DIGITAL FIRST

Cabinet Member: Cllr Lawrence Wood

Ward(s) Affected: All

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PROPOSED DECISION

Members are requested to: -

1. *Approve the Digital First Strategy & Roadmap and the outline business case.*

2. *Agree the inclusion of a Transformation Budget of £0.8m in the draft budgets, later on this agenda.*

3. *To note and agree the reallocation of capital costs towards the delivery of Digital First.*

Reason for Decision

The "Pounds" priority of the Corporate Plan sets the ambition for the Council to "Continue to innovate and transform our services to provide them in the most efficient and accessible way," to achieve, " more accessible services and improved self-service options, including access to information making it easy to see how we are performing as a Council."

Additionally, as part of the requirements of the Local Government Finance Settlement Offer, the Council was required to develop and submit an Efficiency Plan, with the plan submitted to CLG in July following Cabinet approval.

Cabinet adopted the vision concept on 18 September 2017 and noted that this report, seeking approval of the strategy and "roadmap" would be sought in November.

One of the actions within the Efficiency Plan is to develop a:-

"Corporate business case for empowering customers through adoption of a "digital by default" and increased self-service Customer Strategy. The business case will consider the potential scope, benefits and the overall case for moving towards empowering customers through the increased use of self service and increased use of technology in service delivery."

Corporate Implications

Section III of the Local Government Act 1972 and the Localism Act 2011 provide the legal powers for the Council to undertake this work.

Executive Summary

Digital First is about more than just technology. Digital means applying the culture, practices, processes and technologies of the internet era to respond to people's raised expectations.

Digital First is an overarching strategy and is about how we as an organization engage, communicate and respond to people, how we design and deliver services and how we use information to make decisions, inform policy and evaluate performance and outcomes – a joined up and consistent approach across the organization to how we work and the supporting technologies, applications and data we hold and use.

The following report sets out further details of the Digital First program of projects envisaged over the next 2 years. Appendix A sets out the Digital First strategy and roadmap. Appendix B sets out the outline business case for Digital First.

Sustainable Community Strategy/Council Priorities - Implications

The "Pounds" priority of the Corporate Plan sets the ambition for the Council to, "Continue to innovate and transform our services to provide them in the most efficient and accessible way," to achieve, " more accessible services and improved self-service options, including access to information making it easy to see how we are performing as a Council."

Background and Issues

At its meeting held on 18th September 2017 Cabinet resolved: -

That (i) the vision concept within the Report be adopted;

(ii) approval to develop a Digital First strategy and roadmap, setting out how the vision is to be delivered be agreed, and

(iii) an intention to present the Digital First strategy & roadmap to Cabinet in November be noted.

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The vision concept agreed by Cabinet set out:

"Our investment in being "Digital First" will deliver in three key areas: -

- **Better, faster customer services**

  Customers will receive frictionless services, based around their needs. As they access our services they will feel known to us and be not required to repeat themselves of provide information they should expect us to know. Beyond this, our focus will be on service and this will be evidenced by our exceptions Net Promoter Score, sentiment analysis and qualitative feedback.

- **Improved Operational Efficiency**

  As we digitize our processes, we will simplify and automate as much as possible, seeking to enable self-service and processes that require zero or minimal human interaction. This will result in an accumulation of savings which means that Digital First will recover its long term costs.

- **Building new revenue streams**

  We have proven our ability to expand commercially, and the importance of developing commercial services. We believe Digital provides further opportunities to bring in new revenue streams, from providing further value added services to residents, local organizations and partners, including neighbouring councils.

  Fundamentally, we believe that investing in Digital will provide: a better experience for all, improved customer services for the majority, through our digital channels and importantly, more targeted specialist support through non-digital channels."

The following report sets out further details of the Digital First program of projects envisaged over the next 2 years. Appendix A provides the Digital First strategy and roadmap

Strategic aims & objectives

The following diagram sets out our strategic aims & objectives, providing a framework and focus for Digital First and putting the customer and operational efficiency at the centre of all that we do.

Digital First: Excellent services for all

Digital First Programme

The Digital First programme will be delivered through a suite of interrelated projects that will run between now and the summer of 2019. The projects will change the way we use technology, access and use information, communicate and respond to people and communities, our approach to customer services and the way we work. Projects include: -

Digital First – Projects

Citizen Engagement

Operational Excellence

Responsive & Flexible ICT

Build Digital Platform

Data & Insight

Design & development Capabilities

Proactive & responsive communications

Change Management

New ways of working

Responsive & Flexible ICT

Recently, and unlike the majority of other district Councils, WDC has embraced cloud and virtualised technologies; the majority of servers and desktops have been virtualised and most of our hardware is located off-site in third party data-centres. With these changes, the Council has become less location dependent and the performance of services accessed remotely has significantly improved. With the changes implemented, the Council is in a position to take advantage of technology advances including Software as a Service (SaaS) and Infrastructure or Platform as a Service (IaaS or PaaS).

We will review and look to exploit the public cloud to provide resilient, reliable and flexible ICT services. Where possible we will secure platform services and move more towards a utility computing model, using standard & intuitive applications and services.

We will review the existing Managed Service contract arrangements to support changes to the ICT infrastructure and as the contract matures to the 5 year review date (in 2020).

Our ambition is to migrate to public cloud services by the summer of 2019.

Digital platform

The digital platform is a combination of technologies that will allow us to build digital services (both internally and customer focused), share information (between services and with customers), integrate information between applications and engage with

customers. The digital platform will provide us with the means to develop a master record of customer information, providing a single view of the customer and allowing for data insight.

The digital platform will continue to evolve as new technologies develop and/or become available.

New digital technologies will be required to build digital customer services.

Data & insight

With greater information integration and a customer master record, the Council will be able to better use information to support the development of policies, inform decisions and evaluate performance and outcomes.

Design & development capabilities

New skills will be required to undertake end to end customer service reviews (from the customers' perspective) and to develop fully digital services. In the first instance a small number of services that represent high volume or complex will be selected as pathfinder projects to prove the concept.

Proactive & responsive communications

Will see the development of the channels used to listen, inform, engage and respond to customers and communities. The operational role and practices of communications will be reviewed in order to support the strategic and service objectives of the Council

Change Management & new ways of working

The programme of projects will be underpinned by change management and new ways of working. The Programme will use formal project management methodology. Just as reviewing customer services from the customers' point of view, internal processes will be reviewed from the point of view of the user. New skills and a more agile way of working will be required to develop services and respond quickly to changes in demand, behaviour and when things go wrong.

Project teams will be formed using internally available knowledge and skillsets where possible, and supplemented by additional resourcing and skillsets where necessary. These workstreams will develop and evolve as projects develop.

Outcomes & ambitions

Digital First aims to achieve: -

> **Digital Services that people prefer to use**
> - Majority of service transactions are fulfilled through digital channels
> - Residents think digital first
> - Members and officers think digital first
>
> **Supporting partners develop better services**

▷ We have co-developed services with partners and citizens, helping to build capacity and deliver better citizen services

Dialogue where conversations naturally occur

▷ Actively listening to service users and communities and demonstrably addressing issues and misunderstandings early on

▷ Successful campaigns that lead, inform, gain feedback and demonstrably improve the launch of new plans

Mobile Working

▷ Officers, members and citizens have access to services via multiple devices

▷ Officers in the community have direct access to systems, potentially via dedicated mobile applications that integrate and provide a simplified view of existing systems

▷ Improved productivity through transformation of working practices in the field

Easy IT that just works

▷ Improved productivity – with systems that are more reliable and reduce friction

▷ Improved productivity – provisioning of commonly used & intuitive applications

Joined up processes & information

▷ Customers "tell us once," – reduced repeat information requests and rekeying

▷ Improved data quality, with systems that automatically synchronise

▷ Customers are recognised (and verified) by services in a consistent way

Investment & Return on Investment

Appendix B sets out the outline business case for Digital First.

Our ambition is to provide a return on investment starting from 2020 with the potential to reduce the nature and scope of the ICT & CSC Managed Service contracts.

Moving to a utility computing model will see a change to the ICT funding model, from the current hybrid capital and revenue model, to one based more on revenue expenditure, as the Council divests from the ownership of "server" hardware. It is anticipated that the overall cost of ownership will reduce by taking advantage of public cloud offerings.

Based on learning from comparable work in the sector, operational efficiencies are expected to be achieved as customer services migrates to fulfilment predominantly vis digital channels from more expensive traditional channels. With the migration of the majority of customer interactions to digital channels, the scope (possible need) for the CSC managed service will change.

Reviewing services from the customer perspective, and using applications and information that are integrated and "just work" will provide opportunities for improvements to operational efficiency.

Proactive customer services, providing customers with information about the progress of the service they require may reduce unnecessary customer contact, as well as a better customer experience.

Similarly, operational efficiency can be achieved through joined up applications and unnecessary duplication of information or need for rekeying information.

Digital First: Excellent services for all

Connected to customers

- o Digital services that people prefer to use

- o To be on hand to provide support for those that need it

- **Connected to communities –** to listen and be part of the conversation

- **Connected services –** sharing information between our services, with our partners & stakeholders.

Appendix A

Appendix A sets out the Digital First strategy and roadmap.

Consultation

To inform the development of the Digital First strategy, (and working with Eduserv) we have met with stakeholders from across the organisation in order to develop a vision. Meetings have been held with Members and Officers exploring where we are now, how we have delivered against our corporate and service plans, what has worked well, barriers we have encountered and future ambitions.

Next Steps

Subject to Cabinet approval, to deliver the Digital First programme.

As a minimum, we will provide updates quarterly to Cabinet on progress and by exception when appropriate.

We will continue to consult with Members (particularly Cabinet), engage with I&RC and Officers, as our programme of projects develop.

We will develop more detailed plans for each workstream, within an overarching Programme Plan, including risk register.

We will manage our costs and track our facilitated and delivered savings.

We will produce a Procurement Strategy based upon Government Framework Agreements to avoid creating procurement costs.

Background Papers

Digital by Default (SMB, 7th February 2017).

Cabinet report (18th September 2017)