

TEWKESBURY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Report to:	Executive Committee
Date of Meeting:	27 November 2019
Subject:	Digital Strategy
Report of:	Head of Corporate Services
Corporate Lead:	Chief Executive
Lead Members:	Lead Member for Customer Focus
Number of Appendices:	One

Executive Summary:

The way in which our customers want to interact with us continues to reflect what is happening in the online banking and retail worlds – our customers want us to be easily accessible at a time of day that suits them.

This new Digital Strategy sits alongside many of our other corporate strategies – such as the emerging ICT Strategy, Workforce Development Strategy and Commercialisation Strategy – in our efforts to build on our digital successes to date.

Last year, we had 24,000 transactions through our website, and 80 per cent of our 18,000 garden waste club customers renewed online – given that transacting online is significantly cheaper than over the phone or face-to-face, these statistics are really promising and this strategy looks at how we can build on the excellent digital services that we already offer.

Importantly, it also recognises that we have a wider responsibility too; we need to make sure we do not leave anyone behind. Pushing our digital aims forward is clearly a priority for us and by doing this, we anticipate we will free up time to deal with our more elderly, vulnerable and/or complex customers who for one reason or another struggle to transact digitally.

Recommendation:

To APPROVE the digital strategy.

Reasons for Recommendation:

Digital technology has the potential to transform our Council services and the lives of our residents, while also generating savings and reducing pressure on Council taxpayers.

Resource Implications:

Each digital project is subject to its own business case, supported by a business transformation reserve.

Legal Implications:

None directly associated with this report but legal advice will be sought in respect of each business case which will include compliance with relevant legislative requirement such as under the Data Protection Act 2018 and procurement law.

Risk Management Implications:

If the Council does not have a Digital Strategy and supporting digital projects, then our customers will not be able to engage and transact with us in the way that they want to. In particular, the growth of the borough will add increased pressures to how our services are contacted by the customer.

By enabling those that want to transact with us online to do so, we are freeing up officer time to spend dealing with those customers that have not got access to, or are not able to use, digital options.

Performance Management Follow-up:

Monitoring of digital projects is carried out through Transform Working Group.

There is also internal governance through the Council's Programme Board.

Environmental Implications:

Opening up more ways/easier ways for the customer to contact us online, alleviates the need to travel to the offices/area offices.

1.0 INTRODUCTION/BACKGROUND

1.1 We aspire to meet our customers' needs when it comes to 'being digital'. For a small district Council, we have made some significant digital achievements.

But we recognise that there is lots more we can be doing, and 'digital' is not just about offering an online option for something; it is much wider than that – it is about shaping our services to meet the needs of our customers.

We want to empower our Members, staff and our communities to become digital with us – and this strategy reflects that.

2.0 DIGITAL STRATEGY APPROACH

2.1 The Digital Strategy, attached at Appendix A, sets out the way in which we plan to meet the changing expectations of our customers using digital technology in a way which is joined up and worthwhile.

The complexities in achieving this should not be underestimated – while there is a vast range of digital opportunities available, the implementation may not always be an easy or comfortable process because of the scale of change that it may introduce.

2.2 This strategy is underpinned by three simple themes:

1. Digital customer – we want to interact with our customers in a way that suits them and improve how we communicate with them – keeping them up-to-date automatically without them needing to phone or email.
2. Digital workforce - Supporting our one Council approach to Commercialisation and our business transformation journey, our digital approach aims to drive improvements and efficiencies and create an environment where members and staff are empowered to make positive change.
3. Digital place - It is really important that we work with our partners to increase the digital capability of those who are digitally excluded, as well as those who are online but lack the confidence and knowledge to make the most of it.

Sitting underneath each of these themes within the strategy is a set of aspirations and actions setting out how we will get to where we want to be.

3.0 Each of these themes is supported by our five digital principles, and anything we do from a digital perspective will:

1. Put the customer first – digital by preference but access for all.
2. Make digital services as simple as possible.
3. Embrace change and show openness to new ideas.
4. Have a 'one Council' approach so that we are all pulling in the same direction.
5. Use evidence and insights to drive our decision-making.

4.0 GOVERNANCE

4.1 In October, Management Team approved the creation of a new business transformation team that will be fundamental in helping the authority accelerate our journey to achieve more of our digital ambitions and support the efficiency stream of our new commercialisation strategy.

There will be many competing calls on this resource and it is therefore important to have a transparent and robust process in place for evaluating and prioritising projects as well as monitoring progress.

The governance framework is still being established but could take the shape of existing bodies such as Management Team or Programme Board or a new, more streamlined board could be put in place to oversee this area of work. In addition, all relevant projects will go through the Council's Programme Board, with regular reporting to Transform Working Group.

5.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

5.1 None.

6.0 CONSULTATION

6.1 Consultations with our members and customers, including our Citizens' Panel, will take place when digital services are being introduced.

9.0 RELEVANT COUNCIL POLICIES/STRATEGIES

9.1 ICT strategy, Commercialisation Strategy, Workforce Development Strategy

10.0 RELEVANT GOVERNMENT POLICIES

10.1 None directly.

11.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (Human/Property)

11.1 The creation of the Improvement Team will have a really positive impact on the delivery of our Digital Strategy, creating the capacity to move forward with already identified projects.

12.0 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS (Social/Community Safety/Cultural/ Economic/ Environment)

12.1 None directly.

13.0 IMPACT UPON (Value For Money/Equalities/E-Government/Human Rights/Health And Safety)

13.1 The strategy recognises the importance of being digital first but access for all.

14.0 RELATED DECISIONS AND ANY OTHER RELEVANT FACTS

14.1 None.

Background Papers: None.
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Appendices: Digital Strategy.