



NEWARK &
SHERWOOD
DISTRICT COUNCIL

Digital Strategy 2021-2024

“Digitally serving people and improving lives”

ICT & Digital Solutions

Introduction

Foreword

CLlr David Lloyd



Leader of the Council

The COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated, the already urgent, digital transformation agenda. The need for our customers and staff to effectively and efficiently communicate or transact digitally has never been more important.

This Digital Strategy outlines what we need to achieve now and going forward to ensure that we continue to digitally connect our services to our community in the most simple and time efficient way. While ensuring that no resident is left behind, it is important that for those who want to access District Council services digitally, they can do. We want to ensure services are available at a time when it suits our residents to interact with us.

We want to ensure that our digital offer enhances a residents experience of our services. And we want our employees to have the tools available to them to deliver the very best digital service possible. This strategy will ensure that the customer is at the heart of every digital decision we make as we drive forward our ambitious digital transformation agenda.

Sanjiv Kohli



Deputy Chief Executive
Director of Resources and s151 Officer

The Digital Strategy for Newark and Sherwood District Council sets out how we will be using digital technology to deliver economical, efficient and effective services. As well as business as usual, the strategy includes a number of initiatives to enhance customers' experience of using our services.

Through the application of the principals set out in the strategy, we will ensure we deliver outcomes that are aligned to our Council, Customer, Place and Community; whilst always ensuring that risks are identified and managed, within the overarching objective of achieving value for money.

The Digital Strategy 2021-2024 is a One Council approach that will further assist us to connect our community to our services.

The aim of the Digital Strategy

This strategy is part of the corporate suite of strategies and plans – all of which support delivery of the Community Plan and may have linkages within each. Our vision, purpose and values is set out in the community plan and the digital strategy builds further on that plan.

The strategy is an over-arching document that gives a clear direction of where the Council, working alongside all of our partners, wants to be in the next three years – recognising that we will continually adapt with an eye of evolving digital technologies.



Digital Strategy Vision

The vision is to be a modern digital council, with an objective to provide better services to its customers with the intention of connecting the local community with council services.

'Digitally serving people and improving lives'

What we mean by 'Digital'

Becoming Digital is about applying the culture, practices, processes and technologies of the Internet-era to respond to people's raised expectations. It is far more than Information Technology, it is changing working practices and service redesign, it is Digital leadership and cultural change to both the Council and its customers, embracing and embedding digital in all we do.

To further assist Newark and Sherwood District on the Digital journey, the Digital Strategy has three key initiatives Digital Council, Digital Customer and Digital Place, with Digital Communities at the heart and underpins these three initiatives.



Digital Principles

The Government's transformation strategy 2017 to 2020 sets out how it will use digital to transform the relationship between the citizen and the state. This included the technology code of practice that will be used as a guide to help assist in the delivery of the strategy (Appendix A).

The impact of COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic has increased the uptake in digital services globally and the strategy acknowledges the impact on the digital themes.

Pre-Pandemic

- Agile workforce – mixture of limited mobile, home and office based employees
- Meetings took place in physical office space
- Reliance on face-to-face transactions
- Business needs drive technology change
- Dependence on office based technologies

During Pandemic

- Focus on home working employees
- Virtual meeting capability
- Implemented collaborative working solutions
- Customer needs driving technology
- Enabled customer facing technology to become more resilient
- Minimal paper usage

The COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated, the already urgent, digital transformation agenda, including channel shift and increasing digital uptake of Council services. However, this urgency and will to change has shifted, therefore now is the time to focus on action.

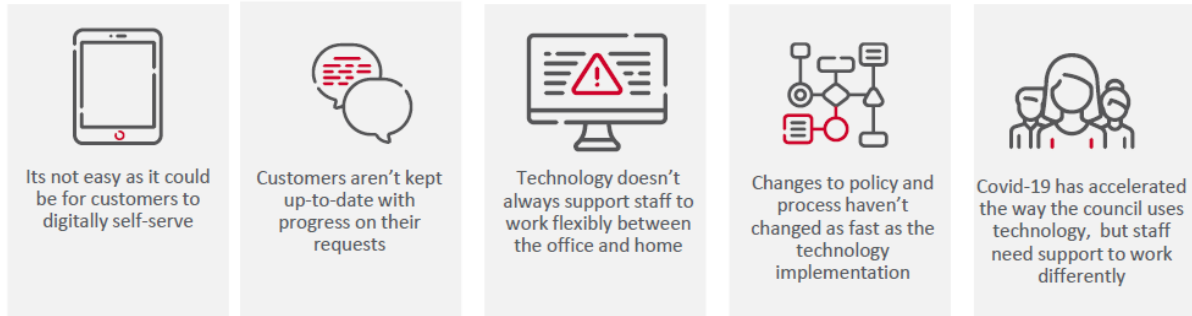
Post pandemic aspirations

Surviving

Striving

Thriving

Digital workshops have discovered common digital themes and challenges faced by employees and customers.



These themes and challenges can be mitigated by our digital aspirations, values and initiatives.

Digital Aspirations

- A Hybrid workforce.
- Carry on the good progress with digital initiatives.
- Employees and members will have the right technology suited to role.
- Customer insight will drive technology change, resulting in an improved customer experience.
- The Council to become more accessible through the use of digital technologies.
- Council services to become more resilient and future proof, availability of services to meet customer demand.
- Connectivity and integration of systems, providing customers with a unified service.
- Improving the quality and accuracy of data, streamlining services.
- Enhancing the digital customer experience, resulting in improved customer satisfaction.
- Ensure future technologies and infrastructure are secure and robust, resulting in confidentiality and integrity of data.
- The Council will provide digital championing across the District, narrowing the digital divide and aim to provide an increased range of digital services.

The Tree to success

Digital Objective Oak



With the foundations developed by internal and external customers

The How

By Our Values

This strategy adheres to the Council's values and supports the delivery of the Community Plan. To delivery this strategy, we will be using our values in the delivery of digital initiatives.

We want to serve our local community the best way we possibly can. As public servants we place a great emphasis on adopting a public sector ethos and seek to embody this in the way that we interact with you and with each other. The Council's purpose and values make it clear what we are here to do and how we will go about it.

Ambitious and forward thinking

The nature of the authority provides digital awareness and culture change whilst adhering to the Local Digital Declaration, including Digital Implications that feature on senior leadership team and committee reports.

Digital Championing within the authority will be promoted to provide a digital culture, reduce external training costs and provides digital opportunities to employees.

As an authority we will be agile / flexible and challenge the status quo.

New technologies will be researched and investigated based on customer need and where a return on investment is robust.

Caring and Compassionate

The enhancement and development of digital technologies will be investigated when intrinsic to customer needs. This will be centred on feedback from various channels including Customer Insight, Resident Panel and Tenant Panel.

Ensuring that our digital response is sensitive to the customer's needs and circumstances.

Commercial and Business like

The Digital Transformation Board will consider cost benefit and the return on investment of each new digital initiative using a priority matrix and evaluation to ensure return on investment, customer need and value to the authority.

ICT and Digital Services team will lead a standardised agile and flexible approach to internal development and projects, to ensure the very best outcome.

Purchasing through partnerships, frameworks, Government platforms and utilising aggregation exercises to reduce costs and provide value for money.

The digital transformation board and corporate information governance group will provide an assurance platform to evaluate the reduction of duplicate systems, increase value for money and provide return on investment.

Professional and Trustworthy

Our customers will experience a professional digital approach and feel safe and secure when interacting with our digital services.

Digital Leadership and Empowerment will be promoted throughout the authority to ensure a digital culture and to futureproof the workforce.

Corporate Information Governance Group will provide leadership and direction in the delivery of the Council's Information Governance Framework ensuring identification and management of Information Risks.

Welcoming and Responsive

Our digital solutions will be designed and maintained to be welcoming and responsive, giving our customers excellent customer service. This will lead to trust and confidence in repeating digital interactions.

Digital acknowledgements and responses will be aligned to corporate customer care standards.

For our workforce we will design efficient and responsive solutions that assist them in excellent service delivery.

We will take every opportunity to gather feedback, listen and improve our digital service offering.

The How

By Digital Initiatives

Initiative 1.0 - Digital Council

Objectives

1.1 Digital tools for staff and members

Identifying areas of improvement that support the delivery of the action plan and provide quality services including enabling Hybrid working for the purpose of improved service delivery for our customers.

1.2 Secure by design, secure by default

Confidence that data is managed securely and transparently. Keeping the Digital Council secure and resilient.

1.3 Value and Rationalisation

Assessing digital development projects within the Council to ensure value for money and return on investment. Value could see rationalised or streamlined internal systems and processes to deliver operational efficiency and improve quality of work to reduce errors and delays.

1.4 Ease of use

Ensuring that our systems, data and processes are lean, convenient, straightforward, connected, accessible and easy to use; whilst using insight to drive our decision making, ensuring the best outcomes and value for our customers.

Initiative 1.2 - Digital Customer

Definition of Council customer:

- Businesses
- Community Groups
- Residents
- Stakeholders
- Tenants
- Leaseholders
- Visitors

Success will see transactional demands being delivered digitally with the potential of supportive automation. These digital transactions maintain our values whilst being efficient and responsive to customer need. This will enable resource to be refocused on serving customers that require one-to-one interactions.

Objectives

1.2.1 **Seamless digital customer experience**

A single customer approach, providing customers with a unified end-to-end service that satisfies needs. We will increase the number of services that the customer can access digitally, including Leisure, Culture, Heritage and Tourism to be an interactive and accessible digital experience.

1.2.2 **Customer led digital design**

Putting the customer at the heart of digital design by using customer insight to understand customer need. Continuously shaping digital services by learning from customer experiences.

1.2.3 **No customer left behind approach**

Maximising customers access to digital services, through assisted digital, to ensure they are not disadvantaged by channel shift. Accepting some services and customers may require other channels or one-to-one interactions.

1.2.4 **Transparent Democracy**

Enabling open and transparent access to democracy (live streaming the decision making process). Enabling all to easily connect with elected representatives.

Initiative 1.3 - Digital Place

Infrastructure, digital innovation and data are promoted within the District to deliver economic growth and potential impactful growth with the local economy, notwithstanding social-economic wellbeing improvements.

Objectives

1.3.1 **Digital Connected Roots**

Connectivity and accessibility in rural communities including a 5G connected forest.

1.3.2 **Digitally Green**

Implement digital technologies that are not only green and low carbon but enable and support other green and low carbon initiatives, activities and working practices. Linkages to the Council's carbon emissions strategy and associated action plans.

1.3.3 **Digital place data**

Implement and establish footfall data within our towns and communities that informs policy, increasing footfall and delivering economic growth and resilience.

1.3.4 **Digital inequality and community**

Supporting and facilitate work across the District to narrow the digital divide.

Measuring Success

How will we measure success?

Ask the customer

- Resident panel
- Tenant engagement framework
- Survey of Tenant and Residents (STAR)
- Mystery shopping
- Customer feedback
- Customer complaint
- Customer compliments
- Internal customer insight
- A place to be proud of (civic pride)
- Visitor and market research

Best Practice

- Bench marking with other local authorities
- Industry standards

Performance Indicators

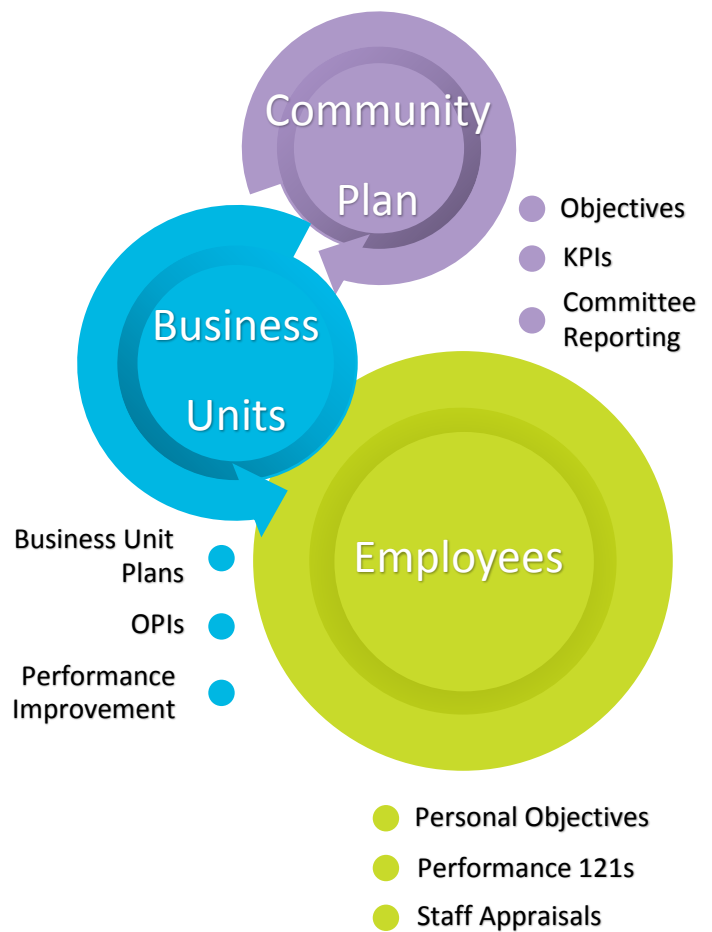
- Number of digital transactions
- Number of online digital services
- Number of visits to the website (bounce rate)
- Signup to e-newsletters and digital services
- Increase number of social media followers
- Customers satisfied they can contact the Council in a way that meets their needs

Tracking Measures *What is happening in the District*

- Tenants - Increase in participation via digital engagement
- % of premises with access to full fibre broadband
- % of residents attending a digital skills course who now feel more confident in using our services online.

Action plan

A detailed action plan, with timelines, is in development to support this strategy; setting out the short (one year) and medium term (one to three years) activities and initiatives.



Digital Principles

The Technology Code of Practice (updated 2019) is a set of criteria to help Government departments (including local authorities) design, build and buy technology. It is used as a cross-Government agreed standard and is part of the [Local Digital Declaration](#).

Digital by default



Design digital services with an aim to prioritise digital over paper. Long term goal to automate and self-serve wherever possible.

Cloud first



Cloud services and solutions should be considered before any alternative. Best value should be shown when cloud is not chosen and future flexibility should be reflected.

User led design



Digital and technology design and spend must demonstrate that it meets user needs based on research with those that use the service.

Ease of use



Digital services will be accessible to the diverse set of users who use them. Assisted digital support will be provided where research identifies need.

Aligned to priorities



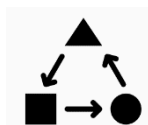
All aspects of service delivery will be aligned with the Council's community plan.

Innovative and agile



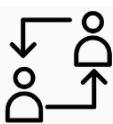
The changing business needs will be supported by digital services that are flexible, agile, iterative and user-centred.

Interoperable



Infrastructure should conform to defined standards that promote interoperability for data, applications and technology. We will use open standards and common government platforms where available.

Partner -up



Procuring new or existing services, we will consider and evaluate potential partnership opportunities – to reduce costs, improve relationships and share information.

Scalable



The technology and infrastructure should be proportionate to our needs. However, this should be scalable in order to provide the ability to respond to changing user needs and demands.

Join it up



Services and solutions should be enabled to integrate with applications and infrastructure components to provide a consistent user experience.

Open



Open industry standards will be used wherever practical. Data will be open and shared where possible, while minimising and securing personal data, or data restricted for security reasons.

Cost effective



We will ensure digital solutions and services will provide value for money. Business cases will include cost benefit and return on investment opportunities.

Secure



Data will be secured to Government best practice. Security controls will be balanced according to business objectives and proportionate to risk.