

Title: Developing a Digital Strategy for South Warwickshire

Lead Officer: Head of ICT

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Hales

Wards of the District directly affected: None

Summary

To summarise the current progress being made towards Digital Transformation and introduce a new Digital Strategy.

Recommendation(s)

- (1) That the Draft Digital Strategy is accepted by Cabinet.
 - (2) That a Digital Transformation Programme is initiated to deliver the outcomes identified in the Digital Strategy.
 - (3) That a governance structure is adopted for the Digital Transformation Programme.
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1 Background/Information

1.1 A Brief History of Digital

- 1.1.1 Throughout modern history, technological innovations have altered the way that people interact, share information and deal with the world around them. Every step forward has resulted in faster, cheaper and more accessible forms of communication that have been universally adopted as part of modern life. The past 25 years have been particularly turbulent times with disruptive new technologies completely altering the way people interact and see the world.
- 1.1.2 The growth of the internet, the proliferation fast and reliable mobile communications, the evolution of the mobile phone and computer technology are just a few examples of how unbelievably powerful devices have become both accessible and necessary components of modern life. In 1993 mobile phones were silver boxes that adorned most street corners but now, they're interactive screens that live in your pocket and do a lot more than just make calls. Technology has truly revolutionised our world.
- 1.1.3 Organisations have responded to this technological explosion by offering ever more immersive and innovative services to assist, entertain and inform a growing consumer market. Technology titans such as Apple, Microsoft, Google and Amazon have diversified from their roots and integrated themselves with people's lives in previously unimaginable ways; from the office PC that knows we're typing a letter, to smart speakers that can predict your musical tastes and re-order your weekly shop. Services have never been more accessible.
- 1.1.4 More recently, notions such as the "Internet of Things" have come to reflect the interconnected world that we now live in. Inanimate "smart" devices that communicate with each other (and us) have become common place and

increasingly important as providers aim to deliver better services, more reliably and effectively. Everything from the industrial control systems that run power plants to the light bulbs in people's homes have become digitally connected; wirelessly sharing information about every measurable element of their existence over time.

- 1.1.5 All of this interactivity and massing of data has created industrial scale operations for data analytics, or Big Data as it more commonly known. The willful sharing of digitally harvested information has the power to significantly benefit people's wellbeing and improve lives around the world. It has given companies greater insight into how their services are consumed and has provided the capacity to predict future needs with increasingly accurate models.
- 1.1.6 This tremendous insight however has also provided greater ability for companies to influence how people perceive the world around them, with both positive and negative outcomes. There have been numerous recent examples, but for every negative aspect there are equally positive outcomes. Global awareness of climate change for example has never been higher and that is in part thanks to social media and the ability for individual people to influence society through timely and targeted promotion.
- 1.1.7 The Public Sector hasn't been isolated from the march of technology. However in general this has been at a much slower pace than the commercial world, which is ultimately driven by what its market requires. Ambitious programs such as the e-gov paved the way for better public services but it's not been until recent years that public organisations have truly begun to embrace digital transformation, with varying degrees of success.
- 1.1.8 Some organisations have become digital leaders, embracing all that innovative technology can offer, whilst others have remained rooted to their past. There is of course no arbitrary route for "doing digital" but what is clear is that innovation and change are both inevitable and necessary.

1.2 Definitions

1.2.1 Within this report four key terms relating to digital are used:

- Digital: Applying the culture, processes, business models and technologies of the internet era to respond to people's raised expectations (Public Digital, 2018).
- Digitisation: the capture or transfer of information from an analogue format (such as paper, microfiche, video tape) to a digital format.
- Digitalisation: the creation or reimagination of a service to be delivered holistically using digital technology.
- Digital Transformation: using digitalisation as a continuous transformative force across an entire organisation.

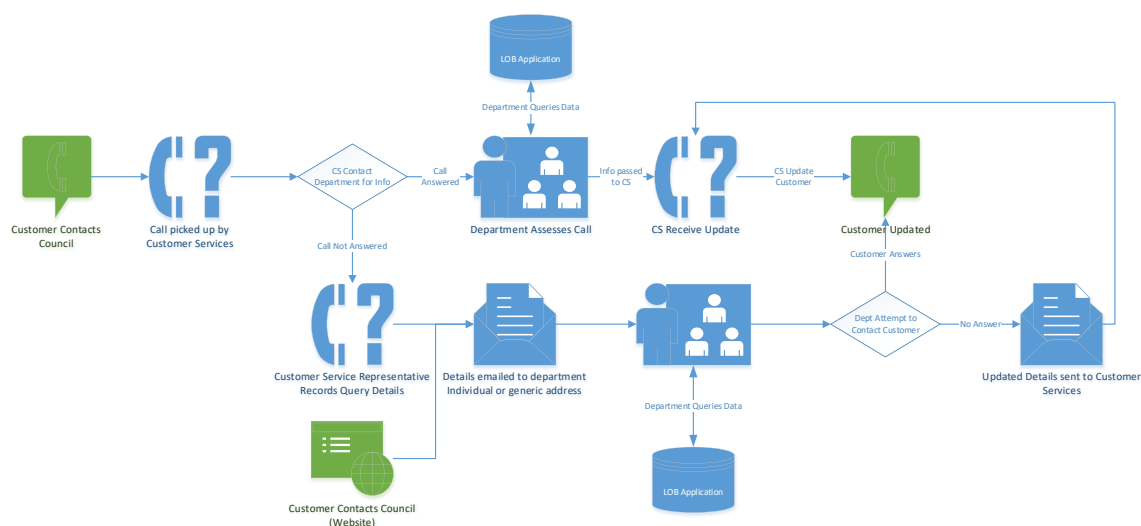
1.2.2 Reference is also made to several enabling technologies. These are:

- *Customer Relationship Management (CRM) System*

A CRM system can be used to manage the caseload created by customers contacting an organisation, direct a transaction or integrate with another application, across multiple contact channels. An example of a CRM's use is shown in figure 1.

CRM technology has the capacity to significantly alter a customer's journey through a service, not only by providing a trackable interaction, but ultimately by providing additional understanding of who, why and how people access services. This is a key component of any digitalisation process as without traceability consistent multi-channel interactions and end-to-end online processes become impossible.

Without CRM



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graph LR; A[Customer Calls Council] --> C[Call picked up by Customer Services]; B[Customer queries website using ref number provided at initial contact] --> C; C --> D[(CRM System)]; D --> E[Customer Service Updates Customer]; E --> F[Customer Updated]; F --> G[Customer advised updates available on website];
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Customer Calls Council

Or...

Customer queries website using ref number provided at initial contact

Call picked up by Customer Services

CRM System

Customer Service Updates Customer

Customer Updated

Customer advised updates available on website

Figure 1 – Technology Example - Progress Updates with and without a CRM

- *Content Management System (CMS)*

A CMS is the software used to manage the creation and delivery of an organisations digital content. Web Content Management systems (as used by SDC and WDC) deliver websites and provide tools for non-technical users to create content through a friendly, word processor style, what-you-see-is-what-you-get interface, requiring no prior knowledge of web programming languages such as HTML.

- *Low Code Platforms*

Low code is a relatively new concept that has grown in popularity over the last decade. Low code systems provide the functionality for relatively novice users to create powerful apps (such as e-forms) in a “drag and drop” type interface, without having to know how they are coded in a traditional sense. This lessens the reliance on programming experts, but such skills can be brought in to further develop a process if warranted.

1.3 **How We Currently Do Digital**

- 1.3.1 WDC and SDC have quite different approaches when it comes to dealing with digital. Whilst both organisations have had a degree of success with the partial digitalisation of some services, neither has yet reached what may be considered as a position of digital maturity. This is simply a reflection of how digital has evolved within each organisation; both of which have significant potential.
- 1.3.2 At SDC, most of the resources to support digitalisation initiatives are focused within ICT. The Council has an extensive development team who have built several key solutions that are central to any digitalisation initiative. The Council’s CMS, CRM and online forms are all in-house, built by ICT.
- 1.3.3 Typically, an SDC digitalisation project will involve a service area contacting ICT or the Council’s Ways of Working team, and members of the respective teams will then work with the service area to build a bespoke solution that meets their needs. Due to the extensive skillset of the developers, in most instances any e-forms created are integrated to a back-office system. Integration with the website and overall website development is also handled within ICT.
- 1.3.4 At WDC, a different approach is taken as there are no centralised resources to undertake digitalisation initiatives. Typically, activities will begin with a service area identifying a requirement or opportunity and resources from ICT may come into the project alongside web-design resource from the Communications team later in the implementation. Like SDC, projects tend to be service area based, but each project can continue to evolve independently.
- 1.3.5 WDC’s key systems which directly support digital delivery are also independent. The Council’s CMS and low code e-Forms package are provided by Jadu, but an alternative e-forms and customer portal solution also exists in the Council’s Arcus platform, which is built on the Salesforce CRM. Jadu also has a CRM module, but this is not currently licensed, which limits the capabilities of the low-code e-forms module.
- 1.3.6 Access and uptake of digital services at both authorities is currently organically grown. Customers are given the choice of multiple channels, but no ongoing initiatives are employed to encourage the adoption of online services. Both Council’s make use of a range of social media outlets such as Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn, but these are not used as two-way communication tools.

1.4 Why Digital Transformation is Important

- 1.4.1 Both WDC and SCD face extremely challenging futures. Table 1 shows a basic analysis of some issues facing both authorities and whilst not explored in great depth, the factors are all significant. However, both Council's financial sustainability is the most significant risk as if this is not addressed, it could undermine the very existence of both SDC and WDC in the medium term.
- 1.4.2 For each threat, a digital opportunity is also presented. This demonstrates the potential importance of digital as a transformative force that can actively address the challenges both authorities face.

Threat	Opportunity
<i>Political</i>	
<p>Local Government Re-organisation may see the demise of district level councils in favour of unitary organisations.</p> <p>It may be seen that digitalisation is a threat to resident's access to services or as a back-door method of reducing service quality.</p>	<p>DLUHC, GDS and the LGA are actively encouraging government at all levels to embrace digitalisation as a means of improving or maintaining standards of service against challenging operational backdrops.</p> <p>Creating an extremely efficient digital organisation can contribute positively to people's opinion of their local council, raising the council's value to residents.</p> <p>Digitalisation opens the delivery of council services to democratic scrutiny. Services can be designed in an open and collaborative way and their success ultimately measured in an agreed format.</p> <p>All service users can benefit from the effects of digital service design, regardless of their preferred service channel.</p>
<i>Economic</i>	
<p>The Medium-Term Financial Strategies of both WDC and SDC predict significant shortfalls over the next 5 years.</p> <p>Funding for local government is increasingly short term, the requirement to bid for specific initiatives is increasing as is the need for alternative funding.</p> <p>Demand for services and the costs of supporting them is generally increasing and the Council has limited capability to deal with this in the medium term.</p> <p>The financial health of the organisations may prevent adequate investment in digital initiatives with a high up-front-cost.</p>	<p>Effective Digitalisation will generate significant, long term financial savings as a direct result of process change; ultimately, processes should be faster, more efficient and consistently successful.</p> <p>Having effective digital council services, a digitally skilled workforce and insight into community needs can all help to attract external investment and improve the areas overall economic outlook.</p> <p>Digitalisation initiatives should be supported by a comprehensive business case that outlines the needs and the anticipated benefits. These benefits can be carefully monitored to ensure both quality and financial returns.</p>
<i>Social</i>	
Public confidence in Council's to deliver	The Council can set standards that all

<p>services digitally has been historically damaged by half-hearted transformations that do not generate promised outcomes.</p> <p>An entire generation is now accessing Council services who have never known life before the internet and expect to interact with the Council on their terms.</p> <p>Local authorities can be plagued by “we’ve always done it that way” or similar mentalities that inhibit change and prevent the development of truly transformational solutions.</p> <p>Legacy delivery methods for some services are exclusive to some customer segments in a modern society. The notion that all people will be able to access services between 9am and 5pm, Monday to Friday is a relic of the past and does not fit with 21st Century life.</p> <p>There is misconception that the demographics of some areas will not lend themselves to using digital services.</p>	<p>newly digitalised services will work first time, every time and introduce a cycle of continuous improvement. This will help to earn the trust of our communities by producing services that they want to use and have confidence in.</p> <p>The forthcoming merger of Council services will provide the best opportunity to naturally undertake a digital transformation programme – designing services from the ground up with a digital perspective in mind.</p> <p>Digitalised services, through their very design open opportunities to improve how services are delivered and to work beyond the traditional 9am to 5pm boundaries. Well-designed, integrated customer journeys and interactions can fulfil a huge role in modern society.</p> <p>Society has become more accepting of online services. In customer segments that do to traditionally embrace being online, the cascade effects of digital service design will still offer them improved services.</p>
<i>Technological</i>	
<p>There is limited understanding of the technology required for digital delivery outside of ICT and this technology is always changing.</p> <p>It is very easy to buy tailored solutions that meet the specific needs of one part of the organisation, but this comes at great expense and potentially to the detriment of other areas.</p> <p>There is significant scope for technology products to go wrong or for investments to be made that do not deliver the expected outcomes.</p>	<p>Digital transformation presents the opportunity to empower our staff with the skills and knowledge required to make better use of the technology they have and to imagine new solutions using future technology they could have.</p> <p>Digital transformation seeks to create reusable technology solutions that can be shared across multiple areas, to meet common needs in an effective way. With the forthcoming service transformation, massive opportunity exists to de-duplicate services and re-invest in better solutions for the long term.</p> <p>Each digital initiative can be carefully managed to ensure that what’s required is understood and that the solutions introduced meet or exceed this need. Where failures do happen, we will learn quickly and using as much “off the shelf” technology as possible will limit the exposure to expensive issues.</p>
<i>Environmental</i>	
<p>Climate Change represents a significant threat to the world and the computational requirements to underpin digitalisation along with the supporting facilities will all require massive amounts of power.</p>	<p>Effective digitalisation and transformation within the Councils could offset the impacts of datacentre generated carbon emissions by a huge degree and the environmental credentials of any underpinning service provider could also</p>

Some digitalisation programmes can result in the dispersal of CO ₂ emissions to other less efficient sources.	be scrutinised to minimise and limit and direct impact. Services should be designed for both operational and environmental efficiency. For example, promoting the use of electronic communication over printed paper, the use of smart sensors within buildings to limit energy usage or the continued virtualisation of meetings to avoid travel.
<i>Legal</i>	
Heavy reliance on digitalisation could have data protection implications should the authority ever be subjected to a malware intrusion that impacts on the confidentiality, integrity or availability of data. The Council's workforce is heavily unionised. Digitalisation may be seen as a threat which could result in action.	Digital Transformation presents the opportunity to fundamentally redesign services with privacy and security as a prime consideration; rather than being an added extra, these considerations can be at the centre of what we do. Digitalisation can make processes more efficient. A potential consequence of this is that staff are released from mundane and robotic activities, giving them more time to use their skills on tasks which may be of greater benefit to our communities long term. Digitalisation can also potentially mitigate some staff pressures when resources are limited or reduced and facilitate a more flexible use of the workforce.
<i>Table 1 – Basic PESTEL analysis of factors affecting WDC and SDC</i>	

- 1.4.3 It is an unavoidable fact that both Councils must make significant changes if they are to remain sustainable for the long term. Digital Transformation, whilst not a silver bullet for all Council problems, does represent a significant opportunity to fundamentally review and improve how the organisations currently operate and contribute towards financial stability, whilst also addressing other challenges.

1.5 **Internal Issues We Face**

1.5.1 ***Drive for Digitalisation***

Neither Council currently has an adopted Digital Strategy, which is reflected in the achievements of each to date. Beyond the immediate delivery of e-forms on each Council's website, development towards digitalising services is relatively limited. Some examples of progress do exist, but these are isolated and not typical of the wider Council.

There is no active plan or palpable ambition to take digital forward. Initiatives which are led by service areas may have success within their own limited scope and likewise, projects led by ICT may have some impact, but this will only be for a short time. For digital to truly affect transformation change, leadership and ownership must come from the top, at a strategic level.

1.5.2 ***We've Always Done It That Way...***

Possibly the most damaging words any advocate for change will ever hear, but which encapsulate the problems both WDC and SDC face when initiating change. Both Councils have examples of past digitalisation initiatives that have met with resistance.

Change Management is a problem in many local government settings, but our current working methods simply exacerbate this. We don't actively cultivate an environment where change is normalised, where experimentation is encouraged or where challenge to "the norm" is readily accepted. Effective digitalisation empowers staff to challenge what they do and encourages experimentation. Where initiatives fail, the failure is fast, lessons are learnt and the service moves on quickly. This is a significant cultural shift that will not become embedded without encouragement.

1.5.3 ***Resources to Support Digital Transformation***

In a typical digitalisation project, specialist business analysis staff will work with teams to evaluate how a service is delivered, objectively and robustly challenge it and then redesign the processes from a digital first standpoint. Input to the process is taken from all stakeholders; from the customer who uses the service to the driver who delivers the final leg.

This service design methodology is well documented and championed by the Government Digital Service. Unfortunately, neither Council currently has capacity to complete this type of work.

Equally, the co-ordination of digitalisation projects (and programmes) is a massive undertaking. The number of moving parts and interdependencies to keep track of is not something that can be done alongside an officer's day-job, particularly for larger transformation programmes. Yet this is currently what happens and neither council has dedicated project management resource that is tied to digital transformation.

We cannot commence a period of significant change, that requires tremendous amounts of transformation, without having sufficient resource to support it. To do so, will result in failure or significant expenditure that either generates limited improvements or potentially makes things worse.

1.5.4 ***Complexity of Supporting Systems***

Both WDC and SDC operate a significant number of legacy line-of-business applications. Some of these applications despite their age remain supported by the supplier and are widely used within the local government space. But this does not mean they will be fit for use within the South Warwickshire Council of the future or adequately provide for services now.

Table two identifies the major line of business applications in use by services at both Councils.

Many of systems in use were introduced before digital was an area of interest for local authorities. As a result, some legacy systems can be extremely inflexible and often software providers will not support any kind of integration or online service presence unless it is using add-on software they have produced. Whilst this does sometimes solve an immediate problem, it ultimately furthers the Council's reliance on a particular platform and makes additional enhancement even more difficult.

Service Area	Warwick DC	Stratford DC
Revenues and Benefits	Civica	Civica
Housing Services	MIS Active H	Uniform Arbitra
Planning and Building Control	Idox Accolade	Idox Uniform
Customer Services	Cisco Telephony No CRM	Mitel Telephony In-House CRM
Regulatory Services	Civica APP Arcus	Idox Uniform
Legal Services	NA	Iken
Democratic Services	CMIS	Modern Gov
Elections	Express	Express
Finance	Tech One FMS	Civica Financials
GIS	GGP	ESRI
Website	Jadu CMS	In-house CMS
Document Management	Multiple application specific vendors	Multiple application specific vendors
Payments	Capita Allpay	Capita Allpay
BACS DD	Bottom Line e-Pay	Pay Gate
LLPG	Idox Accolade	Idox Uniform
Asset Management	Active H	Idox
Licensing	APP	Uniform
Payroll and HR	iTrent	iTrent Tempus
Carparks	Chipside	Chipside
Document Capture	Adhoc	Kofax
<i>Table 2 - Major Line of Business Applications in use at both Councils.</i>		

Figure two shows the impact this currently has on services provided from WDC's website which is supported by no less than 12 different systems. The situation is similar at SDC which also makes use of information and portals from several different line of business applications.

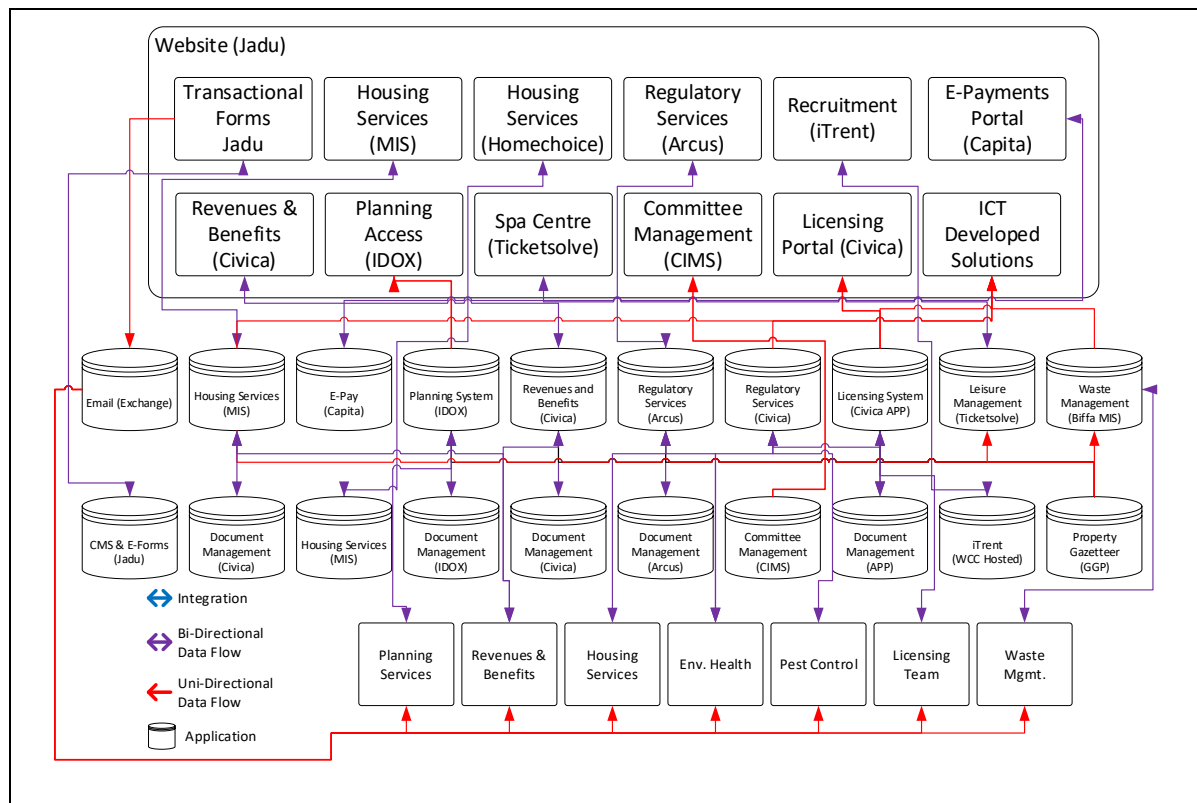


Figure 2. Supporting Systems

The diagram shows some of the systems currently supporting WDC's website. As shown, this is a complex set of interactions and whilst efforts have been made to ensure these systems appear as a part of WDC's website, they are not fully integrated. SDC's web-presence is similarly complex with multiple line of business applications supporting the website's delivery.

1.5.5 **We Can Do Better**

Both WDC and SDC identify a core need to deliver excellent services for the communities they serve. This is listed in both Council's corporate plans as a strategic priority and as service providers, we have a responsibility to follow this commitment through.

Our current digitalisation efforts are largely surface level. In some instances, they would be better described as digitisation efforts as all we have achieved is creating better ways to capture information in a quasi-electronic format. WDC's website for example has 144 e-forms deployed yet 91% do nothing more than generate an email. Many digital transactions still ultimately result in human intervention and very rarely is a process fully electronic from start to finish.

Furthermore, the siloed and unstructured nature of digital development means that services previously could make significant investments in solutions which meet their specific needs but fail to address a wider corporate requirement. Or in some instances, that wider need is recognised, but a structured plan to address it is not developed.

2 Alternative Options available to Cabinet

2.1 Allow Service Areas to Direct Their Own Digital Journey

- 2.1.1 This option is essentially continuing as is without adopting the Digital Strategy. Service areas within the Council will continue to identify digital opportunities as needs develop or as suppliers market new or improved solutions to them. Some improvements may be made, but ultimately this will be on an unplanned, ad-hoc basis. The functionality of systems will continue to be replicated and no meaningful improvements to efficiency or effectiveness are likely.
- 2.1.2 Given the pressures that each Council faces, the desire to move forward with shared services, the undeniable need for more efficient and effective service delivery and, the limited progress that has already been made by adopting this approach, this is not seen as a viable solution.

2.2 ICT Lead a Harmonisation Effort

- 2.2.1 The adoption of the strategy would be accepted, but ICT would take the leading role in trying to co-ordinate and develop a digital future for the Council.
- 2.2.2 Through the work of the Transformation Steering Group, the initiatives of each service area would be centrally co-ordinated, procurement or development of new or improved systems would be considered and carefully planned for implementation. Resourcing responsibility would rest with each service area and efforts would be made to reduce the number of systems used across the Council with duplicate functionality.
- 2.2.3 A proposal of this type would go some way to addressing the Council's digital needs, but at best it would deliver limited benefits and at worst, fail all together. This is not because ICT or the Transformation Steering Group lacks the skill or desire to conduct such a programme, but simply because digitalisation initiatives would always be seen as an ICT project. As such, they would always suffer from the same issues as many other ICT lead changes:
- Perception of digitalisation being done *to* a service rather than *with*;
 - Lack of service ownership;
 - Lack of service engagement;
 - Technological window dressing to old processes; and
 - Failing to embed changes once ICT move on.
- 2.2.4 ICT may be able to improve some processes and make some customer interactions more efficient, but ICT lacks the stature to embed real change within the organisation. The best digital transformations have leadership from the very top of an organisation down (figure 3). It is therefore not recommended that ICT alone, leads the digitalisation initiatives of WDC and SDC.

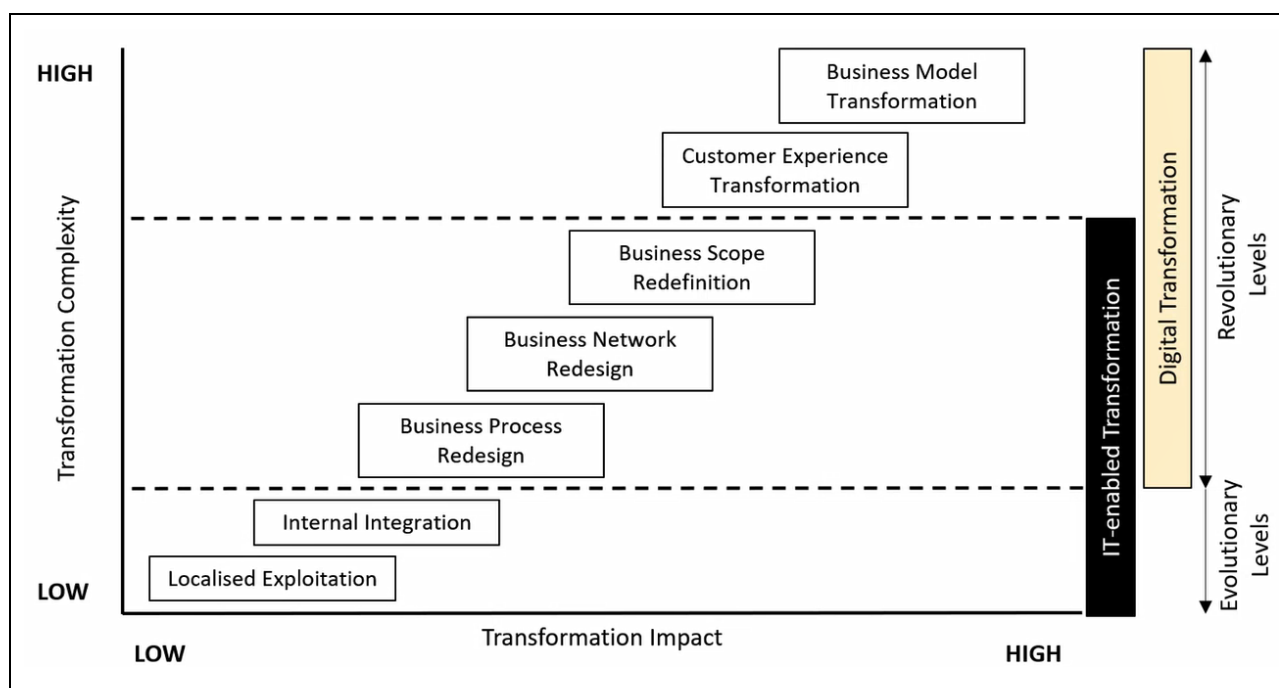


Figure 3 – Positioning Digital Transformation. Ismail et al (2017).

In 2017, work by Ismail et al. attempted to identify the transformation impact of digitalisation initiatives based on how they were led. Relatively simple improvements could easily be achieved by ICT enabled transformation, but truly revolutionary transformation had to be led from the top of the organisation. ICT would simply not be enough to transform customer experience or fundamentally alter how a business operated.

3 Consultation and Member's comments

- 3.1 This report was circulated to the Joint Advisory Steering Group prior to ascension to cabinet. The Portfolio Holder for Transformation was also consulted.

4 Implications of the proposal

4.1 Legal/Human Rights Implications

- 4.1.1 There are no Legal/Human Rights implications to this proposal however the subjects discussed may individually have implications at a later date.

4.2 Financial

- 4.2.1 The Digital Strategy seeks to identify opportunities to support the Council's long term financial stability. This report however does not quantify the financial implications for the whole strategy as each suggested work item has several potential solutions.
- 4.2.2 Should the overall strategy be agreed, a workplan for each identified stream will be completed together with a fully costed individual business case which can be considered by an appropriate body (see 6.3 – Governance Arrangements). It is important that this is considered, as the Digital Strategy itself will not save money.

- 4.2.3 The required savings will come from efficiencies within the service areas that benefit from the outcomes of the digital initiatives. As such, these benefits will need to be carefully considered and tracked throughout their lifecycle and will require the support of each dependent service area. Potential financial goals are illustrated in Table 3, which offer some basic measurements of efficiency and exhibit how the outcomes of the digital strategy can align to them.

Goal	Measure	Alignment
Continued cost management	Cost per transaction.	<p>Projects within the Digital Strategy will allow comprehensive cost measurement for transactional components throughout the lifecycle of an event. Reducing the cost of transactions which create no value to the council or customer will reveal where improvements can be made.</p> <p>The comprehensive design of frictionless, digitally based services will allow efficiencies to be identified in existing processes, that once improved will enable reduced costs.</p>
Maximise income earning opportunities	<p>Percentage of chargeable services available online.</p> <p>Income from tradeable services by channel.</p>	<p>Digital solutions can facilitate the selling of Council Services 24x7x365. Traded services such as pest control appointments, parking permits, garden waste collections, etc. should be capable of completion entirely online, with no back-office interaction.</p>
Seek best value for money	Cost per transaction by channel	<p>The development of processes from a digital first perspective will facilitate the use of automation technologies, integration of systems and the reduction of wasted effort.</p> <p>Equally, the availability of rich information that can be readily analysed will give much more visibility of how the Council's financial expenditure affects service delivery</p>

Table 3 – Illustrative Balanced Scorecard Extract for Financial Implications

The examples provided illustrate how the adoption of the Digital Strategy could ultimately assist the Council to meet its financial challenges. Whilst the strategy itself will not generate any savings, by thoroughly examining and costing how services are delivered, digitalisation can be used as an effective method of cost management and asset maximisation.

4.3 Council Plan

4.3.1 Within Warwick District Council's Business Plan there are several relevant priorities:

- Maintaining or Improving Services
 - Focusing on our customers' needs
 - Continuously improving our processes
 - Increase the digital provision of services
- Financial footing over the longer term
 - Seek best value for money
 - Better return / use of our assets
- Transforming Services

Transforming of the Council's working practices and business processes, utilising technology and enabling digital services to improve the customer experience and access, and reduce costs.
- Digital Strategy

With WDC's Business Plan, the Digital Strategy is specifically listed as a supporting document.

4.4 Environmental/Climate Change Implications

- 4.4.1 The Digital Strategy seeks to identify opportunities to support the Council's environmental and climate change policies. However, it would not be possible to quantify the potential environmental or climate change implications for the whole strategy as each suggested work item has several potential solutions.
- 4.4.2 As such, when each item on the Digital Strategy is considered, individual assessments of the environmental and climate change implications will be completed.

4.5 Analysis of the effects on Equality

- 4.5.1 The Digital Strategy seeks to identify opportunities to support the Council's drive towards equality and its policies. An example of this is shown in figure four. However, it would not be possible to quantify the potential equality implications for the whole strategy as each suggested work item has several potential solutions.
- 4.5.2 As such, when each item on the Digital Strategy is considered, individual assessments of the equality implications will be completed.

SEVERELY MENTALLY IMPAIRED APPLICATION FORM

PART A – BE TO BE COMPLETED BY/ ON BEHALF OF THE APPLICANT

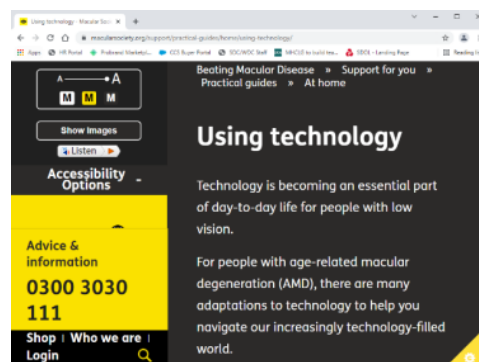
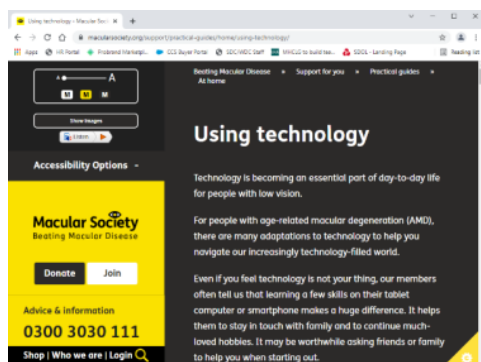
Name: [Redacted]
Date of birth: [Redacted]
Address: [Redacted]
Telephone Number: [Redacted]
Email address: [Redacted]
Council Tax account reference number: [Redacted]

I declare that the applicant is entitled to (but not necessarily receiving) one of the following

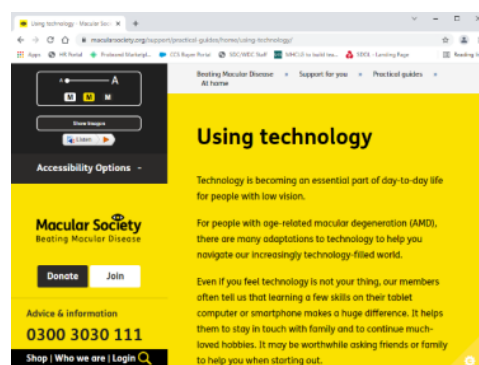
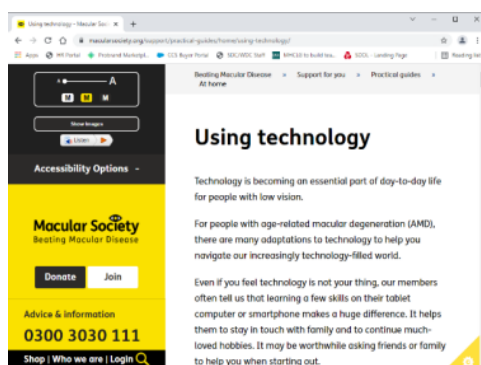
The Fight For Sight organisation's website offers a simulator to show basic effects of visual impairments. On the left is WDC's Severely Mentally Impaired application form when viewed through the eyes of someone with severe macular degeneration. On the right, is the same form viewed through the eyes of someone with cataracts. Areas of the form that may require completion are indicated in bright green – this is not something that would be shown on a printed copy of this form and has been superimposed to highlight the potential issues.

This form is presented as a PDF and as such, doesn't benefit from many of the accessibility options that it would do if it were presented as a properly accessible web form. Such as...

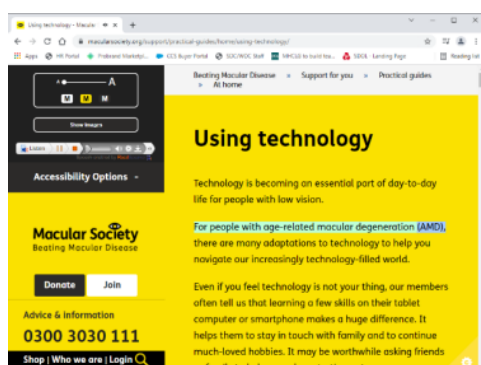
Variable Text Size and Image Toggling...



High Contrast Options...



Screen Reader Compatibility...



Try it at <https://www.macularsociety.org>

Click on the accessibility options, followed by Listen.

In this example the sentence being read is highlighted in green and the word is highlighted in blue. Each highlighted item moves along the page as its read.

On a form, as a user progresses through it the name of each field could be read out, something not possible on some types of PDF form.

Figure 4. Examples of PDF forms and accessibility issues.

PDF forms have been widely used as a means of capturing data but unless properly created, they can introduce significant accessibility issues.

Efforts to digitise data capture should always consider accessibility first and in order for any digitalisation initiative to be successful, users have to be able to access the services they require in a way that is accessible to them.

4.6 Data Protection

- 4.6.1 There are no data protection implications for the actual Digital Strategy. However, each initiative connected to the Digital Strategy will potentially have implications which will be considered when appropriate.

4.7 Health and Wellbeing

- 4.7.1 Externally, there are no health and wellbeing implications for the actual Digital Strategy. However, each initiative connected to the Digital Strategy will potentially have implications which will be considered when appropriate.
- 4.7.2 Internally, a key component of the strategy is the empowerment of staff to become a part of the digital journey, to build their skills and build confidence that they can affect and influence change within their services. Some of the potential benefits are noted in table four.

Goal	Measure	Alignment
All staff are properly trained	Percentage of staff who feel they have the digital skills they need.	Implementing the Digital Strategy is a significant business change that will require staff training and support. A regular, cyclic review of staff ability will contribute to improved services and all other measures utilised.
All staff have the appropriate tools	Percentage of staff who feel they have the correct tools to do their job.	The Digital Strategy will facilitate staff becoming more effective within their role and expand their knowledge. A regular, cyclic review of staff satisfaction with systems will contribute to improved services and all other measures utilised.
All staff are engaged, empowered and supported	Percentage of Staff who feel they have a voice in digital transformation.	Using the Digital Strategy to support change will help staff build confidence and encourage development of digital skills. Staff should feel empowered to suggest changes and identify opportunities in a supportive environment. A regular, cyclic review to identify skill gaps, and assess engagement could be a useful measure of how engaged staff are.
Continuously improve our processes	No. of Customer Complaints by Service Area	Analysing customer complaints by service area allows the Council to see how it is performing and if customer are unhappy, find out why. This facilitates continual improvement within both services that have not been subject to digital transformation and in areas that have, but still require improvement.

Table 4 - Illustrative Balanced Scorecard Extract for Innovation and Learning
The examples provided illustrate how the adoption of the Digital Strategy could ultimately have a positive impact on staff's health and wellbeing. Whilst the strategy itself will generate significant change, a key component is involving staff with this change and equipping them with the skills to participate in the transformation.

5 Risk Assessment

5.1 Services continue to invest in siloed technology

This risk describes the likelihood that services will continue to invest in siloed technology that only meets the needs of their service area.			
As Is		With Recommendations	
Likelihood – High	Impact – Medium	Likelihood	Impact
Has occurred within the past 12 months.	<p>Expensive investments are made in “one trick pony” technologies.</p> <p>Financial resource that could address a wider need are exhausted.</p> <p>Systems that duplicate functionality are introduced adding unneeded costs.</p> <p>Complexity of systems remains high.</p>	Low	Low
Recommendation Impact	Adopting the Digital Strategy alongside other forms of resource management will significantly reduce the potential for services to continue working in isolation.		

5.2 Failure of Leadership to embrace and push digital

This risk describes the potential of the Council’s leadership to not fully embrace digital and its full implications, which in turn will undermine the confidence of staff and limit the success of any programme.			
As Is		With Recommendations	
Likelihood – High	Impact – High	Likelihood	Impact
Has occurred within the past 12 months.	<p>Leaders may not be challenged to embrace digital within their service.</p> <p>Staff confidence will be eroded.</p> <p>Leadership may be seen as applying “do as we say, not as we do” logic.</p> <p>Digitalisation initiatives will take longer or may fail to overcome resistance.</p> <p>The programme will not be seen as corporate imperative.</p> <p>The return on investment may not be realised.</p>	Medium	Medium
Recommendation Impact	Adopting a strategy for Digital Transformation is a clear signal that both Council’s are serious about their ambitions and expect services to deliver. Ensuring that all leaders are challenged to play their part in digitalisation, from the top down, will help to mitigate resistance and compensate for areas where buy in may not be present entirely. The strategy also describes some key projects and quick wins in these areas will help to cement that change can be successful and empower staff to challenge more.		

5.3 Failure to invest in solutions

During times of financial hardship it is often tempting to reduce expenditure on items that are seen as non-essential. Digital Transformation is an expensive task but the risk of underinvestment can actually make situations worse.			
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As Is		With Recommendations	
Likelihood – High	Impact – High	Likelihood	Impact
Has occurred within the past 12 months.	<p>“Make do” solutions which don’t optimise delivery.</p> <p>Focus on cost cutting rather than a balance of quality/efficiency.</p> <p>Investment in new technology to support more effective service delivery may be limited.</p> <p>Return on investment may be below expected outcomes.</p> <p>Legacy solutions may be maintained further due to short term replacement costs.</p> <p>Staff with the right skills may not be available.</p>	Medium	Medium
Recommendation Impact	Each proposal which is part of the Digital Strategy will be accompanied by a comprehensive business case. These will fully describe the investment required, the reasons why and the anticipated returns.		

5.4 Inability of ICT to resource projects and support services

This risk describes the impact of ICT being unable to provide suitably skilled and knowledgeable resources to other service areas when considering the implementation of a new solution, undertaking a project or designing new processes.			
As Is		With Recommendations	
Likelihood – High	Impact – High	Likelihood	Impact
Has occurred within the past 12 months.	<p>Over-reliance on contract resource with significant additional cost.</p> <p>Inability to advise and effectively engage with services to describe their ICT needs.</p> <p>Potential procurement of inappropriate solutions through poor specification design.</p> <p>Inability to effectively support change, resulting in the introduction of “surface level” improvements that are not long term.</p>	Medium	Low
Recommendation Impact	The Digital Strategy recommends the formation of a dedicated digital team. Having the resource to properly support services as they go through digitalisation initiatives will significantly improve the likelihood of on time delivery within their anticipated budgets. This is a necessary undertaking if the Digital Strategy is to have any hope of succeeding.		

6 Conclusion/Reasons for the Recommendation

6.1 Adoption of the Draft Digital Strategy

- 6.1.1 Strategy is the beginning of any process as it sets out the objectives of an initiative at a strategic level. In this instance, the Digital Strategy (appendix 1)

sets four overall objectives:

- Delivering Excellence in Digital Services;
- Digital Services by Design;
- Digital Communities and Place; and
- Our People and Priorities

Each of these objectives centre upon the effective and efficient delivery of the Council's services and using our position within the community to improve the lives of those we serve.

- 6.1.2 Delivering Excellence in Digital Services focuses on how the Council will provide consistent, reliable and efficient services that put the customers needs at the centre of what we do. This theme is intended to dramatically increase the number of successful outcomes that customers can reach through on-line services and without the need for staff to intervene. This is empowerment of our communities to do more.
- 6.1.3 The proposed close involvement of actual customers in how we design services is also a dramatically different way of thinking and fundamentally shifts the focus from internal to external. When executed successfully, not only does this have the potential to unlock significant savings for the Council, but will also provide a much higher quality of service; providing solutions that are accessible, easy to use and most importantly, actually work.
- 6.1.4 Using Customers to inform our design is also a leading feature of our second theme, Digital Service by design. This internally focused theme seeks to fundamentally address how services are delivered by taking a much deeper dive into how services operate than any previous initiative.
- 6.1.5 Through this theme, we will ensure that not only are the benefits of integrating the two Council's realised from a technical perspective, but also exploited as an opportunity to rebuild services as if we were a new Council. This is exactly what South Warwickshire will be; a new Council with an opportunity to do things differently, where simple and effective defeats a legacy of complex and inefficient.
- 6.1.6 Our third theme of Digital Communities and Place recognises the Council's unique positioning within the South Warwickshire area to influence the digital futures of our communities. As a non-unitary authority, there are some limitations to what we may be able to do, but the strategy proposals recognise this and allow us to work within our means, collaborating with partner organisations to assist and promote rather than taking sole responsibility.
- 6.1.7 This theme also deals with how we can help to reduce digital exclusion but it should be noted that no part of the Digital Strategy champions digital as a singular means of accessing a Council service. Our communities will continue to be able to reach us via a means that they feel comfortable using, but they will also ultimately benefit from the efficiencies of digital delivery, regardless of their personal capabilities.
- 6.1.8 Our People and Priorities theme is again, internally focused on how we can improve our digital maturity and support other priorities which are active within the Councils. Empowering our people to champion transformation is a very big cultural shift, but this is the kind of thinking we will need to thrive in the future and can become an integral part of the Council's workforce strategy.
- 6.1.9 Making better use of our data is also a key initiative as currently both Councils

have masses of information which is trapped in legacy systems and cannot be used to inform decisions. This is our data and we should be able to make use of it on a day to day basis; to inform our decisions and support our processes, to focus our limited resources on the things that matter most.

6.2 Initiate a Digital Transformation Programme

- 6.2.1 The initiatives proposed within the Digital Strategy will not deliver themselves and ownership of digital transformation must come from the top. As such, it is recommended that a Digital Transformation Programme is created to oversee the delivery of the Digital Strategy throughout its lifetime and to ensure that digitalisation projects are executed in an effective and efficient way.
- 6.2.2 It is strongly recommended that the programme is supported by a dedicated Project Manager and Business Analyst who can oversee progress and ensure that deliverables are achieved. The cost of these resources have not been included in section 4.2 however they have been passed to the Council's finance team for consideration as part of the resourcing requirements for the proposed WDC and SDC merger.

6.3 Adopt a Governance Structure for Digital Transformation

- 6.3.1 It is suggested that a similar governance structure to that used for the overall Transformation Programme is adopted for Digital Transformation.
- 6.3.2 Day to day monitoring of the programme's performance would be the responsibility of the Transformation Steering Group. This group would also take responsibility for approving digital business cases in line with the recently discussed harmonised procurement process for ICT Solutions.
- 6.3.3 Progress would be reported to the Joint Management team and the Joint Advisory Steering Group who in turn would report up to the Joint Cabinet and Overview and Scrutiny Committees. Individual business cases for workplan items would also be reported up to the committees as appropriate.
- 6.3.4 It is suggested that a member-led group takes overall ownership of the Digital Transformation Programme. This is an important consideration as the programme must be given corporate importance and accountability at the highest level, not just within services where there is a risk that progress may stall as other priorities take hold.
- 6.3.5 As shown in figure 3, true transformation of the customer experience and our operating models cannot be achieved without the buy in of our most senior leaders. As such, Member involvement in shaping and delivering the programme is very important. Councillors are both leaders and corporate ambassadors within their communities and their full support for the digital initiatives are crucial if they are to be accepted, embedded and succeed.

6.4 Conclusion

- 6.4.1 Kaplan et al. (2000) described how "businesses must increasingly create and deploy intangible assets" and that these assets "have become major sources of competitive advantage".
- 6.4.2 For a local authority, the notion of competitive advantage is often missed as we do not compete in a traditional sense. However, our lack of commercial competitors does not relieve us of the responsibility to make sure our services are financially sustainable and deliver quality outcomes for South Warwickshire.

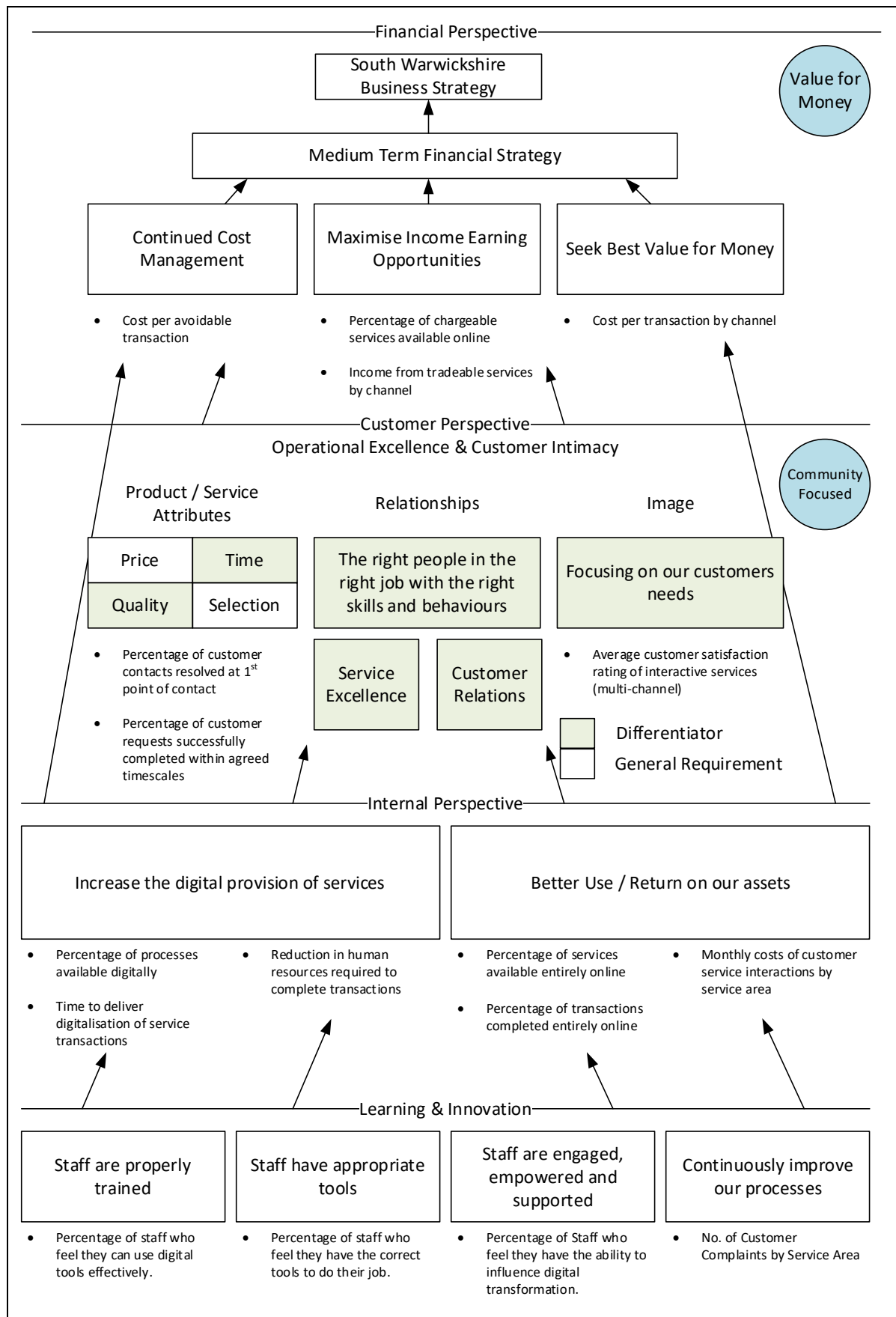


Figure 5 – Strategy Map for Digital Strategy Adoption

Based on Kaplan et al. (2000) this adaptation of the strategy map focuses on developing customer intimacy, whilst also becoming operationally excellent.

- 6.4.3 Figure five, shows a strategy map which connects the potential outcomes of the Digital Strategy to some of our existing corporate priorities. From this is easy to see how the value of the Digital Strategy can add to the sustainability of the Councils; from empowering learning and development for staff and improving customer outcomes, through to optimising and reducing costs.
- 6.4.4 Our competitive advantage has to be efficiency. We may serve a closed market, but like any business if we are not financially sustainable, if we do not deliver the successful outcomes that our customers require, alternatives will be found and as organisations, we will simply cease to exist.
- 6.4.5 Adopting the Digital Strategy is not a commitment for the authority to simply buy new equipment and adopt whatever technological trend prevails – it's a commitment to taking the fundamental reason why the Councils exist, to serve the communities of South Warwickshire, and using technology to improve how we go about doing that.
- 6.4.6 It is a fundamental programme of change that will ultimately benefit everyone, and exclude no one.

Background papers:

SDC, 2020 – [Medium Term Financial Strategy 2020/21-2024/25](#) (accessed 16/09/21)

WDC, 2020 – [Financial Strategy 2020/21-2024/25](#) (accessed 16/09/21).

Supporting documents:

LGA, 2020 – [Fragmented Funding](#) (accessed 16/09/21)

Google, 2021a – PDF Forms – [Warwick District Council](#) (accessed 16/09/21)

Google, 2021b – PDF Forms – [Stratford District Council](#) (accessed 16/09/21)

WDC, 2021a – [Severely Mentally Impaired Application Form](#) (accessed 16/09/21)

WDC, 2021b – [HomeChoice Application Form](#) (accessed 16/09/21)

Fight For Sight, 2021 – [Sight Loss Simulator](#) (accessed 16/09/21)

EIII, 2021 – [Tingun PDF Checker](#) (accessed 16/09/21)

Macular Society, 2021 [Macular Society website](#) (accessed 16/09/21)

Kaplan et al, 2000 – [Having Trouble with Your Strategy? Then Map It](#) (Accessed 15/10/21).

Ismail et al, 2017 – [Digital Business Transformation and Strategy: What Do We Know So Far?](#) (Accessed 15/10/21)

SOCITM (2021), [Digital trends in local public services 2021](#) (Accessed 15/10/21).

Report Information Sheet

Please complete and submit to Democratic Services with draft report

Committee/Date		
Title of report		
Consultations undertaken		
Consultee *required	Date	Details of consultation /comments received
Ward Member(s)		
Portfolio Holder WDC & SDC *		
Financial Services *		
Legal Services *		
Other Services		
Chief Executive(s)		
Head of Service(s)		
Section 151 Officer		
Monitoring Officer		
CMT (WDC)		
Leadership Co-ordination Group (WDC)		
Other organisations		
Final decision by this Committee or rec to another Cttee/Council?		Recommendation to :Cabinet / CouncilCommittee
Contrary to Policy/Budget framework		No/Yes
Does this report contain exempt info/Confidential? If so, which paragraph(s)?		No/Yes, Paragraphs :
Does this report relate to a key decision (referred to in the Cabinet Forward Plan)?		No/Yes, Forward Plan item – scheduled for (date)
Accessibility Checked?		File/Info/Inspect Document/Check Accessibility