



Report to: Portfolio Holder for Organisational Development and Governance

Decision Date: 13 September 2022

Portfolio Holder: Cllr. Keith Girling

Director Lead: Deborah Johnson – Director Customer Services and Organisational Development

Lead Officers: Jill Baker, Business Manager Customer Services, ext. 5810,
Dave Richardson, Business Manager ICT and Digital Services, ext. 5405

Report Summary	
Type of Report	Open, Non-key decision
Report Title	Digital Strategy Update
Purpose of Report	To provide an update on progress of the Digital Strategy action plan.
Recommendations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That bi-yearly updates on the progress of the Digital Strategy action plan are provided to the Portfolio Holder for Organisational Development and Governance. 2. The promotion of webchat, e-newsletters and My Account to take place in conjunction with the Portfolio Holder for Organisational Development and Governance. 3. The creation of key performance indicators for webchat, e-newsletters and My Account.
Alternative Options Considered	No alternative options.
Reason for Recommendation	To ensure Members are regularly briefed on the progression of the Digital Strategy action plan.
Decision Taken	As per the recommendations.

1.0 Background

- 1.1 The Digital Strategy was approved by Policy and Finance Committee on 24 June 2021 and an update is provided bi-annually on the work that is carried out, the success and proposed work for the next six months.
- 1.2 The Digital Strategy Action plan has been created with a detailed summary of strategic alignment and project detail. It should be noted that the action plan is a working document based on the business planning cycle, with priority matrices and the principles established from the local digital declaration and supported by officers on the Digital Transformation Board.
- 1.3 The Digital Strategy Action Plan detailed a number of projects which are based around key themes of digital place, digital customer and digital council.
- 1.4 The following key projects have been delivered in the last 6 months:

Digital Customer:

- Phase 1 implementation of a resident MyAccount. This provides residents with the ability to self-serve and see key information about their accounts with the Council at any time when it suits them, together with ability to track existing progress of enquiries. 332 accounts have been activated during the initial low key phase.
- Webchat activation. During during 2022/23 quarter one, the Customer Services business unit dealt with 765 webchat enquiries. Currently advisors are only able to deal with a single enquiry at a time. Work is taking place to enable advisors to deal with a number of webchat enquiries at the same time. This will increase takeup and increase the customer experience and satisfaction with the service. Once this is implemented, there will be a communications plan to promote it.
- The implementation of Council e-newsletters has delivered a modern approach to communication, reducing paper copies produced and engaging our communities through digital channels. Since going live in early 2022, 1943 residents have signed up to e-newsletters (NewsToMe), which has seen six newsletters released since March and staff have been automatically signed up to receive internal newsletters.
- Investigation of the Website Phase Two work has completed - reviewing further accessibility, ancillary sites and WCAG ranking improvements. A number of milestones have already been delivered including website accessibility which has increased the Councils performance ranking to 24 (out of 411) in the UK for Local Government websites.
- Designing a Housing Repairs online service that is built around the needs of the user and developed for all UK local authorities, funded by the Department Levelling Up, Housing and Communities. NSDC is the current project lead of this service, which is expected to go live for NSDC in autumn 2022. This aims to improve our digital offer, reduce failure demand with users calling for updates on existing requests, reduces the lack of clarity as to responsibility for repairs,

reduces complex diagnosis and reduces urgent/dangerous repairs not suited to digital channel.

Digital Council:

- Rollout of agile working devices in phase one to three business units who are piloting the devices and connectivity. These devices improve the ability for staff to access information and data from any location, thereby reducing visits back to an office which results in improved productivity and a greater customer experience. Following on from the pilot, a business case will be produced which is expected to show a return on investment and cost benefit to the Council, This is anticipated within autumn 2022, and will further influence phase two of the rollout of agile working devices.
- Implementation of a legal case management system, that enables a modern service, improves effective case and document management, reduces costs and saves time on everyday business processes. Furthermore, enable effective security and sharing of sensitive documents.
- Implementation of a new ICT Servicedesk system which improves the support provided across multiple channels to staff and partners. The benefits include a reduction in the the cost of support and and time. Furthermore, enhances productivity for council employees with self service and automation.
- Implemented APEX Asset Management for Housing, which improves the outdated and inefficient processes within Housing Asset Management and Compliance. Reduced the removed the reliance on spreadsheets, minimised the risks relating to compliance management and provides enhanced data management and analysis to support de-carbonisation requirements and investment management.
- Preparation work for iTrent HR/Payroll system implementation which is expected to go live in autumn 2022. This project aims to modernise and improve HR & Payroll business processes, records and data management. Benefits expected are increased employee self-serve functions, reduced management administration time and replacement of obsolete software.
- A review of the Housing Management System has been completed and the tender process is due to commence in autumn 2022. The review of the existing Housing Management System has been conducted across the Housing, Health and Wellbeing Directorate, ensuring the future system is capable of delivering benefits to staff access to system in an agile way, integration options with other related systems such as the council wide CRM, functionality to improve tenant engagement and further service improvements. In addition, deliver new functionality to ensure continued compliance with legislation and regulatory responsibilities.
- Continual security compliance and accreditation to PSN and Cyber Essentials. This ensures council services are and remain safe and secure for customers and staff.

Digital Place:

The authority has secured CityFibre for Gigabit fibre broadband and the roll out is due to commence throughout Newark in November 2022. This is the start of the Digital Place Journey

2.0 Progress

Within the next six months we expect the following to be delivered, all of which support the Community Plan.

Digital Council:

- Business case and PID for ISO27001 information security management system – a set of policies that will provide a standard and level of assurance to industry standards.
- Implementation of iTrent HR & Payroll system
- Members Digital Tools – working group set-up investigating future options. Recommendations are expected in autumn 2022.

Digital Customer:

- TradeWaste MyAccount – investigation of a user centered portal for TradeWaste customers similar to the private sector. This will provide a streamlined digital service as expected by our trade customers.
- Website Phase2 implementation - further accessibility work on PDFs and the main web pages, with the hope of a top ten position in the local government rankings for Q3.
- Development of webchat - investigating enhancement to encourage further takeup.
- Investigations into additional e-newsletters including tenants and businesses.
- Implementation of Housing Repairs Online Service for tenants
- Document consistency programme – this is reviewing all forms of communication, including digital to ensure a standard and clear approach.

Digital Place:

- Palace Theatre ticket solution and website project - seeks to replace the existing digital ticket sales offering for the Palace Theatre and which will result in an improved customer experience with a modern platform, providing the opportunity to increase revenue and expand marketing potential.

3.0 Implications

In writing this report and in putting forward recommendations officers have considered the following implications; Data Protection, Digital and Cyber Security, Equality and Diversity, Human Resources, Human Rights, Legal, Safeguarding and Sustainability, and where appropriate they have made reference to these implications and added suitable expert comment where appropriate.

4.0 Financial Implications FIN22-23/4506

All projects which have either been delivered or have commenced within the previous six months have the required budgets allocated to them.

However, where an initiative is identified that requires additional financial investment, a business case will be drafted by the Digital Transformation Board, and submitted for review as required.

Background Papers and Published Documents

27 January 2022 Policy & Finance Committee Digital Strategy Update

<https://democracy.newark-sherwooddc.gov.uk/documents/s12769/27.01.22%20-%20Digital%20Strategy%20Update.pdf>

27 January 2022 Policy & Finance Committee Digital Strategy Action Plan

<https://democracy.newark-sherwooddc.gov.uk/documents/s12770/27.01.22%20-%20Digital%20Strategy%20Update%20Action%20Plan.pdf>