

NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCIL**CABINET****DIGITAL DEVELOPMENT UPDATE & VISION****1. OBJECT AND KEY POINTS IN THIS REPORT**

- 1.1 To provide Cabinet with an update on the council's digital development and vision going forward.
- 1.2 The key points are:
- A step change in the council's digital capability has taken place over the last year
 - The Covid-19 pandemic has highlighted the importance of digital connectivity and accelerated the delivery of enabling digital solutions
 - To build on progress a digital vision 2021 - 2024 has been developed to lead both the council and place towards an optimum digital state.

2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 2.1 Digital is an enabler for change and at the core of the way the council works, helping to create a mindset and new methods of service design fundamental to achieving its council plan ambitions.
- 2.2 The Covid-19 pandemic has highlighted the importance of digital connectivity and capability. The council's response occurred at a pace of change that required its workforce to operate in a wholly agile way, at scale, demonstrating flexibility and responsiveness, strengthening its collaborative approach and in doing so informing the next phase of its organisational development. New operating models were designed based on agile principles to meet new requirements and have accelerated progressive and sustainable ways of working, enabled by new technological solutions. Examples included:
- Providing creative core offers for communities such as online leisure activities, access to heritage and arts offer via digital media and a digital library offer, achieving a 200% increase in participation
 - Ensuring continuity of learning through virtual and digital platforms such as the Adult Education and Community Learning offer, which was recognised nationally for its innovative response
 - Providing online career events by working with local businesses and further education providers, promoting local training and future careers within North Lincolnshire
 - Enabling remote training and support for schools and early years settings
 - Provision of new contact and data platforms helping the council to protect the most vulnerable residents including residents recognised as clinically extremely vulnerable to Covid-19 who required Shielding.

- Introduction of simple eForms, accessible using any connected device, to make it easy for residents and businesses to request help and support with financial and other wellbeing issues
- Redesigning the council's website to better meet the needs of people and place as a trusted and accessible source of information, advice and guidance. In particular the Covid support and related news pages received around 250,000 views with almost 4 million pages over the last 12 months
- Providing continuity of democratic processes, decision making and partnership working through use of digital virtual platforms with enhanced public and democratic engagement and participation
- Enabling secure "agile from home" capabilities at scale with 1,750 different IT users accessing the IT infrastructure remotely
- Modernising business systems has resulted in more efficient and environmentally friendly practice with a significant reduction in print facilities and reduction in printed documents by 3 million units since 2019
- Implementing modern and secure agile digital tools, such as MS Teams, as a collaboration platform and the creation of new workforce engagement methods such as online webinars.

2.3 The pandemic also highlighted the importance of digital inclusion for enabling residents to access employment, education, essential services and wellbeing opportunities. To help ensure that no resident is disadvantaged due to digital access, a range of support offers and arrangements were put in place, including:

- The council's contact centre was equipped to provide assistance for residents without digital access to help in accessing key services and support during the pandemic
- The Brigg Community Hub opened providing modern digital technology throughout the building including digital touch screen facilities for residents enabling them to self-serve
- Prioritising access by appointment to public computers in community hubs during recent and current restrictions
- In April the government announced support for young people who do not have access to a digital devices during the coronavirus outbreak. Laptops and tablets were provided to support remote education and help children and young people stay in touch with social care services. 510 devices were allocated to children and young people across North Lincolnshire.
- Providing better access to fast, reliable internet connectivity for businesses and residents following work with commercial internet and telecommunications providers. Access to superfast broadband (30+mps) is now available to 95.7% of premises with ultrafast (100+mps) available to 52.1% of premises. Access to gigabit capable "fibre" connectivity also increased from 2% to 10% of premises.
- In addition a further £1m of government funding was secured to deliver better broadband to 133 rural businesses with further local funding injected to increase this to c. 500 business.

2.4 To build on this progress and to frame our digital ambition going forward, a digital vision 2021-2024 has been determined. Its aim is to draw together current and future thinking, initiatives and activities in driving towards a **Digital Council** and a **Digital Place** which underpin the Council Plan. This dual approach aims to enable the council's priorities through modern, digitally enabled service delivery and as a stimulus for investment and local economic growth and prosperity.

2.5 As a **Digital Council** we will provide a digital offer shaped around customer needs and expectations. Our services and information will be made more accessible and personalised, helping customers to self-serve and make better informed choices. Key themes include:

- **Customer Engagement** – reimagining and designing customer access through modern contact channels and platforms. This means driving the pace of digitisation and more agile ways of working, accelerating channel shift to online delivery where that is appropriate and making digital a positive choice and experience for customers, businesses and visitors.
- **Service Redesign** – driving the digitisation of our service models through designing solutions that promote enablement, self-responsibility and self-service.
- **Technology Transformation** – accelerating our “cloud first” strategy by implementing and joining cloud-based technology to provide more resilient, agile and modern platforms that to improve our organisational and environmental performance.
- **Agile Workforce** – developing a digitally capable and agile workforce, equipping them with the new skills, mindset, capabilities and ways of working for the future.
- **Harnessing Data** - developing data platform and data analytics capabilities to drive intelligence led/outcome focussed service planning and decision-making. We will integrate and use our data to target our service priorities, taking preventative actions to support the people who need the most help.

2.6 As a **Digital Place** we will have futureproofed area-wide digital fibre and 5G infrastructure to connect residents, local businesses and public services across the place. We will work with partners to help our residents acquire and nurture digital skills and expertise to create pathways into high-value contemporary employment and attract new businesses and investment whilst supporting the evolution of existing ones.

- **Futureproofed Digital Infrastructure** – securing investment to build and extend a modern digital fibre and 5G futureproofed digital infrastructure that benefits residents and businesses and enhances public services connectivity.
- **Data-Rich Place** – using and sharing data openly across a smart place to support change and innovation and new service developments for our residents and businesses, using real-time community information to provide responsive public services and support. Using new infrastructure technologies to power the Internet of Things to help create safer and better environmental, housing and transport systems.
- **Smart & Connected Place** – harnessing the power of a digital infrastructure to build a smart connected place. Using data and working with partners in the smart connected place, we will help enhance local business and the retail economy, providing useful real-time information to the public, visitors and businesses.

- **Digital Economy** – work with business, industry and education bodies to motivate and upskill the local and emerging workforce to create an agile, highly skilled and digitally included workforce to support future economic prosperity. Investment in digital infrastructure will be used to enable new assets and facilities to support inward investment, attract start-ups, grow our SME base and help the place become a digital destination of choice.
- **Community Enablement** – collaboration with health and care, regeneration, education, business and voluntary sector Partners support and grow our communities. We will engage with and help residents and local businesses to access and fully embrace digital, driving digital literacy and take-up. We will support and enable wellness for residents and communities through digital technology in the home, and via information and guidance and tools that enhance self-help and independent living. We will motivate and enable digital communities to engage and connect people with each other and local organisations and strengthen civic life and local democracy. We will provide information and guidance, self-management and self-care tools to access local services keeping people safe and well.

3. **OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION**

- 3.1 Cabinet is invited to note the the digital update and priorities associated with the digital vision 2021 - 2024.

4. **ANALYSIS OF OPTIONS**

- 4.1 There are no options to consider within this summary report.

5. **FINANCIAL AND OTHER RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (e.g. LEGAL, HR, PROPERTY, IT, COMMUNICATIONS etc.)**

- 5.1 Not applicable.

6. **OTHER RELEVANT IMPLICATIONS (e.g. CRIME AND DISORDER, EQUALITIES, COUNCIL PLAN, ENVIRONMENTAL, RISK etc.)**

- 6.1 There are no other relevant implications.

7. **OUTCOMES OF INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT (IF APPLICABLE)**

- 7.1 An integrated impact assessment is not applicable.

8. **OUTCOMES OF CONSULTATION AND CONFLICTS OF INTERESTS DECLARED**

- 8.1 There are no consultations or conflicts of interests to report.

9. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 9.1 Cabinet is invited to note the digital update and priorities going forward associated with the digital vision 2021- 2024.

DIRECTOR OF GOVERNANCE AND PARTNERSHIPS

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Background Papers used in the preparation of this report
Digital Vision & Roadmap 2021 - 2024