

NEWCASTLE-UNDER-LYME BOROUGH COUNCIL

**CORPORATE LEADERSHIP TEAM'S
REPORT TO**

Finance Assets and Performance Scrutiny Committee

13 December 2023

Report Title: Technology Strategy 2023-2028 Report

Submitted by: Service Director – IT & Digital

Portfolios: One Council, People and Partnerships

Ward(s) affected: All

<u>Purpose of the Report</u>	<u>Key Decision</u>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
To present the 2023-2028 Technology Strategy to scrutiny.			
<u>Recommendation</u>			
That:			
1. The Strategy be considered by the Finance, Assets and Performance Scrutiny Committee and feedback be provided to the Portfolio Holder for One Council, People and Partnerships.			
<u>Reasons</u>			
1. The current ICT strategy was implemented as an interim strategy in 2022.			
2. There is a requirement to amalgamate the ICT and Digital strategies and team into one team – Technology Services.			
3. A Strategy is required to provide a high-level, clear direction of travel towards the Council vision and objectives.			

1. Background

- 1.1** The current ICT strategy was an interim strategy created in 2022. However, since this time, there has been significant change within the ICT and Digital teams. As technology continues to move at pace, it is important that the Council has a clear direction of travel towards the adoption of the latest digital technology and tools in support of the Council plan priorities.

- 1.2 The Council, like many other organisations are becoming increasingly reliant upon Technology to deliver outcomes that meet the needs and requirements of our residents, businesses, and visitors.

2. Issues

- 2.1 In both the medium and long term, there will be a number of challenges to overcome in ensuring that technology continues to deliver, aid and support the council priorities.
- 2.2 This strategy highlights the need for continued financial investment, whilst at the same time rationalising existing systems and spend to ensure affordability and efficiency. It is important that the council continues to invest in technology, but in a way that is affordable.
- 2.3 It is important for effective governance to be in place to ensure that any decisions regarding future technological advancements are in-line with the corporate Technology Strategy as well as working to support the Council Priorities. This governance will ensure that all opportunities are explored prior to the procurement of new services/solutions, i.e., using existing systems and services.
- 2.4 The strategy also sets out our vision for technology and how the Council will utilise all modern technologies and tools to enable, enhance and redefine how our services are delivered. The strategy also sets out the importance of making it easy and inclusive for residents, promoting online services as the default method of access and supporting the development of digital within the borough. Whilst still ensuring we continue to provide a choice of access for those who do not have access or the skills to use digital technologies.

3. Recommendation

- 3.1 The Strategy be considered by the Finance, Assets and Performance Scrutiny Committee and feedback be provided to the Portfolio Holder for One Council, People and Partnerships

4. Reasons

- 4.1 The new Technology Strategy provides a high-level, strategic document detailing how technology will support the delivery of the Council plan priorities in the coming years. It also emphasises the importance of iterative transformation, supported by the allocation of future resources.
- 4.2 To address the highlighted issues, the strategy sets out three Strategic Themes and Actions:
 - 4.2.1 **Customer** – Supporting our residents to access the services and information they require online. Whilst ensuring a choice of access for those who are not digitally connected.

4.2.2 Workforce – Ensuring our workforce have the digital skills required to deliver services our customers, as effectively and efficiently as possible.

4.2.3 Infrastructure – Supporting the enhancement of technological infrastructure within the Borough, with access to high-speed fibre broadband and internet connectivity.

4.3 To ensure the delivery of this strategy, an action plan will be developed and provided to Cabinet for consideration at a future meeting.

5. Options Considered

5.1 None

6. Legal and Statutory Implications

6.1 There is a requirement for our website to be compliant with the Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) Accessibility Regulations 2018. This strategy confirms our ambition for our website to not only be compliant but also rated highly nationally for accessibility.

6.2 There is a requirement for everyone responsible for using personal data to follow strict data protection principles, as part of the Data Protection Act 2018. This strategy confirms our commitment to ensuring that we use personal data in accordance with legislation.

7. Equality Impact Assessment

7.1 There are no direct equality implications resulting from the adoption of the Technology Strategy.

8. Financial and Resource Implications

8.1 Whilst there is no direct financial or resource implications in adopting the Technology Strategy, there is a requirement for continued investment in technology initiatives. The financial and resource implications of such initiatives will be documented as part of the specific proposals, supported by the Technology Strategy.

8.2 This Strategy has been developed by the existing Technology Services team.

9. Major Risks & Mitigation

9.1 The council runs a risk to the delivery of operational services where it fails to invest in ICT and modern technologies.

9.1.1 This is an identified risk within the Corporate Risk Management system under the ICT Services profile.

9.1.2 The council have already taken steps to mitigate this risk with control measures, such as the implementation of a Technology Strategy, Consolidation of hardware and software and One Council transformation programme.

9.1.3 The continued investment in technology is a defined action to reduce and mitigate this risk.

10. UN Sustainable Development Goals (UNSDG)

10.1 The Technology Strategy works to support the Council’s commitment to ensuring a sustainable future that leads to improvements within our communities, whilst striving to reduce our own impact on the environment in everything we do.



11. Key Decision Information

11.1 None

12. Earlier Cabinet/Committee Resolutions

12.1 Cabinet meeting on 5 December 2023.

13. List of Appendices

13.1 Technology Strategy 2023-2028

14. Background Papers

14.1 None