

CABINET

DIGITAL STRATEGY

1 October 2019

Report of Director of Corporate Services

| PURPOSE OF REPORT | | | |
|--|-------------------------------------|------------------|------------------------------|
| To consider and approve the Council's Digital Strategy | | | |
| Key Decision | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Non-Key Decision | Referral from Cabinet Member |
| Date of notice of forthcoming key decision | 4 September 2019 | | |
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RECOMMENDATIONS OF COUNCILLORS JANICE HANSON AND TIM HAMILTON-COX

- (1) To approve the Digital Strategy set out in this report and in Appendix One.
- (2) To pre-approve the principle of funding for infrastructure works in Dalton Square, the establishment of a mechanism for delivering a full fibre network to the Lancaster district and the establishment of a collaborative workspace in Lancaster subject to reserves and capital funding bids being made in accordance with the budget framework.

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The report proposes the Council's Digital Strategy which sets out an ambition to work towards a smart district utilising technology to become a clean, green and healthy district which benefits all residents and businesses.

2.0 The Digital Strategy Vision

- 2.1 The Digital Strategy incorporates a THINK brand which will use digital methodologies and best practice in order to deliver transformation at the Council and throughout the whole district in Technology, Health, Innovation, Nature and Knowledge. The Strategy aims towards a

Gigabyte district which supports all of its citizens, the growing tech sector and key partnerships with universities, health and the third sector.

- 2.2 The Vision recognises the importance of the Council working in collaboration with other key partners, particularly the universities, in order to deliver first class infrastructure in order to support the digital economy in the district. It also recognises that digital technology contributes to a greener economy and innovation which can deliver social value enhancements in health, transport, housing and other areas of well-being.
- 2.3 Digital also provides an opportunity for the Council to transform its own service provision in order to meet rising demands and expectations with fewer resources by using data to improve services, widen access, tackle exclusion and save money through more efficient processes.
- 2.4 A summary of how the Council’s digital approach might assist in the delivery of wider objectives is included in the table below.

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| T Technology | First class technology and connectivity will not only help the Lancaster district attract high value industries, but will enable the Council to deliver wider access to good quality services. |
| H Health | Working with the Health Innovation Campus and the NHS we will be able to use internet technologies to deliver improving health outcomes. |
| I Innovation | We will build deeper relationships with the universities in order to promote the area as a leader in digital innovation and a place for businesses to come to benefit from that innovation. |
| N Nature | To counter the climate emergency, we will use cutting edge and innovative solutions to encourage green thinking and develop green technologies to reduce the district’s carbon emissions. |
| K Knowledge | We will ensure that we become a knowledge organisation in order to better serve our customers and meet increasing demands and expectations. |

3.0 Delivering the Vision

- 3.1 The table above highlights some of the outcomes that digital transformation will enable. In order to deliver the outcomes, the Council will focus on three building blocks; connectivity, collaboration and change.

Connectivity

- 3.2 Digital transformation requires excellent connectivity in the form of full fibre broadband and 5G mobile technology. The Strategy incorporates a digital infrastructure plan which seeks to deliver an open access full fibre network across the district.

3.3 The following key actions in respect of connectivity are included in the digital strategy:

- Infrastructure works in Dalton Square and Canal Quarter site to include ducts and chambers in order to extend full fibre from a Digital Exchange delivering data centre capacity for the public and private sector with high speed resilient fibre broadband.
- Development of a specification for a full fibre network across the district and a mechanism for its delivery incorporating social outcomes.

3.4 The above projects will, if the Digital Strategy is adopted, be developed into capital bids. Pre-approval for reserve funding for specialist technical and legal advice in order to draw up specifications is sought as part of the report recommendations.

Collaboration

3.5 The Strategy recognises that the Council must work with community stakeholders and local businesses, partners and experts and our local universities and colleges. These partnerships will be instrumental in building connectivity throughout the district but also in harnessing that connectivity for the good of all citizens, businesses and stakeholders.

3.6 In developing the Digital Strategy much work has already been undertaken in establishing a number of really important partnerships including one with Lancaster University. This has already reaped significant benefits which have included the Council being given free access to the University's e-campus software system which is now being used to roll out electronic signage and knowledge in Lancaster and Morecambe.

3.7 The Strategy aims to consolidate all partnerships via the creation of a THINK Board made up delegates from across partnership organisations covering the universities, colleges, NHS, local businesses and third sector organisations. Regular THINK events/workshops will be held to bring together all interested parties to discuss how collaborative working on digital can be harnessed to address key issues such as community wealth, digital exclusion, supporting the third sector, climate emergency and support for the digital economy in the district.

3.8 The Strategy sets out an ambition to develop a collaborative workspace in Lancaster, possibly using the area of the Storey to be vacated by the Visitor Information Centre, for which a capital bid will be made. The workspace would be open to all stakeholders.

Change

- 3.9 The Strategy seeks to use digital methodologies to implement significant change at the Council in order to meet rising demands and expectations from citizens at a time of reducing finances. This change will focus around our customers in order that they can easily connect with the Council at time and place of their choosing enabling them to tell us once and expect us to get it right first time. In order to deliver such change we will use technology such as the internet to transform our services and ensure that we promote more and better community participation and engagement.
- 3.10 Digital technologies will allow the Council to work in a more agile way which has the capacity to deliver significant savings from rationalisation of office space. It will also provide opportunity to reduce carbon emissions via reducing unnecessary travel, optimising routes for waste collection and litter bins and using digital technologies around paperless working.

3.0 Options and Options Analysis (including risk assessment)

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| Option 1: Adopt Digital Strategy |
| <p>Advantages</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Significant support to the Council’s economic prosperity plan by providing first class digital infrastructure such as full fibre and 5G to support a growing tech sector in the district which promotes high value and green jobs. • Focus on partnerships which will enable stakeholders to come together to deliver enhancements in health, innovation, nature and knowledge and tackle issues of social exclusion. • The use of digital methodologies at the Council will make it easier for residents to access services whilst making the Council more efficient and agile in order to better utilise its properties and reduce carbon emissions through route optimisation, reduced travel and paperless. |
| <p>Disadvantages</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None. |
| <p>Risks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are risks associated with delivering complex technology projects in order to meet digital ambitions. These risks will be managed as part of the programme and project management processes. |
| Option 2: Do not adopt the Digital Strategy |
| <p>Advantages</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More resource available for other areas of ambition. |
| <p>Disadvantages</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Lancaster district, which has a significant reliance of the technology sector, might fall behind other areas without a current strategy covering digital infrastructures and partnerships. • Council services might remain relatively less accessible and the Council would find it more difficult to drive efficiencies without coherent and integrated digital plans. |
| <p>Risks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are risks that the Lancaster economy and the Council itself will ‘fall behind’ if it is not able to adequately respond to the opportunities provided via digital technology in an organised manner. |

4. Officer Preferred Option (and comments)

4.1 The officer preferred option is Option 1.

5.0 Details of consultation

5.1 A significant number of stakeholders have been consulted as part of the Digital Strategy process. Key stakeholders from the universities, health and local digital businesses have undertaken to work with the Council on the THINK Board and attend THINK events and workshops.

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| RELATIONSHIP TO POLICY FRAMEWORK The Digital Strategy underpins all of the Council's Ambitions via the delivery of excellent digital infrastructure, partnership and change plans. | |
| CONCLUSION OF IMPACT ASSESSMENT (including Health & Safety, Equality & Diversity, Human Rights, Community Safety, HR, Sustainability and Rural Proofing): The Digital Strategy includes an action plan to tackle digital exclusion. | |
| LEGAL IMPLICATIONS There are no direct and immediate legal implications arising from the report. However, one of the key actions of the Strategy is to seek a mechanism to provide full fibre broadband throughout the district which may require a separate legal entity. | |
| FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS There are no direct implications arising from the process of agreeing the strategy. If approved, a number of reserve and capital funding bids and this is set out in the report. | |
| OTHER RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS, such as Human Resources, Information Services, Property, Open Spaces: None identified. | |
| SECTION 151 OFFICER'S COMMENTS The Section 151 Officer has been consulted and has no further comments. | |
| DEPUTY MONITORING OFFICER'S COMMENTS The Deputy Monitoring Officer has been consulted and has no further comments | |
| BACKGROUND PAPERS Appendix One – The Digital Strategy | Contact Officer: Dan Bates Telephone: 01524 582138 E-mail: dbates@lancaster.gov.uk Ref: |