IT & Digital Strategy

Strategy & Resources Committee Tuesday, 6 July 2021

Report of: Acting Chief Executive

Purpose: For decision

Publication status: Unrestricted

Wards affected: All

Executive summary:

The Council has, over recent years, invested in new technology to improve:

- the services delivered to residents and
- the work tools provided to officers enabling them to work more efficiently and effectively.

The proposed strategy will enable new projects and continuous improvement through the use of the IT resources to optimise service delivery and make the most out of the technology systems, tools and solutions.

This report supports the Council's priority of: Building a better Council– making the Council financially sustainable and providing residents with the best possible services.

Contact officer

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Recommendation to Committee:

That the committee approve the draft IT & Digital Strategy 2021/2024

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Reason for recommendation:

To ensure that the Council has an IT & Digital strategy, that provides a plan for the Councils digital ambitions, to be delivered within a robust governance framework.

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Introduction and background

1   The corporate improvement plan approved on 9 July 2020 set out a number of measures necessary to take the Council forward and highlighted that it is essential that the Council developed a digital strategy which included an action plan and governance of future IT work.

2   The IT & Digital strategy for the period 2021/24 has been drafted, this includes governance, a work plan and business case template. There has been engagement with Members and officers on the mission statement and objectives to inform the strategy. The draft strategy appears at Appendix A.

3   The strategy sets out the Council's aims, aspirations and the approach for ensuring it continues to transform the relationship between residents and the District, making the Council as easy to deal with as the very best digitally enabled services. All existing channels will remain for those that are unable to access our services digitally.

4   The strategy contains:

   a)   the following three themes which will be achieved through a set of actions:

          theme one – accelerating channel shift
          theme two – working smarter
          theme three – ICT modernisation

   b)   an improved governance structure that includes a digital design group, who will be responsible for working with the service areas in assessing proposals in terms of technical and business merits

5   Appendix B is the business case for investment in IT – a new form for proposed projects, to be completed and presented to the IT Strategy Board for decision. This includes full cost of the project, resources, budget allocation and cost benefit analysis.

6   Appendix C is the accompanying work plan for the next three years to deliver this strategy. This comprises of the projects already

underway, planned projects and essential improvements required to the infrastructure and network.

7   While the strategy identifies actions to be achieved over the medium term, the Strategy Board will keep the plan under review, both to monitor delivery and to ensure appropriate flexibility in response to changing circumstances and opportunities. It is anticipated that, in six months' time, when further progress has been made with committed projects, it will be possible to develop the Council's ambitions further.

8   Subject to approval of this plan by the Committee, Officers will develop:

    • Regular reports to the Committee to enable Members to receive updates on the delivery of the work plan

    • A framework to monitor and manage risks relating to relevant detailed actions within the plan.

Conclusion

This report presents a draft IT & Digital Strategy for Member review and approval. Subject to the views of the Committee, once agreed the plan will be published with appropriate design and branding: it will be shared with Officers, partners and stakeholders, and published on the Council's website.

Key implications

Comments of the Chief Finance Officer

There are no immediate financial implications from this report. The strategy and recommendations are within existing revenue and capital budgets. Any new projects will require business cases and approval of funding.

Comments of the Head of Legal Services

There are no immediate legal implications for the purposes of the report. Governance of technology is very important and with the proposal to have new governance arrangements in place through the Strategy Board, it can ensure that digital spend and decisions are made efficiently and effectively in a joined-up manner across the Council. Part of the IT & Digital Strategy includes that Councillors will have oversight of the programme of work.

Other corporate implications

None applicable.

Equality

This report contains no proposals that would disadvantage any particular minority groups.

Climate change

This report contains no proposals that would impact on the Council's commitment to climate change.

Appendices

Appendix 'A' – Draft IT & Digital Strategy 2021/24

Appendix 'B' – Business case for IT investment template

Appendix 'C' – Work plan 2021/24

Background papers

None

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