

Cabinet

Item No:

Decision making report title:	NCC Digital Strategy and Roadmap for the 2020s
Date of meeting:	12 April 2021
Responsible Cabinet Member:	Cllr FitzPatrick (Cabinet Member for Innovation, Transformation and Performance)
Responsible Director:	Simon George – Executive Director, Finance & Commercial Services
Is this a key decision?	No
If this is a key decision, date added to the Forward Plan of Key Decisions.	

Introduction from Cabinet Member

Work carried out under the 2018-2021 Digital Norfolk Strategy has meant that digital connectivity has been greatly improved across the county. Significant progress has also been made in refreshing the Councils internal digital infrastructure and the ability of our staff to fully exploit the technology and data. This work culminated in Norfolk being awarded the Connected Britain Digital Council of the Year 2020 award.

The NCC Digital Strategy and Roadmap for the 2020s builds upon these solid foundations and raises the level of ambition further. Though this is first and foremost a strategy for exploitation of digital opportunities by the County Council, it is also intended to contribute to a wider Norfolk place-based strategy and highlights the importance of joined-up partnership working.

The emphasis remains on improving digital connectivity, digital skills and effective use of joined up systems and data to support delivery of the council's strategic vision. It is not about technology for the sake of technology, rather about enabling the improvement of quality of life for Norfolk's residents, businesses and visitors.

Executive Summary

The Council's digital strategy exists for two main reasons. Firstly to support growth, both business growth and the wider strategic agenda of inclusive growth for the people of Norfolk. And secondly, to enable all areas of the County Council's operations to exploit digital, technological and data driven opportunities to achieve the best outcomes possible within our budgets.

As the current Digital strategy cycle draws to a close, research and consultation has been undertaken to refresh and extend the Digital Strategy so that it operates as a Digital Strategy and Roadmap for the 2020s.

The 2018-2021 Digital Norfolk Strategy oversaw many improvements to the Council's technological and digital infrastructure as well as connectivity for Norfolk's residents and businesses. We therefore build on solid foundations as we look forward to how technology and digital services should evolve during the 2020's.

Broadband and mobile services availability and speeds are now close to the overall national average and better than many other rural counties. However, more needs to be done to achieve our objective of 100% fixed and mobile coverage, so this remains a key strategic focus area.

Digital skills, digital inclusion, seamless multi-agency public sector working, carbon reduction, use of IoT sensor networks, agile low-code/no-code development, exploiting data and supporting the transition to electric vehicles are all growth areas for the ambition of the strategy.

The risks posed by cyber security attacks also means our defences must continue to receive the appropriate level of investment and priority.

Emerging technologies such as Artificial Intelligence (AI) will be monitored as they develop and integrated into NCCs technology stack as and when they are sufficiently mature.

The strategy incorporates technology roadmaps for the effective maintenance of our many existing systems as well as the development of new digital capabilities.

The Digital Strategy and Roadmap for the 2020s has been constructed in a presentation format. This approach has been taken in order to facilitate effective sharing of the strategy with partners and stakeholders as well as regular updates. The strategy and roadmaps have been designed to be frequently updated as roadmaps for new technology and digital initiatives are added, and enhanced by continuous feedback from delivery partners and the beneficiaries of the digital services and opportunities.

Recommendations

- 1. To approve the Digital Strategy and Roadmap for the 2020s, as set out in Appendix 1 of this report.**

1. Background and Purpose

- 1.1.** The purpose of the Digital Strategy and Roadmap for the 2020s is to define how technology, digital infrastructure and digital services will be delivered and exploited in order to achieve the Council's strategic vision and objectives.

The two main objectives of the strategy are firstly to provide the platform to enable business growth and inclusive growth for the people of Norfolk, and secondly, to enable all areas of the County Council's operations to exploit digital,

technological and data driven opportunities to achieve the best possible outcomes within our budget.

- 1.2. This latest iteration of the Strategy builds upon the engagement work with NCC departments undertaken by the Council's Information Management and Technology (IMT) and Strategy, Innovation and Performance (SIP) services.

With agreement from the Corporate Select Committee in January 2021 the Strategy and Roadmaps have been shared, in draft form, with key strategic service delivery partners such as the NHS and Districts. Feedback has been consistently positive and has allowed small iterative improvements to the strategy, with a particular emphasis on effective, joined-up place-based working for the benefit of the people of Norfolk.

- 1.3. The primary elements of the Digital Norfolk Strategy objectives are as follows:

- Enhancing service delivery to our citizens – through improved broadband, mobile coverage and wider digital inclusion support, our residents will be able to access appropriate services online at a time and place that suits them and fits with the demands of modern life. Accelerating the use of assistive technologies to give people the skills and confidence to live independently and safely in their own home for as long as possible.
- Enable employees – Staff will have access to the right technology and data and have the skills to use them effectively. Taking a systematic approach to transactions and redesigning internal systems to be digital by design. This will improve productivity and take out cost across the organisation.
- More effective use of data - Business insight: Data should be exploited effectively for operational and strategic purposes. Data driven decision making will enhance our ability to target services more effectively across the county. Multi-agency data sharing for collective benefit will be routinely used.

2. Proposals

- 2.1. This digital strategy and roadmap explain how we are going to build on our past and current successes, as the Connected Britain Digital Council of the Year 2020.

Our corporate plan articulates a clear vision for Norfolk, via our priorities.

- Focusing on inclusive growth and improved social mobility
- Encouraging housing, infrastructure, jobs and business growth across the County
- Developing our workforce to meet the needs of the sectors powering our local economy

- Work to reduce our impact on the environment
- This way we can help Norfolk have a growing economy, full of thriving people living in strong communities we are proud of

Our digital strategy and road map for the 2020s supports that corporate vision, not by technological change for the sake of change but is fundamentally driven by our ambition for our County to be a place where we put people first, a place of opportunity where we can fulfil our potential and live productive, healthy and independent lives, a place for economic growth and regeneration whilst protecting our environment and a place where we can access the education, skills and employment that we seek.

2.2. **The Digital Strategy and Roadmap Components**

The strategy and roadmap takes the form of an overarching and a linked presentation, supported by a series of more detailed technical roadmaps for the development of various elements of our technological portfolio.

The Strategy and Roadmaps have been initially developed as two PowerPoint presentations to enable them to be more effectively shared with internal and external stakeholders. This approach allows changes to be made more easily based on feedback and incremental enhancements, reflecting the intention for it to be a “living” articulation of the Councils Digital plans.

These materials will be updated on at least an annual basis to keep in line with evolving council priorities, budgets, technological and societal developments.

2.3. **Presentation 1 – Digital Strategy and Roadmap**

This contains the primary strategy & roadmap content and includes the following:

- Executive summary
- Current activities, priorities and strategic context
- What our departments said about where they want to get to in the next 5 years
- What comes next? The emerging future of technology
- What comes next? Has the pandemic changed anything?
- What are our partners doing?
- Technology is just one part of the change process
- Building on our success – key priorities moving forward
 - Improving Business Practices
 - Data
 - Digital Skills & Reducing Digital Exclusion
 - Partner Networks
 - Key service specific issues

- Horizon Scanning
- Staff & Citizen Engagement
- Cyber security
- Developing technology specific road maps till 2025
 - Identity & Access Management
 - Data Centre Infrastructure
 - Data Management
 - Collaboration & End User Technologies
 - Cloud & Edge Computing
 - CRM Strategy & Customer Experience
 - IT Operations & Cloud Management
 - Data Analytics & Artificial Intelligence
 - Applications Platforms, Architecture & Integration
 - Security Management Programmes
 - Agile Software Development & DevOps
 - Security Technology, Infrastructure & Operations
- What this strategy means for you
 - Staff and managers
 - Elected members
 - Citizens of Norfolk
 - Our partner organisations
 - Norfolk Business Community

The importance of digital inclusion and the role of the strategy in support of the Council's carbon reduction targets have emerged as increasing priorities. These themes will be further developed in conjunction with our service delivery partners and wider stakeholder engagement.

2.4. **Presentation 2 – Case Studies and Appendices**

The progress made in exploiting technology and digital opportunities is achieved not just from the work of the Council's IT service, but through associated strategies, projects and programmes. These are delivered all across the organisation and increasingly in collaboration with our partners from the wider public sector, the private sector, charities, volunteers and academia.

This non-exhaustive second presentation captures information about a variety of complimentary initiatives through which the people of Norfolk will benefit from the Digital Strategy and Roadmaps, now and throughout the 2020s.

It initially incorporates information about the following:

- 5-year Customer Experience Strategy
- Digital inclusion – Healthy Libraries
- Digital inclusion – Video Care phones Pilot
- Data & Analytics- Corporate Strategic approach
- Data & Analytics for Finance & HR

- Norfolk Office of Data & Analytics (NODA)
- Digital Strategy for Care
- GO Digital – free business support to become more digital
- LoRaWAN – largest free public sector deployment in UK
- LoRaWAN – case studies inc Highways, Museums and business applications
- Schools Digital Skills
- Innovation Network – Assistive Technology & Sensors
- Integrating the Fire Service

3. Impact of the Proposal

3.1. If we successfully deliver this strategy, during the 2020s, then we will have achieved:

- A fundamentally better resident experience whenever and however they interact with us irrespective of what service they need
- A better understanding of our residents, their needs and future demand through a modern approach to data and insights that focuses on collaborative sharing of data with partners to continuously improve services and make better decisions
- A more cohesive and collaborative council, that builds partner networks, innovates through co-production with residents and becomes more transparent with its data and decision making
- A more sustainable financial model, where we can improve service delivery while maintaining or reducing costs
- A positive impact on our climate commitments to be carbon neutral by 2030, through a radical reduction in the use of paper, a move to digital record and cloud based storage solutions, reduced postage, increased use of virtual communication systems and more intelligent travel choices that reduce carbon emissions.
- Residents and businesses with access to the internet and sufficient digital skills to achieve the financial, educational, social and health benefits that come with digital inclusion.
- Elected members who have the technology and digital skills to support their whole community and have access to the most accurate, up-to-date data available to support key decision making and organisational scrutiny
- Happier, more efficient staff who have the technology and skills they need to do their jobs.
- And staff who will have had many of their time consuming, repetitive tasks automated to allow them to use their expertise to focus on adding value to the work we do with Norfolk residents

4. Evidence and Reasons for Decision

4.1. Development of the Digital Strategy and Roadmap for the 2020s has been informed by extensive research and consultation. It builds upon learning from the successes of the 2018-2021 NCC Digital Strategy as well as methodical

consultation with Council departments, elected members and various service delivery partners. Sector and industry best practice research has been used particularly from Gartner and also Socitm (the professional network for leaders engaged in the innovation and modernisation of public services).

5. Alternative Options

- 5.1. Further work could be carried out to develop an alternative strategy. However, this proposal is based on extensive research and consultation. It builds upon previous successful approaches and is aligned to support delivery of the council's overarching priorities and target outcomes outlined in 'Together for Norfolk', Norfolk County Council's business plan for 2019-2025.

6. Financial Implications

- 6.1. The Digital Strategy and Roadmap is based on the currently approved levels of expenditure, both capital and revenue. Any new initiatives arising from the strategy would require further business cases to be presented in order to attract any further investment.

The strategy currently leverages millions of pounds per annum of external investment from government departments and organisations like the New Anglia LEP. Further external investment will continue to be sought for the benefit on Norfolk's residents, businesses and visitors.

The IMT service has its own savings targets which this strategy will help to achieve as well as supporting the savings objectives of nearly all other council service areas. For example the Customer Experience Strategy references the savings below and there are similar digitally enabled efficiency targets in other directorates, most notably Adults and Childrens.

Departmental savings plans (2021-25) target £1.73m through 'making the best use of technology to make everyday transactions more efficient', £0.38m through 'digitising print, post, scan and record storage' and £4.8m through efficiencies from 'continuing our smarter working programme'. The £1.7m ongoing capital investment required to support this customer experience strategy over the full 5-year cycle is a significant enabler to achievement of the broader savings agenda.

7. Resource Implications

7.1. Staff:

The strategy is intended to improve the efficiency, effectiveness, skills and flexibility of the Council's existing staff. There is no expectation from the strategy that overall staff numbers will be affected as a direct result of the strategy.

7.2. Property:

This strategy will assist with the Norfolk Property Services objectives to achieve associated savings and make best use of the Council's property portfolio.

7.3. **IT:**

This Strategy and Roadmap articulates the objectives of the councils IMT service.

8. Other Implications

8.1. **Legal Implications**

N/A

8.2. **Human Rights implications**

N/A

8.3. **Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)**

The Customer Experience Strategy should be considered in conjunction with this Digital Strategy as it describes how the digital infrastructure and approaches will be applied to interactions with Norfolk's residents. An EqIA has been conducted as part of the Customer Experience Strategy and has determined that there may be positive impacts on residents, but negative impacts are unlikely. Therefore, there is not anticipated to be any adverse impacts or legal impediment to going ahead with this proposal.

8.4. **Health and Safety implications**

N/A

8.5. **Sustainability implications**

It is expected that the Digital Strategy and roadmap will make a significant contribution to the Council's 2030 carbon neutral target. Industry guidance is that effective use of technology and digital approaches could account for over 20% of the improvements.

8.6. **Any other implications**

N/A

9. Risk Implications/Assessment

9.1. The main risk associated with the council's use of digital services is described in the Customer Experience Strategy and would be in relation to it excluding or disadvantaging customers in some way, particularly those with protected characteristics or impacted by inequalities. Measures to mitigate that risk include the emphasis on the principle of 'digital by design' (not 'by default'), and the focus on accessibility outlined in the Equality Impact Assessment associated with the Customer Experience Strategy.

Other risks include failure to prioritise and invest in the strategy and/or to adopt the principles and approach across the whole council, both of which would impact delivery and implementation.

Cyber and data security risks will continue to be reduced through the application of the strategy and roadmaps.

10. Select Committee comments

- 10.1. The January Corporate Select Committee resolved 1. To acknowledge that the draft Digital Norfolk Strategy and Roadmap provided the feedback on all the changes that the Committee wished to see incorporated. 2. To agree that the Strategy and Roadmap were ready to share with wider Public Sector service partners before returning to the Committee/ Cabinet for final approval.

11. Recommendations

- 11.1. **1. To approve the Digital Strategy and Roadmap for the 2020s, as set out in Appendix 1 of this report.**

12. Background Papers

- 12.1 The following publications were used, along with Socitm Inform & Gartner publications.

Local strategic documents:

- Norfolk and Waveney STP Digital Strategy 2019-2024
- Police and Crime Plan 2016-20

Future and Pandemic Impacts reports:

- GO-Sciences – Emerging Technology Scanning Programme
- Deloitte – A Journey into the Future of Government
- Future Today Institute – 2020 Tech Trends Report
- Institute of Government – Future technology in government
- Copenhagen Institute for Future Studies – Scenarios for the Covid 19 crisis & beyond

Local strategic documents:

- Norfolk and Waveney STP Digital Strategy 2019-2024
- Police and Crime Plan 2016-20

Engagement and Roadmap methodology

- GO-Science _ Futures Toolkit
- Technology Road mapping for Strategy and Innovation – published by Springer and edited by Martin Moehrle, Ralf Isenmann and Robert Phaal

Officer Contact

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