Digital Strategy 2019 – 2021

Introduction

The Council Plan "Your Nottinghamshire Your Future" sets out a clear and ambitious vision for the future of Nottinghamshire. A county that is a great place to bring up a family, to fulfil ambition, to enjoy later life and to start and grow business. This is underpinned by Departmental Strategies and Plans which set out how we intend to achieve these ambitions and ensure the provision of the best possible services for local people and improve the place in which we live, study, work and do business.

The way we operate as a Council and our approach to change are fundamental to the delivery of these plans. We want to ensure local people are supported to remain independent whilst continuing to have access to a diverse range of services; to protect and shape our local environment; to create the right conditions for a strong local economy and encourage visitors to our historic County.

It is widely acknowledged that expectations of public services are changing and the way we live our lives is changing at an unprecedented rate with ever-increasing demands for good quality services to be delivered how, when and where is most convenient for local people. We need to understand demand and our customers fully, so that services are delivered in the most effective way with customer needs and expectations at the heart of everything we do.

As resources decrease it has never been more important that we put value for money at the forefront of our thinking to make sure that we continue to provide the best possible value for our taxpayers, spending their money wisely and ensuring that we get the most out of every penny spent.

This strategy has also been developed to help ensure we have the right infrastructure in place and are doing the right things to become better connected across the whole County to support the delivery of our ambitious plans.

The Digital Strategy is about connecting people, businesses, visitors, partners and our employees to deliver independence, information, improved efficiency and improved outcomes for local people, businesses and visitors to Nottinghamshire. This Strategy sets out the overarching approaches that we will take when looking to technology to support the people of Nottinghamshire and how we will innovate and be creative in the way that we do this.

Section 1 Strategic Context

The Council is having to adapt to new ways in which local government will be funded. Services are continuing to explore ways they can work differently, both internally and in collaboration with partners, to make public money go further. We need to find innovative ways of doing business, generating sound returns for all residents and making Nottinghamshire an even better place to live, work and visit.

To meet the changing needs and ambitions of our residents, visitors and businesses, we need to think differently about how we can achieve the outcomes that are most important.

The digital strategy has been developed in the context of the key drivers which will support the County Council in delivering its commitments as set out in the Council Plan. These drivers fall into three main categories:

Strategic Drivers

A sustained reduction in Central Government funding for Councils allied to increased demand and costs for children's and adults social care mean that current forecasts show a potential funding gap which we need to address. These long term financial constraints and the increased demand for services continually challenges the County Council's existing models of service delivery to remain affordable, sustainable and relevant to service users. Key to the success of any new/revised operating models will be how we deliver services differently and more cost effectively but also how we enable people to become more connected with their communities and how we support them to remain more independent.

Service Drivers

Managing a continuing increase in service demand from a wide range of stakeholders including citizens, visitors, businesses, partners, and employees. Key to the success of this new strategy will be the ability for us to: make it easier for all stakeholders to understand changes; improve access to services; make all stakeholders feel part of something through better connectivity and links to us and to their communities.

Technology Drivers

Technology keeps improving, is ever changing and more easily available. As a Council we want to stay ahead of the game when it comes to improving access channels and using the most effective tools to communicate; educate and inform people; make available self-service options; have a variety of tools available to enable people to be, and remain, more independent.

Section 2 Digital Transformation

Why Digital?

Digitalisation isn't about developing digital services or doing ICT projects better; it's about doing and thinking about things differently, in response to customer and user needs and expectations. Moving along our digital journey will involve the active engagement of the Council's leaders, managers and staff as well as local people and our partners – *it needs to be a lived reality and embedded in how we do things.*

The case for change is compelling. We face the challenges that many other local government organisations face; providing better services whilst coping with reduced funding, increased demand and higher customer expectations.

At the moment many local government organisations are structured in a way that residents find it difficult to understand and hard to navigate. This is changing however, and our approach needs to keep pace with the need to provide more efficient, joined-up, easily accessible solutions.

The full benefits of a more integrated digital approach will materialise over time but through effective leadership and change management, the embedding of a digital approach and culture can enable us to meet our overall strategic priorities enabling the people of Nottinghamshire to be:

- Healthier and more independent.
- Happy, safe and better supported in, and by, their local communities.
- Confident that their money is being spent wisely and efficiently.

- Able to feel the benefit of strong economic growth and access more work opportunities.

Where are we now?

Whilst we have made some progress, this work has to date been developed in particular service areas, often in isolation to address a specific issue. We are in the early stages of our digital transformation journey as a whole organisation. We have the appetite to do more and to move forward maximizing the use of technology and digital tools, working collaboratively and applying these across the Council to support our ambitions to improve things for local residents.

The transformation journey will never be complete as we will have to constantly respond to new challenges and to find and exploit new digital resources as they become available.

Principles:

"Digital" and the use of technology needs to be embedded in our culture and part of our way of working. To assist with this, we have developed a set of principles which will underpin our work going forward. These will need to be consistently applied to help us achieve our vision in a more cohesive whole Council approach.

We need to:

- Ensure that information and services for local people are readily

accessible and easy to use for all and no-one is disadvantaged by changes.

- Enable a degree of choice for residents, visitors and businesses in how they engage with the Council.
- Enable customers to self-serve so that they can control their interactions with the Council.
- Harness and maximise the benefits of technology for local people, their communities, businesses and people visiting the County.
- Support local people to become involved with their local communities and the Council.
- Facilitate creativity and innovation and inspire digital advancement across the County.
- Enable the Council to be more efficient and provide value for money on a sustainable basis.
- Develop a digital culture by effective digital leadership and collaborative working.
- Work collaboratively across the Council, with key stakeholders and partners to maximise the benefit and improve outcomes.
- Future proof systems, tools, processes and technology by designing and implementing with in-built flexibility and future needs in mind where possible.

Where do we want to be?

We have set out our ambitions for the future in relation to the role and vision for digital transformation in more detail in the next section.

Section 3 – Vision

NOTTINGHAMSHIRE – A SMART PLACE

Connecting local people, communities, workers, businesses and visitors.

Digital inclusion

We will work with others to create the climate and develop and deploy digital platforms, tools and approaches to:

- Ensure that local people and their communities are better connected.
- Ensure that local people are kept well informed and able to provide feedback and share their experiences.
- Enable local people to have access to information and services. This will include improving existing access and developing new self-service channels.
- Ensure local service provisions designed around local people.
- Enable residents to engage fully in their local communities and helping each other.
- Provide choice and manage service demand by enabling people to self-serve.
- Support the development of digital skills for local people in local communities.
- Enable people to remain independent and manage their own health and wellbeing. This will include roll out of digital health tools and greater use of assistive technology to improve the lives of local people.
- Support the development and roll out of "Smart Homes" and buildings as part of our wider approach to Investing in Nottinghamshire and Economic Regeneration.

Digital County

We will use proven economic drivers to create a digital economy, improve business growth and generate a positive economic climate by:

- Digital skills development working with local schools, colleges, universities, training providers and businesses to ensure we have the skills we need for the future.
- Encouraging the creation of jobs, apprenticeships and opportunities working in the digital economy across the County.
- Encouraging inward investment, new business growth and start up and growth of digital business.
- Developing the digital infrastructure across the County including fast, accessible broadband across the whole County.
- Continuing to secure funding for large infrastructure projects including new road and rail networks, cross-county developmental opportunities along with economic regeneration projects using new technology.
- Continuing our engagement with wider regional and national infrastructure and development programmes for the benefit of Nottinghamshire.
- Working with partners to be a catalyst for wider digital public services.
- Use digital tools to promote Nottinghamshire, improve the accessibility of the County and develop the local visitor economy.

Digital Council

We will embed digital principals, tools and approaches consistently across the work of the Council to deliver our corporate objectives, provide value for money and improve outcomes by:

- Investing in Nottinghamshire and using technology to help us work in a more agile way to ensure the provision of local services designed around local people.
- Using digital tools to understand, forecast and effectively manage increasing demands and changing needs for services.
- Using local intelligence, data, feedback and information to assess risk and potential impact of change and inform how we design more efficient services in the future.
- Developing our approach to service review and change to embed a more consistent application of digital principals across the Council.
- Using digital tools to embed and drive a cycle of continuous improvement as part of our performance management culture and framework.
- Developing digital leadership and champions across the Council to embed a new culture and ways of working where innovation and creativity is encouraged, and digital expertise developed.
- Developing specific digital skills and improving the broader knowledge and skill base across our workforce as part of our ongoing development programmes.

- Ensuring that our systems and processes are lean, convenient, straightforward, accessible and easy to use.
- Ensuring that service change and transformation is collaborative, cross-council and designed around the needs of customers and service users to embed and exploit the benefits of technology.
- Maximising the use of cloud-based technologies and other tools and approaches developed or used across the whole Council.
- Horizon scanning and keeping up to date on potential new ideas and approaches which could be beneficial to service re-design and delivery.

Section 4 – Approach

Maximising the use of technology, application of our digital principles and our digital infrastructure are key strands which run through the Council's overarching approach to change and transformation. Technology can provide the catalyst for change opening new possibilities for how we manage and deliver services. If digital is the engine driving change then our principles will be used to keep it on track supported by a refreshed approach to change and transformation.

Technology is not the universal solution and must be fit for purpose and used where and in a way, which is most appropriate to meet the needs of our residents. We need to have the right technology in place, consolidate and simplify our technology solutions and reduce dependency on legacy systems. This is reflected in other programmes of work such as the Cloud Programme.

One of the first areas of work will be the more detailed scoping of this programme to ensure that it builds on and aligns with work previously undertaken or already underway and sets out clear, achievable objectives and outcomes for this programme which can be clearly articulated and measured.

This early stage will also include the mapping of digital and technology applications already in place in some service areas and identify the potential for these applications to be applied more widely across the Council as a series of potential early wins. This will maximize the benefits for residents and value for money and avoid duplication and waste.

Work on the Council's "Digital Front Door" through the development of a MyNotts App is already underway to make it easier for residents to access services and resolve issues first time when and where they want.

It is also envisaged that the programme will involve further reviews of services, processes and systems to drive further change and transformation, utilising our digital principles and technology as key drivers. Clear, simple, transparent processes for implementing improvements will be developed.

One of the key aspects of this new programme of work is a whole Council approach. This will require the Council's leaders to act collectively as digital enablers, promoting the right culture and developing a digital mindset thriving on creativity, innovation and trust. Current approaches to digital skills development will be reviewed as part of the Workforce Strategy to ensure that employees have the broader digital skills they need to work effectively in new ways and that the Council has access to the more specialist skills it may require in future. Digital change leaders will inspire and ensure people are equipped to embrace these changes, identify and ensure that we capitalise on future technology and opportunities.

The Council will need to develop and work collaboratively across its services and with partners to take a consistent approach to collecting, storing and using data, insight and intelligence to inform decision making as we move towards a shared view to provide compelling evidence of the case for change. Online data and analytics and their application will enable us to predict the potential impacts of change; measure and monitor performance in a cycle of continuous improvement and identify potential solutions in real time.