



Report of the Cabinet Member for Service Transformation

Cabinet – 20 April 2023

Digital Strategy 2023-28 and Transformation Programme

Purpose:	To approve the new Digital Strategy 2023-28 and associated Digital Transformation Programme.
Policy Framework:	Corporate Plan 2023-28, Transformation and Financial Resilience Well-Being Objective, Medium Term Financial Plan
Consultation:	Access to Services, Finance, Legal.
Recommendation(s):	It is recommended that Cabinet: 1) Approves the Digital Strategy 2023-28 (Appendix A). 2) Approves the proposed investment of £2 million (or amended budget sum as outlined in 5.2), to fund projects identified in the Digital Transformation Programme Business Case (Appendix B).
Report Authors:	Sarah Lackenby
Finance Officer:	Ben Smith
Legal Officer:	Debbie Smith
Access to Services Officer:	Rhian Millar

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Digital Strategy was approved in principle by Cabinet on 17th November 2022 subject to public consultation. Consultation was undertaken for six weeks and concluded at the end of January 2023.
- 1.2 The consultation and engagement activities sought input and feedback from:

- All residents via a public consultation survey, online and in paper format
- 50+ network
- Poverty Forum
- Disability Liaison Group and Parent Carer's Group
- Organisations that support Welsh Language
- Partner organisations, e.g. Health, Universities, other Councils, WLGA
- Internal stakeholders.

2. Digital Strategy 2023-28

2.1 The Digital Strategy 2023-28 (Appendix A), has been updated following consultation and engagement.

2.2 Consultation and engagement activities were undertaken via online and paper-based surveys, face-to-face and online meetings, and over email. The consultation and engagement activities highlighted the following:

- Responses ranged from a broad demographic of respondents including those aged 26 up to 85 years old
- The majority of respondents agreed with the Digital Strategy vision
- The majority of respondents agreed with the Digital Strategy goals
- One comment requested clearer support for older people accessing digital services online, an aspect that forms a key plank of the first goal "excellent customer service aligned with our service standards". In this goal we have therefore added, "Support for older people when applying for/accessing public services" in response to this feedback.

3. Digital Transformation Programme 2023-28

3.1 The digital transformation programme business case (Appendix B) sits alongside the Council's Digital Strategy 2023-28. The programme includes a series of projects that will deliver the strategic goals. The business case provides a pipeline of initial projects that can be taken forward over the next five years. The Digital Transformation programme forms part of the corporate transformation programme, "Successful and Sustainable Swansea".

3.2 The business case presents the following:

- The clear links that deliver the Corporate Plan well-being objectives
- A pipeline of initial projects. These are projects that are transformational, address a service gap, mitigate or eliminate significant risks, and deliver MTFP savings
- Benefits for residents and other customers, staff and the wider Council
- The programme forms part of the new corporate transformation programme "Successful and Sustainable Swansea" and contributes to

other areas of that programme, e.g. Waste Strategy, Transforming Additional Learning Needs, Workforce and Organisational Development Transformation

- Critical success factors align with the five ways of working
- Robust governance and programme management arrangements are in place, with the programme reporting up to the Transformation Delivery Board for “Successful and Sustainable Swansea”, CMT, and Cabinet, with assurance and oversight by Scrutiny
- The programme involves significant change management within services
- The programme will conclude with an evaluation and final report to identify how the activities have delivered the digital strategy vision and goals.

3.3 The pipeline of initial potential projects includes:

- Community Hub / City Centre Hub
- Housing digital solutions. These will be funded through the Housing Revenue Account (HRA)
- iRecruitment
- Parks management digital solutions
- Commercial waste digital solutions
- Schools Admissions
- Schools Transport
- Education management information digital solutions
- Schools management information digital solutions
- School uniform grants
- Schools catering digital solutions
- Swansea Account
- Unified Communications and telephony Strategy
- Automation and Chatbots
- Education and schools aligned workforce and budget planning solutions
- Common property database
- HM Courts and Tribunals
- Data Management Strategy
- Development programmes for staff and Councillors
- Digital Skills and Apprentices
- Smart City roadmap and roll out.

3.4 Each project has submitted a business case with estimated costs and expected benefits and risks. Scoring criteria will be established to determine which projects to take forward within the overall funding envelope. Many of the projects are still assessing the market therefore this is an estimated cost.

4. Integrated Assessment Implications

- 4.1 The Council is subject to the Equality Act (Public Sector Equality Duty and the socio-economic duty), the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure, and must in the exercise of their functions, have due regard to the need to:
- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Acts.
 - Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
 - Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
 - Deliver better outcomes for those people who experience socio-economic disadvantage
 - Consider opportunities for people to use the Welsh language
 - Treat the Welsh language no less favourably than English.
 - Ensure that the needs of the present are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.
- 4.2 The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 mandates that public bodies in Wales must carry out sustainable development. Sustainable development means the process of improving the economic, social, environmental, and cultural well-being of Wales by acting in accordance with the sustainable development principle, aimed at achieving the 'well-being goals'.
- 4.3 Our Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) process ensures we have paid due regard to the above. It also takes into account other key issues and priorities, such as poverty and social exclusion, community cohesion, carers, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and Welsh language.
- 4.4 A full IIA report (Appendix C) has been updated following the public consultation and engagement.
- 4.5 Each project that emerges over the next five years as a result of this strategy will undertake an IIA screening / full IIA where applicable.
- 4.6 With regard to involvement, the strategy development has been informed by other strategies and operating models, some of which have included their own consultation / engagement activities. In addition, input and feedback has been initially sought from our partners. Public consultation and engagement has been undertaken on the draft Strategy following Cabinet approval in principle. Further engagement and consultation will be undertaken with residents as part of the development of individual projects that will ultimately deliver the six strategic goals. Consultation activities undertaken involved seeking input from:
- All residents via a public consultation survey

- 50+ network to ensure the strategy is informed by older people's use of all the Council's access channels, telephone, face-to-face, email and online
- Poverty Forum – to consider the financial benefits and impact to residents of being online, including children and young people
- Disability Liaison Group and Parent Carers'
- Organisations that support Welsh Language
- Partner organisations, e.g. Health, Universities, other Councils, WLGA
- Internal stakeholders

4.7 The Well-being of Future Generations Act (Wales) 2015 places a well-being duty on Swansea Council to carry out sustainable development. This is in line with the Council's Sustainable Development Policy and our Corporate Plan's Well-being Objectives.

4.8 The strategy adheres to the Transformation and Financial Resilience well-being objective in the Corporate Plan, so that we and the services that we provide are sustainable and resilient for the future. Well-being and future generations and the five ways of working considerations include:

- Taking an outcome-based approach. We will plan and track delivery, in the context of outcomes rather than organisational (performance) level outputs.
- The strategy and resulting projects aim to provide support and access channels that support residents early and prevent problems escalating
- This is an integrated strategy that links with wider national and regional strategies and programmes
- Collaboration and partnership working is a key guiding principle of the strategy
- The strategy supports virtual learning and sustainable digital solutions for schools
- Key stakeholders will be actively involved in the design and development of customer focused projects as a result of this strategy
- The strategy will help and support residents to embrace technology which can significantly improve their life chances
- The strategy promotes the Council's circular economy approach, disposal of hardware is via sustainable means so that components can be re-used and recycled.
- A review of wider language provision has also been undertaken.
- Each project has assessed its individual risks around deliverability and resources as part of submitting an initial business case. In addition, although this is about the roadmap for digital it is not advocating a digital only approach. Face-to-face and telephone channels will continue to support residents and will provide wraparound support for those residents using digital channels. One comment requested clearer support for older people accessing digital services online, an aspect that forms a key plank of the first goal "excellent customer service aligned with our service standards". In this goal we have

therefore added, “Support for older people when applying for/accessing public services” in response to this feedback.

- 4.9 Our customer service standards are under review and will be published shortly, so residents and businesses know what to expect when they contact the Council.
- 4.10 With regard to the cumulative impact of the strategy, each project will include its own IIA screening. The overall strategy, overseen by the Digital Transformation Board, will continuously review the overall impact on people and/or communities as the programme develops and delivers. In particular, how digital channels integrate with telephone, email and face-to-face channels so that the overall access to services supports people and promotes inclusion.

5. Financial Implications

- 5.1 All the projects requiring investment listed at point 3.3 involve using digital technologies to implement new ways of working in accordance with the definition of transformation and will deliver a range of benefits, including:
- Improving customer service to residents, including 24/7 access to information
 - Transformation, introducing new ways of working, and operational efficiency
 - Resolving key risks on the risk register
 - Delivering savings in the MTFP.
- 5.2 The programme requests initial investment of £2 million to support project delivery in the first two years of the programme. This will be provided from the balance on the Restructuring Reserve at year end. The final project list for 2023-25 may need to be adjusted accordingly should the reserve balance be less than £2 million.

6. Legal Implications

- 6.1 Any contracts arising from the supplies and services required to deliver this strategy will be the subject of a range of procurement processes governed by the Public Contracts Regulation 2015.

Background Papers: None

Appendices:

- | | |
|------------|--|
| Appendix A | Digital Strategy 2023-28 |
| Appendix B | Implementation Programme Business Case |
| Appendix C | IIA Full Report |