

IT & Digital Strategy

2024/25

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Consultees	
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Governance	
The Strategy applies to:	All
The Strategy is available on which platforms?	Council Intranet
Progress with implementation of this Strategy is reported:	Annually
This Strategy has related documents:	None
The Strategy was disseminated to:	CLT, CMT and Strategy, Finance & Policy Committee

Document Control				
Date	Officer Name, title	Version	Action	Amendments (s)

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1. Introduction

In recent years, Rochford District Council has been working to modernise our technical foundations. This has been achieved through investment in cloud technologies and deployment of digital platforms. It is now time to build upon those foundations and their success. To do this we will strengthen our focus on the “digital experience” of our customers, members and employees.

The aim of this strategy will be a mixture of discovery and delivery and will focus on following 3 themes:

- a. Customer Experience
- b. Member & Employee Experience
- c. Data & Security

2. Aims

Our Digital & IT Ambitions		
As a Customer -	As a Member -	As an Officer -
“I know what services are available and how I can access them”	“I can carry out my elected role effectively, with access to the right information at the right time. I can do this digitally, where possible”	“I can access the tools and information I need easily and work in modern workplace”

3. Strategy Context

Alongside each ambition are a set of high-level priorities, outlined below:

Customer Experience

Our vision is to provide easy to access and easy to use services for all our customers

- Understand how technology can enhance the customer experience
- Explore digital solutions to further improve customer access channels, and ensure a robust and secure service
- Use data insight to improve the digital customer journey
- Prioritise the expansion of a CRM to all service areas

Member & Employee Experience

Our vision is to equip our employees and Members with the right devices, skills and systems to fully leverage the benefits of digital technology

Digital Member

- Provide effective digital tools, such as a casework portal, to allow members to fulfil their roles more efficiently
- Research how to provide modern devices that support members to work digitally
- Support the development of digital skills

Digital Officer

- Combine communication channels in to a unified communication platform

- Understand service priorities and provide modern devices that allow officers to work anywhere
- Standardise hardware to simplify usage and support
- Empower officers to maximise their use of technology

Digital Platforms

- Further leverage our Cloud infrastructure
- Utilise the ITSM framework for service support and delivery
- Ensure technologies are well supported and maintained
- Improve the virtual desktop to simplify access to business system
- Maintain environmental awareness of our computing consumption and hardware disposal
- Continually review our 3rd party relationships and services

Data & Security

Our vision is to provide safe and secure systems by design and default, ensuring we maintain the highest cyber security standards possible

Cyber Security

- Expand and continually review our cyber practices
- Prioritise incident preparedness and response

Management & Protection

- Maintain cloud backups within Azure/M365
- Use IT health checks to provide continued assurance on our infrastructure
- Policy audit and rationalisation

Insights and Analytics

- Understand what we can learn from our data and our data sources
- Consider how can we begin to build a data insight infrastructure

AI & Process Automation

- Extend use of Application Programme Interfaces (API's) to connect our systems
- Expand understanding and application of AI within a Local Government context

How we will deliver our objectives

We deliver our service to the organisation via the following delivery frameworks to help ensure that we provide a well-managed service:

- **IT Service Management (ITSM)** – we adopt a structured approach to managing our service to ensure the best design, planning and delivery of corporate objectives
- **Digital development and change management** – we adopt an approach of continuous improvement that evolves technology with minimal disruption
- **Agile project and programme methodology** – we adopt an iterative approach to development, breaking down work into small, manageable cycles to focus on continuous improvement in the development of a product or service
- **People side of change** – we adopt a user-focussed approach that supports people to successfully adopt technology

4. Strategy Action Plan

4.1 Key Actions

Action plan

Complete	Complete
In progress and on track	In progress and on track
In progress, needs attention	In progress, needs attention
Needs intervention	Needs intervention
Not yet started	Not yet started

IT & DIGITAL ACTION PLAN 2024 – 2025

Theme	Action	Completion Date	Status	Comments
Customer Experience	Expand deployment of the CRM to all services	Q3		July 2024 - additional integration work has delayed progress. Roll on plan in development between Digital Services & Customer Services
	Continually review the accessibility scoring of our website, maintaining WCAG 2.1 AA standard and meeting AAA, where possible	Ongoing		July 2024 – automated quality assurance reporting in place with remedial action taken, if necessary
	Review our suite of online forms, reviewing content to ensure that they meet customer-centric design principles	Q3/Q4		July 2024 – revised design principles being developed before engaging with services on improvements
	Work with services to expand our online services, where required	Q3/Q4		July 2024 - this work will be informed by service level transformation plans
	Undertake telephony improvements, including queue placement and call back functionality	Q2		July 2024 – works raised with third party provider
	Roll out a new payment system for payments made by telephone, enhancing the security of customers payment data	June 2024		July 2024 – some additional testing required which has delayed go live

Theme	Action	Completion Date	Status	Comments
Member & Employee Experience	Work with Comms, Transformation and HR teams to add further functionality to the Joint Intranet	Q4		July 2024 – not yet started
	Cost, plan and submit for a capital programme to refresh 30%-50% of the laptop estate	Q2/3		July 2024 – will form part of budget setting preparations
	Develop an implementation plan for the rollout of Windows 11	Q4		July 2024 – requires resource allocation
	Deliver improvements to the Microsoft platform that enhance cross-organisation, partnership collaboration	Q2/Q3		July 2024 - some improvements in beta testing with a group of Officers. Further planned improvements on track with third party.
	Reintroduce service level account meetings to enhance working relationships with services	Q1		Meetings commenced June 2024
	Work with services to improve the AVD experience across the One Team partnership	Q4		July 2024 – this work will follow completion of the B2B cross-org work
	Participate in the solution, creation, implementation or improvement to service level Digital Products to support service and transformation plans	Q4		July 2024 – forecasted work, as a result of service plans, is underway or in planning. Awaiting outcome of service level transformation plans
	Technically support the implementation and transition to Modern.Gov and cessation of CMIS	Q4		July 2024 – initial scoping meeting held. Awaiting further instruction from Member Services

Theme	Action	Completion Date	Status	Comments
	Support ongoing improvements for the Democratic and Corporate Services teams to most effectively conduct their roles across the partnership	Q2/Q3		July 2024 – this will be complemented by the cross-org B2B work that is in progress
	Support the ongoing uptake of the Members portal by continually reviewing its functionality and responding to reactive	Ongoing		July 2024 – further usage required to understand success/issues with portal
	Install comprehensive network and hardware services to new office locations	Q1/Q2		July 2024 - live at Launchpad. Planning for installation at Rochford Library is in advanced stages
	Decommission the remaining on premises servers and replace with high availability by design, cloud solutions	Q4		July 2024 – working with third party to develop a plan to migrate DHCP server
Data & Security	Expand Cyber Incident Response Plan, technical data protection strategies and support organisational recovery objectives	Q4		July 2024 - contribution from other internal parties required to ensure this objective is achieved. Officer cyber working group to be formed.
	Contribute to the co-ordination and delivery of cyber awareness training, to include cyber roadshows and real-life training (i.e. phishing campaigns)	Q1		July 2024 – work programme yet to be developed
	Undertake preparation for the introduction of the Cyber Awareness Framework	Q4		July 2024 – application made to DLUCH to become part of formal pilot
	Support services with the technical and preparatory requirements of any viable AI initiatives	Q4		July 2024 – AI workshop delivered to CLT & CMT May 2024

Theme	Action	Completion Date	Status	Comments
	Enhance our agile PM methodology to better manage workloads and to complement the corporate PM framework			July 2024 – methodology introduced to wider team a regular sprint meetings in place

4.2 Performance Management

The IT Management team will be responsible for monitoring delivery of this strategy monthly. An annual review will be reported to committee, with a review and refresh of this strategy due May 2025.

4.3 Roles and Responsibilities

Strategy sponsor – Director for Customer & Data Insight
Officer responsible for day-to-day delivery – Corporate Manager, IT & Digital Services
Amendments – to be authorised by relevant Director

4.4 Funding

Delivery of this strategy will be funded through a combination of existing service budgets and capital programme.

5. Corporate Knowledge

Use the table below to provide a visual display of how this Policy will impact on the delivery of the Corporate Plan. You may wish to expand on each point, as required.

RDC's Corporate Priorities	Levels of Impact			
	High	Medium	Low	None
Being financially sustainable	X			
Early Intervention			X	
Maximise our assets			X	
Enable communities			X	

6. Links to Other Corporate Policies or Partner documents

List key corporate documents that are linked to this Strategy:

- Corporate Plan