Coventry City Council

Cabinet	21 February 2017
Council	21 February 2017

Name of Cabinet Members:
Cabinet Member for Strategic Finance and Resources – Councillor J Mutton

Director Approving Submission of the report:
Executive Director, Resources

Ward(s) affected:
All

Title:
Digital Coventry Strategy

Is this a key decision?
No.

Executive Summary:

Technology is increasingly present across all sectors and becoming integrated in many aspects of our lives. Coventry needs a digital strategy because digital technology has the potential to transform the city and lives of residents while generating long-term savings and income – digital is important for our 21st century City. Coventry City Council is already responding to this challenge through its transformation work, including Customer Journey and Kickstart programmes, alongside digital innovations within individual services and superfast broadband.

We know from speaking to residents, including recent petitions received, that access to high quality internet connections is incredibly important to them. We know, from speaking to businesses, that this is also a priority for them – it helps them to grow their business and want to locate in the City. As well as being an essential service, investment in broadband is proven to generate jobs and bring wealth to an area - for every £1 of public investment in broadband infrastructure £20 in net economic benefits are gained.

We can make the services the Council provides to its customers better by redesigning them and opening up self-service channels through the internet – this means people can access services 24/7 from the comfort of their home. It's also more efficient for us to do things this way. We already have 70% of customers using our online services for booking a tip visit or ordering a copy certificate.

As we reduce Council budgets further we are looking at every way to protect the most vulnerable and front line services – we have firm savings plans of £1m by reducing our buildings, working in a more digital way and moving more of our services online.

To fully realise the benefits that digital technology can bring, we need to pull together our digital work, increase its scope beyond the work that the Council is doing as an organisation and align this work to other partners so that we are co-ordinating this work across Coventry. We need to make sure we don't leave people behind as digital becomes part of day to day life.

We are establishing this Digital Coventry Strategy because it will benefit the people of Coventry, develop Coventry as a place and improve the outcomes that the Council can deliver. It will support the delivery of the Council Plan, including promoting the growth of Coventry's economy, improving the quality of life of Coventry people and delivering our priorities with fewer resources.

Recommendations:

Cabinet is asked to recommend that Council:

1. Approve the Digital Coventry Strategy attached to this report at Appendix 1.

2. Note that the Digital Coventry Strategy will be a regularly reviewed document that will be updated, following the present iteration, to reflect the needs of our customers, advances in technology and the ambitions of the Council.

Council is asked to:

1. Approve the Digital Coventry Strategy attached to this report at Appendix 1.

2. Note that the Digital Coventry Strategy will be a regularly reviewed document that will be updated, following the present iteration, to reflect the needs of our customers, advances in technology and the ambitions of the Council.

List of Appendices included:

Appendix 1 – Digital Coventry Strategy

Background papers:

None

Other Useful Documents:

None

Has it been or will it be considered by Scrutiny?

No – Although this report is not being considered by Scrutiny, the Finance and Corporate Services Scrutiny Board (1) were presented the draft strategy on the 6th July 2016. The Finance and Corporate Services Scrutiny Board (1) and Business, Economy and Enterprise Scrutiny Board (3) established a joint task and finish group to consider three themes: Broadband and other infrastructure, digital service transformation and digital skills and culture. This work concluded during November 2016.
That the Strategy:

a)   Clearly sets out our digital aspirations for the city.
b)   Explains to residents why the focus in terms of broadband infrastructure is on businesses due to the funding streams available, and how residential properties should benefit as a consequence of this investment. This is to emphasise the importance of connections for residential as well as businesses.

c)   Should be flexible enough to cope with new technology as it becomes available and is therefore a living document.

It should be noted that these comments have already been incorporated into the Digital Strategy attached to this report at Appendix 1.

Has it been or will it be considered by any other Council Committee, Advisory Panel or other body?

No

Will this report go to Council?

Yes, 21 February 2017

Report title: Digital Coventry Strategy

1   Context (or background)

1.1   Internet and digital technologies have transformed lives on a global scale and continue to do so at an ever-increasing pace. The effect has been to revolutionise banking, shopping, health care and social interaction as well as the places where we live and work. Companies such as Google, Twitter, Facebook, Uber and Airbnb are all now household names, even though they are relatively new, they have developed fast. Having access to high speed internet is now often described as the fourth utility – and is an important consideration for residents and businesses when considering living, working or investing in a city.

1.2   Digital technologies are helping to plan better, more sustainable growth in cities worldwide: to make cities better connected, safer, greener and better places to live. The pace of technology evolution is also changing what people want from the services that the public sector - including the Council - provides. People want transactional services and information to be available through their own device, any time, day or night - mirroring the experience they have with banking and retail. Even services that require some form of human interaction, including social care, can be enhanced by technology and can often help people to live independently for longer or for families to better support their loved ones.

1.3   Digital change is already happening and it is important that Coventry understands how we can harness these changes to best effect – for the Council, for customers, for residents and for Coventry. Today computer skills and knowledge of the internet allow people to find new and better jobs, work in more flexible ways, enable inexpensive forms of communication and social interaction to community infrastructures and government services, improve access to learning opportunities and provide access to more convenient and often cheaper products and online services

1.4   It is important that despite the widespread nature and uptake of digital technology, we don't leave residents behind who don't have the skills or access to take advantage of this opportunity. Digital inequality matters because those without access and the right combination of access, skills, motivation and knowledge are missing out on important areas of the digital world. This does not just impact individuals but also on families, communities, political processes, democracy, public services, economic and social health.

1.5   Digital is a fundamental part of the change that Coventry needs to embrace, to develop the physical environment of the city and deliver on the ambition of becoming an even greater place to do business.

1.6   We do not have the funding, capacity and all of the expertise to deliver the digital innovation that we know would benefit the city. We have strong partners, including two world class universities, communities and businesses in the city who are already engaged in digital innovation – relationships we can develop to make Coventry digital.

1.7   We know that digital can help us to achieve the reductions in the cost of public services through increased efficiency, automation and effectiveness. We can use digital to increase the productivity of the public sector workforce – through flexible and agile working. We can also use the opportunity of digital to completely rethink the way we deliver services rather than just computerising them – this work is enabling at least £1m of savings to be delivered and forms part of future savings within our Budget plans.

1.8   The ability to operate in a digital age is a key skill for all of our residents, and in particular young people leaving school. This will help to increase their job readiness and ability to

thrive in work, maximising the use of technology to support health, wellbeing, community networks and democracy through a person's life.

1.9   We recognise too that there is a need for human interaction – digital can enhance the way that services are delivered and the way that people want to live. There are also new challenges that arise as a result of the digital revolution including cyber-security and cyber-bulling – issues that also require management and new thinking.

1.10   Therefore by recognising these issues and the opportunities digital brings, it is important that a city wide, co-ordinated approach is taken and the Council uses this as it develops policy, financial and service plans. The Digital Coventry Strategy attached to this report at Appendix 1 delivers the framework to achieve this.

2   Options considered and recommended proposal

2.1   Not adopting the strategy would leave Coventry at a disadvantage compared to other UK cities in digital adoption and transformation. Projects may not be coordinated effectively and we may not necessarily focus our resources on the correct priorities for the greatest outcomes.

2.2   Coventry could fall behind in key aspects of digital, such as broadband speeds, that would have an impact on growing the local economy and the quality of life for our residents.

2.3   The aims of our digital strategy are to:

- Set the scene for Coventry City Council and partners for the future direction of digital services, infrastructure and innovation.
- Be an over-arching document that gives a clear direction of where the Council, working alongside all of our partners, wants to be in the next five years – recognising we will continually adapt and evolve to keep up to date with the latest advances in digital technologies.
- Focus limited public resources to achieve the best digital outcomes across the whole Council, the city and beyond.
- Encourage and direct investment in the digital programme by others and to maximise limited public resources.
- Encourage services, people and organisations to work together to share developments and knowledge.
- Address the growing demand for digital services and focus on what residents want in order to deliver outcomes that matter to them.
- Enable the Council, residents, businesses and partners to get the most out of digital.

2.4   The strategy sets our 4 priority themes and case studies that describe existing activity against those themes:

- **Digital place** – Infrastructure, digital innovation and data are promoted within the city to deliver economic growth and public service reform.
- **Digital customer and inclusion** – Enabling customers to get the information they need and to access our services through online self-service.
- **Digital communities** – Using digital technology to engage with our citizens and to work closely with our partners to address complex issues and help people to live independently for longer.
- **Digital workforce** – Enabling a workforce which has access to the right tools to do its job and is confident in maximising the use and benefits of technology in its daily work.

2.5   Our aspirations for the next five years will see a clear shift in the way our customers engage with the Council. Advances in digital solutions as to the way we store and analyse data will enable us to be clearer about how and when we should be delivering services. We aim to influence that all residents and businesses across the city will have access to superfast broadband and be confident in realising its potential. External funding streams to date have focussed on the provision of super-fast broadband to businesses, which in

turn offer some opportunity to reduce barriers to connecting residential areas. The Council will continue to work with suppliers, partners and Government to influence the delivery of broadband to residents. We also aim to influence that Coventry will have high coverage of ultra-fast broadband realised through pro-active relationships with suppliers and partners. People will be able to access free Wi-Fi across the city as we continue to increase the number of public Wi-Fi hotspots across the whole city.

2.6 Cabinet is recommended to approve the strategy to maximise the opportunities that digital technology will deliver for the Council, for customers, for residents and for Coventry.

3 Results of consultation undertaken

3.1 None.

4 Timetable for implementing this decision

4.1 Subject to approval it is proposed to adopt the strategy with immediate effect.

5 Comments from Executive Director, Resources

5.1 Financial implications

There are no direct financial implications of adopting the strategy. We will work to maximise the use of existing budgets to deliver the aims of the strategy and to leverage external funding or partner effort where possible. We will also work to ensure that the strategy underpins saving delivery across the organisation as set out in para 1.7.

5.2 Legal implications

The strategy provides a high level framework to facilitate the council becoming a 'digital council'. The Government Digital Strategy of 2012 set the scene for digital change. The implementation of digital strategy will need to ensure that the council complies with relevant legislation such as Data Protection Act.

6 Other implications

6.1 How will this contribute to achievement of the Council's key objectives / corporate priorities (corporate plan/scorecard) / organisational blueprint / Local Area Agreement (or Coventry Sustainable Community Strategy)?

6.1.1 Adoption of this strategy aligns with and supports the Council Plan as digital changes create the opportunity for innovation and growth, improving the lives of Coventry residents and helping the Council to deliver outcomes in a more effective and efficient way, working with partners and residents.

6.1.2 It also supports the draft City Centre Area Action Plan by encouraging the expansion of digital infrastructure.

6.1.3 The strategy also supports the CWLEP Strategic Economic Plan by unlocking programmes that address digital connectivity.

6.1.4 Adoption of the strategy also aligns with the WMCA Strategic Economic Plan by promoting digital as a key driver to growth and productivity.

6.2 How is risk being managed?

6.2.1   The risk of resources not being aligned to the appropriate digital priorities is being managed through the creation of a Digital Coventry Governance Board. This has been created to have an oversight of all activity that contributes to the delivery of the Digital Coventry Strategy ensuring that digital activity across the organisation is co-ordinated and in line with the aspirations of the Strategy.

6.3   **What is the impact on the organisation?**

6.3.1   The outcomes from new and existing Digital projects and work may not be maximised if we do not take a strategic approach to digital. This could lead to an impact on ability to deliver services in an efficient and effective manner impacting on the quality of life for our residents.

6.3.2   A lack of investment in the digital infrastructure across the city would lead to Coventry falling further behind in broadband speeds and connectivity which would have a negative impact on the local economy.

6.4   **HR Implications**

6.4.1   There are no direct HR implications as a result of this report. HR impacts would be considered for each individual programme launched via the strategy. The Council's draft Workforce Strategy includes the importance of digital and commits to developing a Digital Skills Strategy and plans.

6.5   **Equalities / EIA**

6.5.1   As the strategy is an over-arching document it has been determined that an Equalities and Consultation Analysis is not required. The individual digital programmes that support the Digital Coventry strategy will cover the specific equality considerations that impact on their scope.

6.6   **Implications for (or impact on) the environment**

6.6.1   The actual impacts on the environment would be considered for each individual programme launched via the strategy.

6.6.2   However it is envisaged that the strategy would promote positive impacts on the environment in a number of ways. For example data from traffic monitoring or weather patterns from networked monitoring stations across our highways infrastructure could lead to informed decisions on traffic management that would reduce carbon emissions. Faster broadband speeds could see more people working from home reducing the carbon footprint for Coventry.

6.7   **Implications for partner organisations?**

6.7.1   Over the next 12 months we will work more closely with partners in the city to progress the digital agenda, including Warwick and Coventry Universities, technology suppliers, businesses and innovators and providers who are delivering infrastructure within the city. It is expected that through this closer working the delivery of key aspects for digital innovation will be expedited as priorities, resources and investment opportunities are aligned. The Council will also include digital in its commissioning and procurement activities.

Report authors:

Name and job title:
Lisa Commane, Assistant Director ICT, Transformation and Customer Services
Paul Ward, Head of ICT Strategy, Systems and Development.
Gary Griffiths, Lead ICT Strategy Delivery Manager

Directorate:
Resources

Tel and email contact:
024 7678 7542
Paul.ward@coventry.gov.uk

(All queries should be directed to the above person)

Contributor/ Approver name	Title	Directorate	Date doc sent out	Date response received or approved
Contributors:				
Marc Greenwood	Head of Business Systems and Continuous Improvement	People	31/10/16	03/11/16
Andy Baker	Insight Manager (Intelligence)	People	31/10/16	03/11/16
Andy Williams	Resources and New Projects Manager	Place	31/10/16	03/11/16
Mamta Dhand	Organisational Development Advisor	Resources	31/10/16	03/11/16
Richard Greenslade	Technical Architect	Resources	31/10/16	03/11/16
Phil Helm	Finance Manager	Resources	31/10/16	03/11/16
Mark Chester	Head of ICT Infrastructure and Operations	Resources	31/10/16	03/11/16
Alison Hook	Communications Manager (Digital and e-Communications)	Chief Execs	31/10/16	03/11/16
Jane Murphy	Head of Transformation and Major Projects	Resources	31/10/16	03/11/16
Clare Storey	Programme Manager - Transformation	Resources	31/10/16	03/11/16
Cllr Richard Brown	Elected Member Digital Champion	-	02/11/2016	03/11/16
Approvers:				
Legal: Oluremi Aremu	Legal Services Manager	Resources	26/10/2016	26/10/2016
Finance: Rachael Sugars	Finance Manager, Resources	Resources	26/10/2016	26/10/2016
Director: Chris West	Executive Director Resources	Resources	26/10/2016	28/10/2016
Members: Councillor John Mutton	Cabinet Member – Strategic Finance & Resources	-	02/11/2016	02/11/2016

This report is published on the council's website:
www.coventry.gov.uk/councilmeetings