



**EAST STAFFORDSHIRE BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**REPORT COVER SHEET**

<b>Title of Report:</b>	Embracing digital opportunities: A strategy to address digital transformation 2020 – 2023	To be marked with an 'X' by Democratic Services after report has been presented
<b>Meeting of:</b>	Corporate Management Team: Tuesday 22 <sup>nd</sup> September	X
	Leader and Deputy Leaders: Monday 28 <sup>th</sup> September	X
	Leader's / Leader of the Opposition's Advisory Group / Independent Alliance Advisory Group: Wednesday 7 <sup>th</sup> October / Thursday 8 <sup>th</sup> October	X
	Cabinet: Monday 26 <sup>th</sup> October	
	Scrutiny Audit and Value for Money Council Services Committee: N/A / Scrutiny Community Regeneration, Environment and Health and Well Being Committee: N/A	



Is this an Executive Decision:	NO	Is this a Key Decision:	NO
Is this in the Forward Plan:	YES	Is the Report Confidential:	NO
If so, please state relevant paragraph from Schedule 12A LGA 1972:	N/A		

**Essential Signatories:**

**ALL REPORTS MUST BE IN THE NAME OF A HEAD OF SERVICE**

Monitoring Officer: **Angela Wakefield**

Date ..... Signature .....

Chief Finance Officer: **Sal Khan**

Date ..... Signature .....

**EAST STAFFORDSHIRE BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**Report to Cabinet**

**Date: Monday 26<sup>th</sup> October 2020**

**REPORT TITLE: Embracing digital opportunities: A strategy to address digital transformation 2020 – 2023**

**PORTFOLIO: Leader of the Council**

**HEAD OF SERVICE: Sal Khan**

**CONTACT OFFICER: Daniel Arnold Ext. No. x1626**

**WARD(S) AFFECTED: All**

**1. Purpose of the Report**

1.1. To provide an overview of the Council's proposed Digital Strategy 2020 – 2023 (Appendix 1).

**2. Background**

2.1. Like all local authorities East Staffordshire Borough Council is facing different challenges to the way in which it delivers its public services. The availability of new technology is changing the expectations of customers, residents, officers and members.

2.2. This digital transformation is changing the way that many people live their lives, from the way we purchase goods and services to the way we communicate with others. For local authorities, it represents an opportunity to shape new and emerging technologies to redesign public services in a way which meets the expectations of our stakeholders.

2.3. Over recent years the rapid development of new technology has transformed the way services are delivered. Our residents and businesses want to be able to interact and transact with the Council digitally and technology has enabled Council services to become much more efficient.

2.4. Whilst technology provides these opportunities there are still significant challenges for the Council. Like all local authorities, the Council is delivering

its public services whilst facing significant financial pressures. As a public sector organisation there is a need to be transparent but also a requirement to adhere to strict data and security standards.

2.5. In developing the strategy, Councillors Goodfellow, Gould, Metcalfe and Sankey formed a group of members who helped steer the direction of the strategy.

### **3. Contribution to Corporate Priorities**

3.1. The Digital Strategy directly contributes to delivery of all three Corporate Priorities:

- Value for Money Council
- Community Regeneration
- Environment and Health & Wellbeing

### **4. Digital Strategy**

#### **4.1. Section 1: Background and Vision**

4.1.1. Access to digital services and the internet has changed. The number of people who have access to digital services is increasing. A study by the ONS highlights that in 2012, 77.9% of the West Midlands used the internet and in 2018 this has increased to 88.9%<sup>1</sup>.

4.1.2. ONS data also shows that 96% of people have access to the internet in the UK and 89% of adults use the internet every day<sup>2</sup>. East Staffordshire Borough Council's website attracts over 30,000 users every month<sup>3</sup>, the majority of whom use a mobile phone or tablet.

4.1.3. Digital in an organisation is more than just technology; it's ensuring that there is a clear strategic direction, that the correct process are in place, the right technology is used and that it is flexible to meet the changing requirements of stakeholders and the organisation.

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<sup>1</sup><https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/householdcharacteristics/homeinternetandsocialmediausage/datasets/internetaccesshouseholdsandindividualsreferencetables>

<sup>2</sup><https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/householdcharacteristics/homeinternetandsocialmediausage/articles/exploringtheuksdigitaldivide/2019-03-04#what-is-the-pattern-of-digital-exclusion-across-the-uk>

<sup>3</sup> This figure only includes those visitors who have opted in to analytical cookies on our website. The figure is likely to be higher.

4.1.4. The strategy will support the Council's vision of providing value for money services, being open and transparent, nurturing innovation and in-house development, a consideration of emerging technologies and digital by preference.



#### 4.2. Section 2: Influences on the strategy

4.2.1. There are a number of internal and external influences on this strategy. Internally, influences range from our ICT framework to our planning developments. Externally, our digital services are governed by regulations such as GDPR and programmes such as Building Digital UK will impact on how residents and businesses across the borough can connect with the Council and with one another.

4.2.2. A list of external and internal influences is described on page 7 of the strategy.

#### 4.3. Section 3: Why Digital?

4.3.1. Local government is facing increased demand and expectations from its stakeholders whilst managing significant financial challenges. In recent months, the coronavirus pandemic has placed further emphasis on the importance of providing a reliable digital services to stakeholders.

4.3.2. An effective Digital Strategy provides an opportunity to improve our customer services, to create efficiencies within the Council, support

wider digital enablement in the community and meet our Corporate Priorities.

4.3.3. Over recent years the Council has made significant steps on its digital journey. Previous strategies and initiatives have delivered a number of key benefits which provide the foundations for this strategy. The Council has been recognised by the National Digital Leaders awards. In 2017 and 2018 the Council was shortlisted in the Digital Council of the Year category and in 2020 it was shortlisted in the Digital Leaders Smart City category.

4.3.4. Figure 2 on page 9 of the strategy presents a summary of the Council's progress against a number of themes associated with digital maturity.

#### 4.4. Where do we want to be?

4.4.1. Our approach to Digital will seek to achieve a number of outcomes which are categorised into the following themes:

- Digital Council
- Digital Services
- Digital Enablement

#### 4.4.2. Digital Council

4.4.3. This section explains how the Council will ensure that its internal processes and systems are optimised and how the formation of a strategic and operational digital group will help drive the Council's digital priorities through the organisation.

4.4.4. This will be delivered with the aim of achieving the following outcomes:

- Digital Groups
- Continuous review of digital processes
- Effective use of data and existing systems

#### 4.4.5. Digital Services

4.4.6. The Council will use digital to allow stakeholders to use our services and access our information. Throughout the lifecycle of the strategy we will strive to make continuous improvements to the user experience.

4.4.7. The digital services outcomes described in the strategy document are:

- Continuous improvement to digital services (DS1)
- Effective digital communications with our stakeholders (DS2)

4.4.8. When assessing the benefits and suitability of new software, the Council will undertake a cost and benefit analysis for each individual consideration.

4.4.9. Digital Enablement

4.4.10. By working with our partners the Council will support opportunities to strengthen digital enablement across the borough to create further opportunities for growth and better quality of life.

4.4.11. The outcome to be delivered from Digital Enablement is to support digital enablement across the borough.



4.5. Section 4. Programme Plan

4.5.1. This section outlines in more detail how the outcomes described within the themes in Section 3 will be delivered. The programme plan describes a number of projects that have been identified at the outset of the strategy however the programme plan will evolve over the lifecycle of the strategy.

4.5.2. Each individual project outlined below is linked to the outcomes described at section 3 of the strategy. More detail on each project can be found between pages 17 and 24 of the strategy.

Effective use of the Unique Property Reference Number (UPRN)

The Council will utilise the UPRN as a single address identifier across address applications. This will not only significantly reduce the amount of data matching required across teams but a single address identifier used across the Council will provide the structure for any address based digital services we develop.

## Emerging Technology and Artificial Intelligence

Over the lifecycle of the strategy the Council will examine opportunities that may present themselves with regards to emerging technology to determine whether they are relevant or provide value for money. The Council will also work closely with current and future software suppliers to explore new opportunities through technology such as automation of processes.

## Digital Groups

In order to ensure the vision and the outcomes outlined in this strategy are delivered and to drive digital across the organisation, the delivery of this strategy will be overseen by a strategic digital working group consisting of members and senior officers. The strategic digital group will be supported by an operational group of officers from across the organisation.

## Digital Process Review

The Council will continue to enhance our technology and review our process to ensure they are streamlined to deliver best the outcomes intended, whether that is an internal function or customer facing service.

The Council will also establish a process of reviewing digital services that begins by identifying the intended outcome, designing the process and considering the technology most suitable to deliver that outcome.

## E-Services

Throughout the lifecycle of the strategy the Council will continue to develop its e-services. This will range from additional self-service forms to different ways in which the user can interact with the Council.

## Communications

The Council will explore and introduce new ways of communicating targeted and tailored messages to our residents and businesses. As part of this project, the Council will also review how services such as gov.notify can be integrated into our software.

## Planning Document Management System

The Council will continue to develop smarter working practices in planning and as part of this objective, a value for money appraisal of an electronic document management system will be undertaken in order to evaluate the cost/benefits of implementing such as a system.

## Support digital enablement across the borough

By working with and supporting partners the Council will seek opportunities when they arise to ensure that our borough is digitally enabled.

#### 4.6. Section 5: Risk Management

4.6.1. A strategy such as this not only seeks to improve business processes and digital services but it also introduces risks into the authority both at an operational and strategic level. The key risks of this strategy have been identified and are listed at section 5 of the strategy.

### 5. **Financial Considerations**

*This section has been approved by the following member of the Financial Management Unit: Lisa Turner*

5.1. Whilst there are no immediate financial issues arising from this report, there may be some financial implications that arise as the proposals within the strategy develop and evolve. The cost/benefit of each proposal will be fully developed on a case by case basis. A proposal will be brought forward for consideration in the event that a financial contribution is required which cannot be met from existing budgets, in-line with financial regulations.

### 6. **Risk Assessment and Management**

6.1. The main risks to this Report and the Council achieving its objectives are as follows:

6.2. **Positive** (Opportunities/Benefits):

6.2.1. Opportunity to improve our digital services and make our digital channels the preferred method of interaction.

6.2.2. Ensure that our digital process are efficient and maximise the use of existing software.

6.3. **Negative** (Threats):

6.3.1. The public are not able to use our self systems and revert to more traditional methods of interacting with the Council. This will be mitigated by testing at all stages of development.

6.3.2. The security of our systems and ensuring those who use our services do so in a secure environment is vital. All of our digital services will be provided through our existing ICT processes.

6.4. The risks do not need to be entered in the Risk Register. Any financial implications to mitigate against these risks are considered above.

### 7. **Legal Considerations**

*This section has been approved by the following member of the Legal Team: Angela Wakefield*

7.1. For projects that are considered to likely involve a high risk to people's personal information, the project or service manager will need to complete a Data Protection Impact Assessment.

## **8. Equalities and Health**

8.1. **Equality impacts:** The subject of this Report is a policy, strategy, function or service that is new or being revised. An equality and health impact assessment is to follow.

8.2. **Health impacts:** The outcome of the health screening question does not require a full Health Impact Assessment to be completed.

## **9. Human Rights**

9.1. There are no Human Rights issues arising from this Report.

## **10. Sustainability (including climate change and change adaptation measures)**

10.1. Does the proposal result in an overall positive effect in terms of sustainability (including climate change and change adaptation measures)  
Yes

10.2. Please detail any positive/negative aspects:

10.2.1. Positive (Opportunities/Benefits)

Digital technologies can help reduce carbon emissions in a number of ways through solutions provided by digital services including remote working, improved customer communications and building management for example.

10.2.2. Negative (threats)

## **11. Recommendation(s)**

11.1. To approve the Digital Strategy 2020 - 2023.

## **12. Appendices**

12.1. Appendix 1: Digital Strategy 2020 - 2023