

Item No. 22.	Classification: Open	Date: 9 February 2016	Meeting Name: Cabinet
Report title:		Southwark's Digital Strategy	
Ward(s) or groups affected:		All wards	
Cabinet Member:		Councillor Fiona Colley, Finance, Modernisation and Performance	

FOREWORD - COUNCILLOR FIONA COLLEY, CABINET MEMBER FOR FINANCE, MODERNISATION AND PERFORMANCE

I am delighted to present Southwark's digital strategy for cabinet approval. This strategy has been led by Councillor Radha Burgess, the council's deputy cabinet member for digital strategy. Her unique role demonstrates how committed Southwark Council is to becoming a truly digital council and a digital borough.

The strategy explores the value digital can bring and the challenges we will inevitably encounter. The arguments for going digital are persuasive, especially in the current economic climate and immense budget challenge facing the council. This is a key factor in our realisation that no amount of "salami-slicing" of costs can deliver the services we need. Instead, it requires a radical re-imagining of how we deliver services and manage operations. If we embrace digital, the potential is enormous: reduced costs, increased efficiencies, better interactions with residents, better use of data and - the great prize - improved outcomes and better lives for the people we serve.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That the Cabinet approves Southwark's Digital Strategy as per Appendix 1.
2. That the Cabinet notes the Digital Strategy summary as per Appendix 2.
3. That the Cabinet notes the Equality and Health Analysis as per Appendix 3.
4. That the Cabinet notes the Digital Strategy will be a regularly reviewed document that will be updated, following the present iteration, to reflect the needs of our customers and the ambitions of the council.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

5. Southwark Council is embracing digital as an opportunity to transform how we deliver services and interact with our customers. In doing so we can realize resource efficiencies and financial savings and be in the best position to provide an excellent digital service for customers that is reliable, safe and consistent.
6. Southwark's Digital Strategy is the first document of its kind at Southwark Council and the impetus for digital transformation. There are two key aspects to Southwark going digital: becoming a digital council and developing a digital borough.

7. A digital council focuses on understanding the needs of our customers and putting them at the center of all digital design and change, using customer feedback to continuously review and update our services. This is a new way of working for the majority of the organisation and this approach must underpin an accepting, digital culture within the organisation in order to be successful. In rethinking and delivering digital services we must also support those in our community who may be digitally excluded: not having access or the skills to use digital services.
8. In developing a digital borough we will continue to work closely with our communities, increasing access to digital infrastructure by improving accessibility and usability of the digital services we provide. Minimizing digital exclusion is a key focus and we will continue to work with parts of our communities likely to be excluded to support the development of digital capabilities and confidence.
9. Going digital is less about IT technologies and hardware and more about developing a culture within Southwark Council and beyond into our communities that embraces digital as the norm, internally using digital tools as part of service design and choosing digital as a legitimate way of communicating with all of our customers. The technologies we use are important to enable this change and the detail of how we will do this will be addressed in a separate Technology Strategy led by IT.
10. Our digital vision is to use technology in our operations and service delivery to improve outcomes and the lives of the people we serve. By improving our digital services customers will move away from traditional methods of contact by choice-‘digital by default.’
11. The case for digital in Southwark is compelling. There are significant benefits Southwark can realize by actively improving our digital offering.
 - The minimization of waste and duplication of internal processes
 - We can create and maintain a web presence that customers choose to consistently use
 - Make financial and resource savings across the organisation
 - Reinvest savings and resource into supporting the vulnerable in our communities.
12. Having regularly conducted surveys of our residents four specific groups have been identified who are more likely to be digitally excluded: residents over 60 years of age, disabled people, council tenants and the unemployed or those in low income jobs. Approximately 40,000 Southwark residents do not have the skills to perform basic tasks on the internet. A key objective of the digital strategy is to work with these parts of the community to minimize the likelihood of digital exclusion.
13. The context for digital change across government is the Government Digital Strategy of 2012. This central government strategy estimates savings between £1.7 and 1.8 billion per year from moving services from offline to digital channels. A key part of this saving is attributed to transactional services such as online payments. A further impetus for change in Southwark are the impending financial cuts to the council budget and the recognition that we need to radically rethink how we deliver services in order to meet budgetary commitments without compromising vital services.

14. To enable the digital by default approach and to act as a digital council we will:
- Establish a standardised approach to digital service redesign
 - Utilise corporately endorsed digital tools: online application forms (eforms), digital payments, Customer Relationship Management IT system and My Southwark
 - Streamline internal, manual processes and scrutinize back office systems
 - Make best use of IT infrastructure to enable sharing of non sensitive data across departments
 - Share our experiences and lessons learnt from engaging with customers and from enabling change.
15. The strategy is centered around four digital principles that will guide Southwark Council in all digital change: customer led service improvement, digital culture, digital inclusion and continuous improvement.
16. **Principle 1 - “Putting the customer at the centre of digital change”**
Many of the ways we work as an organisation have been designed to reflect our internal structures and reflect processes that have built up over time. We will change this by putting our customers at the centre of the way we work. We will put ourselves in the customer's shoes and re-imagine services around them, using digital tools to make their experience of interacting with us smoother and quicker. We will develop relationships with our customers where they feel confident that the feedback they provide will be acted upon.
17. **Principle 2 - “Putting digital ways of working at the heart of our organisational culture”**
We will change the way we think of ourselves as an organisation by embedding digital ways of working at all levels of our organisation. We will build our digital capability, encouraged by our senior managers, by investing in our infrastructure and the skills of our workforce. Wherever possible, we will make digital ways of working part of everyone's day jobs and cultivate an environment of digital self-confidence and capability. We will provide a digital infrastructure that staff can rely on to make their jobs easier.
18. **Principle 3 -“Ensuring that everyone can share in the benefits of digital change”**
As we change the way we work, we will ensure that our customers are not left behind and unable to access the services and support they need. We recognise that the most vulnerable in our community may need extra help. By doing things more efficiently through digital, we can make best use of our time and expertise, reinvesting it into supporting the vulnerable of our community in accessing our services.
19. **Principle 4 - “Committing to continuously improve our services”**
We will take an iterative approach to maintaining and improving our services by making small and incremental improvements. Instead of completely rethinking our approach every few years, we will regularly check in with our customers and obtain feedback so we can continuously improve our services. In doing so we can save money by minimizing the need to overhaul and redesign our services from scratch every few years.
20. Five priority areas have been identified as a focus for organisational change: a

transformed website, making best use of digital infrastructure, smarter ways of working with business intelligence and analytics, digital inclusion and digital communication.

21. In order to promote and support digital delivery and the Digital Strategy in Southwark a number of key follow up activities will be carried out including: establishing a governance and performance framework that will create uniformity across the organisation, identify and implement success criteria to measure success and customer satisfaction; advocate for each service area to develop a Digital Action Plan; and publishing a series of key documents for service managers and change agents within the organisation to enable digital transformation amongst many other activities. External to the organisation, engagement with the business community and entrepreneurs of Southwark will further support the promotion of digital in the borough.
22. The Digital Strategy is a guide for service managers to lead digital service design and transformation and how best to play a key part in developing a digital culture within Southwark Council.
23. The Digital Strategy will be a live document that is regularly reviewed and updated to reflect the needs of our customers and the ambitions of the organisation.

KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

24. Supporting documents to the Digital Strategy, relating to digital transformation, will be published for service managers and other change agents within the organisation. These will include detailed information on subjects such as digital payments, channel shift and guidelines for the main, corporate website.
25. A separate Technology Strategy specifically addressing access to and best use of IT infrastructure, including plans to future proof infrastructure in line with our digital ambitions as set out in the Digital Strategy, will be published in 2016.
26. Monitoring and evaluation metrics to measure the impact of the Digital Strategy on internal and external customers will be identified and implemented.
27. The Digital Transformation Programme will be the corporate mechanism for coordinating and monitoring digital change projects across the council as delivered by service areas.
28. The Transformation team will provide support and expertise to enable services to design and implement digital service improvements. These improvements will enable service areas to realize efficiencies and financial savings and improve customer experiences.

Community impact statement

29. The Equality and Health Impact assessment for the Digital Strategy is attached as Appendix 3. The impact assessment, like the Digital Strategy, is a living document and will be updated as more data and evidence is collated on the protected characteristics. It will be a requirement of all major digital projects established as a result of the strategy, to conduct impact analyses, as led by service areas, in order to mitigate any potential negative impacts of introducing

digital change.

30. As the Digital Strategy is an impetus for digital change within the organisation it is expected that a number of digital projects across the organisation will be introduced. For all major existing and future digital projects, service areas will be required to carry out an impact assessment to fully understand how various parts of our communities will be affected by the introduction of a digital service. Greater emphasis will be placed on those projects looking to phase out and close traditional engagement methods, the implications of such changes and the measures to be put in place to support the vulnerable in our communities to continue to access services.

Financial implications

31. The document is a strategy and as such does not carry any immediate cost or savings implications. It is expected however that the many projects flowing from this strategy will incur costs as well as produce efficiency savings, although the timing of costs and savings will not always coincide. Any costs incurred prior to efficiencies will be funded by existing project budgets, or if this is not possible, by corporate reserves. Efficiencies will be dealt with by way of the budget setting process.

SUPPLEMENTARY ADVICE FROM OTHER OFFICERS

Director of Law and Democracy

32. 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.
33. The implementation of digital strategy will need to ensure that the council comply with relevant legislation such as Data Protection Act.
34. In addition the implementation will need to have regard to the council's duties regarding best value and its duty under section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act
35. The digital strategy has an Equality and Health Impact assessment attached in appendix 3 and in addition states that the strategy will require all major digital projects established as a result of the strategy, to conduct impact analyses, as led by service areas, in order to mitigate any potential negative impacts of introducing digital change.
36. The cabinet should have regard to this assessment when considering the council's duty under the Equality Act 2010 ("the Act") which requires the council to have due regard when taking decision to the need to:
 - Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation or other prohibited conduct;
 - Advance of equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristics and those who do not share it;
 - Foster good relations between those who share a relevant characteristic and those that do not share it.

37. Of particular regard are issues of age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation.
38. Having due regard to the need to advance equality of opportunity is further defined in the Act as having due regard to the need of:
- Remove or minimise disadvantages connected with a relevant protected characteristic
 - Take steps to meet the different needs of persons who share a relevant protected characteristic
 - Encourage persons who share a relevant protected characteristic participate in public life or any other activity in which they are under-represented.

Strategic Director of Finance and Governance

39. The strategic director of finance and governance notes the strategy set out in this report, and the financial implications set out in paragraph 31.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Background Papers	Held At	Contact
None		

APPENDICES

No.	Title
Appendix 1	Southwark's Digital Strategy (circulated separately)
Appendix 2	Southwark's Digital Strategy Summary (circulated separately)
Appendix 3	Southwark's Digital Strategy: Equality and Health Analysis(circulated separately)

AUDIT TRAIL

Cabinet Member	Councillor Fiona Colley, Finance, Modernisation and Performance	
Lead Officer	Gerri Scott, Strategic Director of Housing and Modernisation	
Report Author	Heena Greenleaves, Project Manager	
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Dated	28 January 2016	
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CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES / CABINET MEMBER		
Officer Title	Comments Sought	Comments Included
Director of Law & Democracy	Yes	Yes
Strategic Director of Finance and Governance	Yes	Yes
Cabinet Member	Yes	Yes
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