

Public Report
Overview and Scrutiny Management Board

Committee Name and Date of Committee Meeting

Overview and Scrutiny Management Board – 23 March 2022

Report Title

Digital Strategy – progress report

Is this a Key Decision and has it been included on the Forward Plan?

No

Strategic Director Approving Submission of the Report

Judith Badger, Strategic Director of Finance and Customer Services

Report Author(s)

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Ward(s) Affected

Borough-Wide

Report Summary

The purpose of this report is to update Overview and Scrutiny Board members with progress on the delivery of the Digital Strategy, which was approved by Cabinet on 15th February 2021.

Recommendations

1. For Overview and Scrutiny Management Board members to note the current progress on the delivery of the Digital Strategy.

List of Appendices Included

Appendix 1 Digital Strategy - Activity Delivery Plan (as at Feb 2022)

Background Papers

None

Consideration by any other Council Committee, Scrutiny or Advisory Panel

None

Council Approval Required

No

Exempt from the Press and Public
No

Digital Strategy – progress report

1. Background

- 1.1 Overview and Scrutiny Management Board discussed the Digital Council Strategy on 13th February 2021, in advance of it being considered by Cabinet on 15th February 2021. Cabinet agreed with the recommendations set out in the report, namely:
1. To approve the Council's Digital Strategy.
 2. To note the investment already approved towards its delivery.
 3. To endorse the management and governance arrangements.
- 1.2 Overview and Scrutiny Management Board requested a progress report to be presented at a subsequent meeting approximately 12 months later.

2. Key Issues

- 2.1 Following approval of the Digital Strategy a plan of key activities for 2021/22 was developed and agreed at a meeting of the Strategic Leadership Team and Assistant Directors on 9th March 2021. The Digital Council Board was tasked with providing the necessary governance and oversight for its delivery and for the wider Digital Strategy.
- 2.2 The plan of key activities, attached at Appendix 1, was broken down against the four strands of the Digital Strategy and has been the focus of delivery for the last 12 months. However, the effect of and continued response to the pandemic has impacted on what has been possible to achieve, competing alongside other pressures and priorities. This continues to be the case.
- 2.3 The attached plan also highlights the delivery against each of the themes and projects. However, of particular note are the following deliverables:
- a) Full upgrade of the 'People's Network' which has seen the installation of new public access computers in all libraries, along with a replacement library management system.
 - b) Establishment of a digital inclusion programme and recruitment of a Digital Inclusion Manager to drive this programme, working alongside the voluntary and community sector and other partners, including Health.
 - c) Development of telephony automation to better direct calls made to the general enquiries number to reduce the double-handling of calls.
 - d) Facilitated the commercial investment and delivery of full fibre connectivity which will see a significant increase in availability across large areas of the Rotherham district over the next two years.
 - e) Extension of Microsoft Teams to support collaborative working with external partners, other local authorities and suppliers.
 - f) An agreed installation programme of 'hybrid meeting' technology across the Council's accommodation portfolio, which will support staff and others to participate in meetings regardless of whether they are in a physical meeting room or joining remotely.

- g) A complete upgrade to the Council's servers and databases to ensure they are secure, compliant and remain fully supported.

2.4 In addition to these deliverables, it is also worth highlighting that a key overarching principle of the Digital Strategy is to be 'secure by design'. As a result of a significant amount of work over the last two/three years the Council was awarded with a Public Service Network (PSN) connection compliance certificate in January 2022 by the Cabinet Office. This certification acts as a measure of confidence in the way the Council manages and protects its systems and networking infrastructure.

3. Options considered and recommended proposal

3.1 This is a progress report and therefore there are no options being presented for consideration. Overview and Scrutiny Management Board are asked to note the progress made against the delivery of the Digital Strategy.

4. Consultation on proposal

4.1 There are no proposals being put forward in this report.

5. Timetable and Accountability for Implementing this Decision

5.1 The Digital Council Board will continue to provide governance and oversight for the delivery of the activities and will also be considering the plan of activity for 2022/23.

6. Financial and Procurement Advice and Implications (to be written by the relevant Head of Finance and the Head of Procurement on behalf of s151 Officer)

6.1 There are no direct financial implications as a result of this report. The Digital Strategy work will be funded from existing revenue and capital budget provision and as such has no additional impact on the Councils budgets.

6.2 There are no direct procurement implications arising from this report.

7. Legal Advice and Implications (to be written by Legal Officer on behalf of Assistant Director Legal Services)

7.1 There are no legal implications arising from the recommendation in this report

8. Human Resources Advice and Implications

8.1 There are no direct HR implications arising from the recommendation in this report.

9. Implications for Children and Young People and Vulnerable Adults

9.1 There are no specific implications arising from this report. However, the views and experiences of young people are being captured as part of the digital inclusion baseline research, currently underway.

10. Equalities and Human Rights Advice and Implications

10.1 There are no specific implications arising from this report. Members may be interested in the baseline analysis which is currently being undertaken to understand the extent of digital inclusion in the Rotherham district, compared with the national picture. A range of voluntary and community groups, resident groups and individual citizens will also be invited to take part in a survey, which will explore barriers and attitudes to using digital technologies.

11. Implications for CO2 Emissions and Climate Change

11.1 There are no specific implications arising from this report

12. Implications for Partners

12.1. Partners within the Voluntary and Community sector are specifically engaged in the Digital Inclusion programme of works. Many of which are represented on the board overseeing this work.

12.2 Officers from the Council's IT department and their equivalents in Health are engaged in regular discussions about the opportunities for closer working. This is of relevance in relation to integrated health and care services and the co-location of staff.

13. Risks and Mitigation

13.1 The impact of the pandemic on the overall IT and Digital delivery programmes has resulted in slippage and a need to re-prioritise certain activity. This is not limited to the Council side of delivery but also with our supplier base. Inevitably this will see some projects delivered later than anticipated, which will need to be reflected in the delivery plan for 2022/23.

14. Accountable Officers

Steve Langrick, Head of Digital Services
Luke Sayers, Assistant Director of Customer, Information and Digital Services

Approvals obtained on behalf of Statutory Officers: -

	Named Officer	Date
Chief Executive	Sharon Kemp	Click here to enter a date.
Strategic Director of Finance & Customer Services (S.151 Officer)	Named officer	Click here to enter a date.

Head of Legal Services (Monitoring Officer)	Named officer	Click here to enter a date.
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