## Digital Strategy

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| **Final Decision-Maker** | Policy & Resources Committee |
| **Lead Head of Service/Lead Director** | Georgia Hawkes, Head of Commissioning & Business Improvement |
| **Lead Officer and Report Author** | Gary Hunter, Transformation Manager |
| **Classification** | Public |
| **Wards affected** | All |

**Executive Summary**

The Council has developed a Digital Strategy, which describes the actions we plan to take over the next three years to transform services using digital technology.  This report introduces the Strategy and recommends that it be adopted.

**This report makes the following recommendations to this Committee:**

1.  That the Digital Strategy is adopted.

| Timetable | |
| --- | --- |
| **Meeting** | **Date** |
| Policy & Resources Committee | 25 April 2018 |

# Digital Strategy

## 1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1.1 The Digital Revolution is changing the world. The pace of change driven by technology over the past 10 years has been unprecedented, and it will only increase in the next 10 years. People rightly expect the same quality of services from us as they get in other aspects of their lives. In order to face many policy and financial challenges, we need to transform how the Council works and redesign public services around residents.

1.2 The Council has developed a Digital Strategy, which describes the actions we will take over the next three years in order to meet these challenges.

1.3 The introduction to the strategy and the section describing Our Future Organisations was jointly written by digital and ICT officers from the three Mid-Kent Services Councils. The purpose of joining together to write these sections of the strategy was to align our future approaches to working in the digital age and consequently provide a clear and coherent set of priorities for our shared ICT service to work to.

1.4 The Digital Strategy highlights the importance of implementing a digital infrastructure and culture across Maidstone – utilising digital technology to drive better services and reduce costs - and helping to ensure that everyone who wants to, has the chance to benefit from these changes.

1.5 The Council has already made good progress in embracing the digital agenda. We have been using digital technology as part of our customer improvement strategy, helping to improve the customer experience and target resources. A wide range of services has been successfully moved online, with positive customer feedback and successes in managing demand.

1.6 The strategy focuses on delivering two key outcomes.

**A Digital Community**

People living, working in and visiting Maidstone will have access to the benefits of a digitally enabled society and digital will facilitate greater community participation and informed decision making.

Customers will be able to easily connect with the Council at a time and place convenient for them, they will only need to tell us once and can be confident that we will get it right first time.

**A Digital Council**

Staff will be enabled through culture, information and technology to provide an excellent connected service to all residents and businesses in Maidstone. Joining up data and improving the experience for our customers will guide

the way we do business and we will have an 'open by default' approach to data.

1.7 The Council has identified six interrelated digital themes that, when progressed together, will enable us to achieve our aims:

- **Digital Customer** - Reducing digital exclusion by providing digital skills and access to digital services for all residents of the borough.

- **Digital Place** - The Council will support where necessary the provision of fast and effective digital infrastructure for residents, businesses and visitors, and will exploit digital technology to make the borough a better place.

- **Digital by Design** - Embracing digital technology to enable council services to be delivered online with the capability to meet the future needs of the authority, with digital services designed in such a way that customers choose to use them as a default, whilst still supporting those who are not yet capable of doing so.

- **Digital Workforce** - Building a culture that embeds digital ways of working at all levels of our organisation, in order to build our digital capability and create a digital workforce which is agile, mobile and using the most appropriate technologies to support service delivery.

- **Digital Infrastructure** - Ensuring we harness new and emerging technologies to support the redesign services in a way which meets the changing expectations of staff, residents and businesses.

- **Data for Digital** - Making better use of data and making data more accessible to residents through online council channels, increasing accessibility and transparency.

1.8 Pages 13 to 15 of the Digital Strategy contain a high level list of actions or projects that support the delivery of the Strategy which were identified as part of discussions with Managers during the formulation of the Strategy. The table indicates a rough timescale for delivery of these actions or projects, however these timescales may change.

1.9 An annual update on progress with these actions will be brought back to Policy & Resources Committee.


## 2. AVAILABLE OPTIONS

2.1 The Council does not need to adopt a Digital Strategy. The Council would still continue to respond to technological advances and demand from customers; however this may not be in such a cohesive way.

2.2 That the Digital Strategy is adopted.

## 3. PREFERRED OPTION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 We recommend adoption of the strategy at Appendix 1. This will ensure the Council achieves the digital progress required to enable it to keep pace with new technology and the expectations of customers. Specific projects also directly support the Council's priorities of Keeping Maidstone Borough an attractive place for all and Securing a successful economy for Maidstone Borough.

## 4. RISK

4.1 We have considered the risks associated with this proposal, including the risks if the Council does not act as recommended in line with the Council's Risk Management Framework. We are satisfied that the risks associated are within the Council's risk appetite and will be managed as per the Risk Management Policy.

## 5. CONSULTATION RESULTS AND PREVIOUS COMMITTEE FEEDBACK

5.1 The Digital Strategy has been developed following discussions with Members of Policy & Resources Committee in December 2017, Wider Leadership Team in January 2018 and Heads of Service and Managers between September 2017 and March 2018.

## 6. NEXT STEPS: COMMUNICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION

6.1 The Digital Strategy sets out at pages 13 to 15 the principal actions to be undertaken once it is adopted.

## 7. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS

| Issue | Implications | Sign-off |
|---|---|---|
| **Impact on Corporate Priorities** | We do not expect the recommendations will by themselves materially affect achievement of corporate priorities.  However, the Digital Strategy itself will support the Council's overall achievement of its aims as set out in section | Head of Commissioning & Business Improvement |

| | 3 - preferred alternative. | |
|---|---|---|
| **Risk Management** | See section 4. | Head of Commissioning & Business Improvement |
| **Financial** | Implementation of the Digital Strategy can be accommodated within existing budgets. It is expected that the Strategy will contribute to future cost savings. | Section 151 Officer & Finance Team |
| **Staffing** | We will deliver the Digital Strategy with our current staff resources. | Head of Commissioning & Business Improvement |
| **Legal** | No specific legal implications are identified. The Policy and Resources Committee are responsible for all policy matters not otherwise allocated to any other committee or to Council as part of the policy framework. As such it is for the Policy and Resources Committee to approve the strategy. | Interim Deputy Head of Legal Partnership |
| **Privacy and Data Protection** | The strategy acknowledges the need to comply with the General Data Protection Regulations. As such privacy should form part of the design of any new digital initiative and where necessary a Privacy Impact Assessment will need to be carried out. | Interim Deputy Head of Legal Partnership |
| **Equalities** | The adoption of the Strategy itself does not directly propose a change in service therefore will not require a full equalities impact assessment, however the equalities impact will be considered as individual projects are progressed. The stage 1 equalities Impact assessment is shown at Appendix 2. | Equalities and Corporate Policy Officer |
| **Crime and Disorder** | The Strategy does not have an | Head of |

| | impact on Crime and Disorder. | Commissioning & Business Improvement |
|---|---|---|
| **Procurement** | The Policy does not require any immediate procurement. Any future procurement exercises for products or services that would enhance our approach will be undertaken in line with applicable Contract Standing Orders. | Section 151 Officer |

## 8.   REPORT APPENDICES

The following documents are to be published with this report and form part of the report:

- Appendix 1: Digital Strategy
- Appendix 2: Equality Impact Assessment