

## Leeds City Digital Strategy

Date: 19 October 2022

Report of: Director of Resources

Report to: Executive Board

Will the decision be open for call in?  Yes  No

Does the report contain confidential or exempt information?  Yes  No

### Brief summary

The City Digital Strategy provides a high-level overview of the digital ambitions and aspirations for Leeds City Council and the Leeds Health and Care Partnership (LHCP). It has been written however, from a 'whole city' view rather than from any specific organisation's perspective to encourage participation in its delivery.

This report will outline the contents of the new digital strategy for the city and how it will support the Best City Ambition and three pillars of Inclusive Growth, Health & Wellbeing, and Zero Carbon. It will outline the planned programme of innovation and how it will align with the high-level digital strategy and more detailed digital roadmaps (priorities) that are being drawn up for specific services.

The strategy articulates the priority areas that will be taken forward by the Integrated Digital Service with a focus on improving service delivery and realising efficiencies. It provides a steer for targeting resources in the right areas and supporting the council in addressing the financial challenge it faces in the current economic climate.

Digital solutions and technologies can radically improve how services are delivered in Leeds. There are of course challenges that will need addressing to realise a more sustainable, equitable Leeds that we all aspire to. However, these should be viewed in relation to the opportunities that exist that will enable people, businesses and communities to prosper.

It should be noted that this is not about replacing all analogue services with digital ones. It's about adopting a 'Digital First but not Digital Only' approach that recognises that not everyone will want to access services via a digital channel all of the time, and that any digital offer will be complimentary to existing channels such as face-to-face and over the telephone. To safeguard this approach we will prioritise our digital inclusion work to ensure no-one is excluded and that the people of Leeds are supported.

The use of digital technology, to support in the delivery of our services, offers many opportunities that we must encourage and embrace. This is not simply about moving services online however, we must also transform how we work. Bringing the digital services of the council and the Leeds Health and Care Partnership together to create a combined Integrated Digital Service is the start of this digital transformation, enabling us to provide a more joined up digital offer for the people of Leeds.

To progress and build on this digital transformation approach, a dedicated Strategy and Innovation team will focus on identifying new, innovative digital solutions, opportunities and proof of concepts that showcase best practice and outline how services can be delivered differently and more efficiently.

## Recommendations

Executive Board is requested to:

- a) Support the approach being outlined in the digital strategy, the digital transformation approach, and the innovation programme.
- b) Approve the strategy and agree that it can be published.

## What is this report about?

### LEEDS DIGITAL STRATEGY

- 1 The strategy has been written following extensive consultation including 13 workshops (public-facing and internal) and numerous one-to-one conversations. People from all sectors and backgrounds have contributed to the discussions and their feedback is reflected in the content.
- 2 As introduced in Best City Ambition, the strategy adopts a four-stage 'life course' approach, Starting Well, Living Well, Working Well and Ageing Well, that clearly articulates the opportunities and challenges at every stage of a person's life and how digital can support them throughout their lives. For the purposes of the strategy, Living Well and Ageing Well have been combined.
- 3 Each section provides an overview of ambitions and then more detail about how we will achieve these, and what this means for the city and the people of Leeds.
- 4 Whilst it focuses on Leeds, its people, and services, it is written in the context of national policies and strategies that focus on the wider challenges facing the UK and which will have a significant impact on our plans such as the NHS Long Term Plan, the UK National Data Strategy and the UK Government's Technology Code of Practice.
- 5 The following sections summarise the main sections of the strategy. The full strategy is attached as Appendix 1:
- 6 **Starting Well:** We will use modern digital technologies to understand the challenges associated with population health and education and how they affect individuals from birth through to old age. Understanding health and economic conditions prevalent across Leeds will help reduce inequalities through providing more relevant and impactful services to families. For example, the improved collection and analysis of data about the population of Leeds, their needs, and their health that leads to support the design and commissioning of council services and health initiatives.
- 7 We will work increasingly with schools, colleges and community groups to encourage children and young people to get involved in after school activities, code clubs and digital innovation work that helps develop their digital skills and get them interested in the technology sector. We will promote the breadth of opportunities the sector offers, and ensure that they acquire work-ready digital skills from an early age.
- 8 **Living and Ageing Well:** We will implement intelligent and automated processes that make services more efficient, convenient and joined up, and that are designed around the individual

and their needs. For example, we will build an information sharing approach that is consent-based and person-centred to ensure their data and information can follow people regardless of which organisation and/or service they are engaging with.

- 9 We will use data to understand the challenges and inequalities being faced by the people of Leeds, and share this intelligence with partners to define and deliver effective, personalised services that support people to live good and healthy lives.
- 10 **Working Well:** We will build on existing collaboration across workforces in all sectors by improving information flow between organisations and supporting the city's inclusive growth ambitions.
- 11 A thriving digital community, modern infrastructure and skilled workforce will attract new and established businesses to invest in Leeds improving opportunities for the city and people of Leeds. Taking a people-centred approach to service-design, we will deliver a co-ordinated innovation network and community that champions Leeds as a city of innovation excellence. We will encourage the testing and trialling of new technology in a real-world environment that both supports local businesses and addresses city challenges.
- 12 **Digital Foundations:** Whilst the strategy outlines the ambitions for digital services and technologies in Leeds, to deliver these, we need to get the basics right. Five digital foundations have been outlined that set the baseline for which the rest of the strategy is built on and will ensure that our ambitions are grounded, achievable and inclusive:
- 13 **Data management, use and access:** Data underpins everything we do. It is a valuable resource that has the power to revolutionise how businesses are run and services are delivered. It's important however, that when collecting, using, storing, disposing, or sharing personal data, it is managed appropriately and within an information governance framework that instils confidence and is in line with data protection laws.
- 14 The Chief Data Officer for the Integrated Digital Service will oversee the creation and delivery of a new Leeds Data Strategy. Aligned with the National Data Strategy, it will identify where current data gaps exist and outline opportunities and initiatives that will benefit the city.
- 15 We will expand the Office of Data Analytics which brings together data science expertise and technologies resulting in improved data intelligence, decision making and service delivery.
- 16 **Connectivity and infrastructure:** Protecting our data and information is of paramount importance. To ensure data and systems are protected from any threats (cyber or physical), deliberately or otherwise, we will deliver a 24/7 365 security operations centre that will prioritise the safety and security of people's data and be accessible by any organisation across Leeds.
- 17 We will follow a 'Cloud First/Multi-Cloud' approach that delivers best value for money, best technological approach, and the highest security standards. We will take an open standards approach for all software developments to ensure the maximum potential for systems integration and interoperability.
- 18 21st century connectivity and infrastructure provide the backbone for world-class service delivery and supports our 'connected place' ambitions. The council is working closely with its Full Fibre network partner BT, to provide gigabit capable fibre to 1,400 council buildings and other public sector buildings (e.g. NHS and schools). Furthermore, it will enable up to 90% of homes and businesses to access super-fast broadband by 2026, and supports the build out of a 5G network providing faster mobile connectivity across the district.
- 19 Additionally, the installation of the Leeds Wireless Innovation Network (Leeds WIN), that supports the collection of real-time data from devices, is now complete and is being used by innovators across the city and by the council to test temperature, air quality and footfall sensors.

- 20 **Digital inclusion:** The barriers to digital inclusion for many people are complex and link to wider factors beyond the common issues of lack of skills, motivation or access to a device. We will address these barriers to ensure that everyone in Leeds has equal opportunity to use digital tools, technology and services in the right way for them.
- 21 Through further investment in the city's flagship 100% Digital Leeds programme and by working collaboratively through partnerships and networks, we will continue to build a co-ordinated and connected digital inclusion ecosystem in more communities where people can gain the motivation, skills and confidence to get online.
- 22 **Digital skills:** We take a life-long learning approach that will ensure everyone in Leeds has the right skills to access services in a way that suits their needs, and that digital channels will be accessible, well designed and so easy to use that they become most people's preference. It is important however, that we adopt a 'Digital First but not Digital Only' stance that recognises that not everyone will want to access services via a digital channel all of the time and that any digital offer will be complimentary to existing channels.
- 23 In addition to supporting improving digital skills of the public and the wider workforce, it is important that our own workforce has the requisite skills to facilitate the digital transformation that the organisation requires. A digital academy will be created that will upskill staff in areas such as data intelligence, cyber security and cloud.
- 24 **Digital and data ethics:** Data is easier to collect than ever before and technology is developing so quickly that it is often difficult to keep pace. It's therefore important that as these new technologies become increasingly prevalent and are introduced more widely, that we have a thorough understanding of them. Just because something can be done using technology, doesn't mean to say it should be.
- 25 We will develop data and digital ethics principles that provide checks and balances for any use of data, or introduction of new technology, and draw upon expertise from across the city to provide additional support and scrutiny. Leeds is already a champion of the "tech for good" approach by taking a person-centric approach; embedding strong governance procedures will support the approach that Leeds is regarded as the best destination for anyone who wants to deliver services ethically and equitably.

## **DIGITAL INNOVATION PROGRAMME**

- 26 The high-level strategy, alongside more detailed service digital roadmaps (priorities), is a key document that provides the steer for the digital service's digital transformation and innovation programme. It is important to have a clear link between the Best City Ambition, three pillars, City Digital Strategy and the resulting programme of innovation.
- 27 In line with the approach being promoted in the strategy, it is important that as a city, we are equally co-ordinated in respect of innovation activity. A collaborative and joined-up approach will not only ensure that the best skills and capabilities are tapped into, but also avoid duplication and repetition.
- 28 Any innovation activity must focus on one, or all, of the following:
- a) Improves the services we deliver
  - b) Improves outcomes for people
  - c) Delivers efficiencies/savings
- 29 A dedicated Strategy and Innovation team (part of the Integrated Digital Service) will co-ordinate and have oversight of all digital innovation activity across the council and Leeds Health and Care Partnership. Utilising a new innovation platform, it will also connect with other activity that is taking place across the city to promote best practice, ensure a co-ordinated approach,

and promote the city as a 'centre of innovation excellence'. Work will be co-ordinated with that being undertaken by Economic Development and the development of the 'Innovation Arc'.

### What impact will this proposal have?

- 30 The work that is being delivered and supported by the Integrated Digital Service is being done so by strategic prioritisation. In addition to the key priority areas that have already been identified at the start of this report, the digital strategy and digital roadmaps will provide a steer to determine future priorities and those that are ripe for innovation.
- 31 An Equality, Diversity, Cohesion and Integration Screening form is attached in Appendix 2 covering the high-level strategy. Additional impact assessments will be completed as individual projects are brought forward.

### How does this proposal impact the three pillars of the Best City Ambition?

Health and Wellbeing       Inclusive Growth       Zero Carbon

- 32 All of the work outlined in the report plays a key role in achieving the council's ambition to build a compassionate city, tackling poverty and reducing inequalities. Work is aligned with the Best City Ambition and the Health and Wellbeing, Inclusive Growth and Carbon Zero pillars.

### What consultation and engagement has taken place?

Wards affected:

Have ward members been consulted?       Yes       No

- 33 The development of the digital strategy included delivering 13 workshops, six of which were predominantly targeted for the public and Leeds-based organisations to attend, and the remaining focusing on council and healthcare colleagues.
- 34 Additionally, an outline of the strategy and innovation programme proposals has been presented to both the Infrastructure, Investment and Inclusive Growth, and Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Boards which included cross-party councillor representation. Approval to the approach was received at both Boards.

### What are the resource implications?

- 35 The areas of work outlined in this report all have the aim of delivering more efficient services and improving outcomes for the people of Leeds. The strategy articulates the priority areas that will be taken forward by the Integrated Digital Service with a focus on improving service delivery and realising efficiencies. It provides a steer for targeting resources in the right areas and supporting the council in addressing the financial challenge it faces in the current economic climate. For example, work is already underway to review how automation technology can improve processes across the organisation, enabling front line staff to work more effectively. Taking a strategic approach to innovation will enable the council to test and trial how technology can support these aims resulting in targeted investment that is sustainable.
- 36 The primary focus for the innovation work is to identify how a more efficient use of data and technology can positively impact on resource allocation, whilst maintaining or improving service delivery.
- 37 The delivery of projects is funded through existing funding and capital funding which is sourced from Leeds City Council and the NHS. We will also bid for additional funding as it becomes available.

## **What are the key risks and how are they being managed?**

38 Risk management of individual projects is built into the delivery of all council and LHCP digital service work. Programme governance includes regular reporting to the Integrated Digital Service senior leadership team, other leadership teams and senior stakeholders, as well as annual reports to Scrutiny Boards.

## **What are the legal implications?**

39 Decisions are subject to call-in however there are no specific legal implications or issues relating to access to information.

## **Options, timescales and measuring success**

### **What other options were considered?**

40 An outline of the digital strategy and associated innovation programme has already been discussed at both the Infrastructure, Investment and Inclusive Growth, and Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Boards.

### **How will success be measured?**

41 The digital strategy identifies a number of key priority areas and how they will positively impact on people and businesses across Leeds. The Strategy and Innovation team will work closely with services across the council and LHCP to ensure priority areas are being addressed and positive outputs and outcomes are being delivered. Updates on strategy priority areas will be provided at future Scrutiny Boards and the Leeds Digital Board.

42 The Integrated Digital Service will complete digital roadmaps (priorities) for all service areas to outline ongoing work and identify future priorities. Some of this work will result in innovation projects being delivered as outlined earlier.

### **What is the timetable and who will be responsible for implementation?**

43 The digital strategy has a 3-year timeframe however, it will be regarded as a 'live' document that will be updated and amended as dictated by external factors. A comprehensive review of the strategy will take place in 2024 led by the strategy and innovation team.

44 The innovation programme is currently planned over an 18 month timeframe, however as additional funding becomes available, this will be augmented and extended.

45 Timeframes for the majority of the projects all have a final end date of March 2024.

## **Appendices**

- **Appendix 1:** CITY DIGITAL STRATEGY 2022 – 2025
- **Appendix 2:** Equality, Diversity, Cohesion and Integration Screening document

## **Background papers**

- None.