's resources effectively and empower staff and customers to achieve their desired outcomes quickly and easily, we need to conduct a programme of modernisation that puts our systems in line with modern standards in infrastructure, interoperability, user design, security and architecture.
- 6.3 We recognise that technology is a significant component in delivering our corporate priorities (as per our Corporate Plan) and that it is critical to robust resource management and to continually achieving our residents aims within our means. The Strategy lays out how it can contribute to others, most notably in helping the Council meet its Net Zero commitment to be carbon neutral by 2030.
- 6.4 Digital skills and literacy are a key component of the government's Levelling Up agenda, as recognised in its Digital Skills Partnership initiative. In building a thriving and inclusive economy for Northamptonshire, we recognise that the Council is a key player that can act as a sponsor and facilitator of combined efforts by the public sector, private sector, academics, volunteers, and others in the area to improve skill levels, offer training and employment opportunities and attract investment and businesses.

7. Implications (including financial implications)

7.1 Resources and Financial

Following the adoption of the strategy, we will devise a supporting roadmap of programmes, projects and activities to meet its objectives. Any additional funding required would be subject to approval at either a future Cabinet meeting once costed, or as a part of the Council's annual budget-setting process.

7.2 Legal

Various projects arising from this strategy may require procurement activity, and necessitate compliance with other legislation (e.g. data protection legislation). We will consult with the Legal team on any such work arising.

7.3 Risk

There are no significant risks arising from the proposed recommendations in this report. Any individual projects arising will have individual risk assessments conducted as part of our governance processes. Overall, the strategy contributes to the reduction of several risks on our corporate risk register by helping the Council to deliver efficient, robust services,

7.4 Consultation

No statutory consultation is required; however, engagement and consultation has been undertaken with directors, cabinet members and internal staff in the development of this strategy.

7.5 Consideration by Overview and Scrutiny

The finalised Digital, Technology & Innovation Strategy will go to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to allow for challenge and comment on the 65 key activities.

7.6 Climate Impact

The strategy will have positive impact on our climate commitments: supporting hybrid working and reducing staff transport; evaluating our technology choices explicitly against their carbon impact; and evaluating new Smart City technologies that improve traffic routing and thus reduce vehicle emissions and support the Council in making fewer vehicle journeys while using cleaner vehicles.

7.7 Community Impact

The strategy will position WNC to work explicitly in partnership with the community for the first time on matters of technology and innovation, to the benefit of all our residents. It further embeds our commitment to supporting digital skills and digital literacy and offering direct training and support for residents in some cases; and working with the community to support these initiatives in others.

7.8 Communications

Upon adoption of the strategy, we will conduct an internal campaign to ensure that all staff and council services fully understand the opportunities and impact of the strategy upon them and understand how to support it and contribute to the roadmap of projects that will support the initiatives listed.

8. Background Papers

Appendix A – DTI Strategy