

**THE MORAY COUNCIL
ICT AND DIGITAL STRATEGY (2020-23)**

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Moray Council ICT and Digital Strategy 2020-2023 sets out how ICT Services will support the delivery of Moray Council's Corporate Plan 2019 - 2024 which has the following vision:

“To make life better for everyone in Moray, where there is a positive future for all, within a vibrant economy, with empowered and connected communities.”

- 1.2 This vision is supported by the following key priorities:

- Our People: Provide opportunities for people to be the best they can be throughout their lives with a strong and sustained focus on those individuals and groups in our society who experience the most disadvantage and discrimination
- Our Place: Empower and support communities to build capacity
- Our Future: Drive economic development to create a vibrant economy for the future

While delivering these priorities we will also work towards creating a sustainable council that provides valued services to our communities.

- 1.3 The ICT service as an enabling service recognises the need to support the ambitions of the council and adopt a transformational approach to the use of ICT and digital to deliver against these priorities.

- 1.4 In particular this ICT and Digital strategy is aligned with the Corporate Plan to deliver against the priorities through:

- Supporting the delivery of council services.
- Increasing the availability and access to easy to use self-service for all employees and customers.
- Supporting employees to develop their digital skills to make best use of technology.
- Providing staff with improved access to the data needed to inform their decision making.
- Making data available to the public to raise awareness of council services and how they work.
- To expand the data sharing approach to “join up” council services including those of the Integrated Joint Board.
- Adopt best practice in key ICT activities.
- Protect the data held by the council through robust security arrangements.
- Preparation of plans for the future potential uses of technology.

- 1.5 The COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on the ICT Service as the Council readjusted at pace and scale to accommodate increased homeworking and delivery of new and existing services to a digital format. This strategy has been revised to accommodate the changes the pandemic has brought about in terms of the council's priorities and how the ICT Service will respond to ensure their achievement.

2. Achievements

The previous ICT strategy identified 4 key priorities for the service and the following provides an overview of the progress against these priorities.

2.1 Developing digital services

The Digital Services project introduced a number of core tools including a customer portal, an electronic forms solution and an online payment solution. These provide the platform to accelerate our shift to online or digital services and now sit at the heart of our online services delivery model resulting in the planned deliverables contained in the last strategy being met. The new services delivered include

- Registration for eBilling of council tax
- Reporting change of address for revenues processing
- Online payments for primary school meals and in class menu selection
- The parents portal providing parents the ability to register online to report absences and provide emergency contact details
- Online bookings for leisure services has also been introduced providing this solution throughout all Moray Council operated centres.

Throughout the COVID response the core tools, particularly the electronic forms solution, have been used to provide a quick response to the situation as it unfolded and the requirements were identified. Forms were used to provide online applications for members of the public in a number of areas which would otherwise have been difficult to achieve in the timescales required.

As council services identify new opportunities for delivering services within the contact centre environment or to be provided online the tools currently available will provide the ability to adopt new solutions quickly.

2.2 Technology for the Moray classroom

This priority identified the need to implement the necessary infrastructure to underpin future developments for the strategic use of ICT within the Moray classroom. The agreed provision of desktop devices has been met and a regular refresh programme is in place to maintain the agreed allocation ratio of pupils to device. However with COVID the requirement for devices which

can be used at home has been highlighted by both students and staff. ICT are currently rolling out over 1300 laptops to pupils which can be used at home and in school utilising Microsoft Always on VPN.

Education are Investigating the benefits of the laptop solution along with piloting Chromebooks and iPads to find the most beneficial way of delivering blended teaching within Moray should there be any additional local / national restrictions.

Other major work in this area included the replacement of telephony solutions and servers within schools. Campus wide Wi-Fi coverage is available across the entire school estate and all secondary schools have access to dedicated video conferencing equipment to allow virtual classroom working. In addition there is a programme for installing interactive panels all of which places schools in a good position for the next strategic review of the use of ICT within schools.

2.3 Delivering systems and infrastructure

Targets were met in the area of implementing business systems and infrastructure through the development and enhancement of solutions for service areas. This aspect of our work includes the operational projects and while they bring about enhancements to existing systems they also contribute to maintaining the core technologies and “keeping the lights on” for the council.

In some areas of ICT new developments are often unseen and therefore difficult to pick out as success stories but some notable areas to highlight from the list of projects tackled in the last period include:

- Renewal of corporate Microsoft agreement to enable a move to Office 365 and Microsoft Teams across the organisation.
- Implementation of a resilient corporate backup solution which will also support the backup of key data in the Office 365 environment.
- Further roll out of virtual desktops and dedicated laptops enabling additional staff to work from anywhere.
- Implementation of a new resilient corporate remote access solution to support increased home working.
- Upgrade to core security infrastructure (Firewall hardware and software)
- Significant progress on corporate telephony project prior to Covid
- Upgrade of the corporate email environment
- Increased use of e-Forms and online information

2.4 Partnership working

The Scottish Wide Area Network (SWAN) contract continues to provide a stable and highly available managed network service to the Council. The transition to SWAN from the previous contract resulted in significant savings, and further savings have been realised through regular market testing. Although the call off contract allows for the provision of services until March 2026, the Pathfinder North Partnership (Argyll and Bute Council, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar, Highland Council, Moray Council and Orkney Islands Council) has already started to look at requirements for the successor contract. Continued membership of the Partnership and a collaborative procurement approach will result in a better outcome than individual organisations running separate procurement exercises.

The ICT Service has continued the partnership role with the Improvement Service and participates in the development of the national myaccount solution and also the developments around the delivery of digital solutions for schools. Additionally, the Council is now a member of the Scottish Digital Office providing the opportunity to collaborate with other Councils on transformation projects.

Progress for the Integrated Joint Board Infrastructure Programme Board has been slow however Health and Social Care Moray have been a priority over the course of the last 6 months in terms of the corporate roll out of ICT equipment to facilitate home working.

3. Drivers

This revision of the Moray Council ICT and Digital Strategy has been developed against the background of a number of drivers.

3.1 Corporate objectives

The ICT and Digital strategy will be aligned to the council's overarching strategy and priorities contained within the corporate plan as per section 1.2 and the Local Outcome Improvement Plan.

3.2 Impact of COVID-19

The ICT service has been responding to the impact of COVID-19 since March 2020, both in facilitating homeworking and developing solutions for new and current services to continue. For ease of continuity, these are woven through the same drivers that were part of the previous strategy.

3.3 Services and staff expectations

Council services were becoming more and more reliant on technology prior to the pandemic. The focus for this move has sharpened since the pandemic began with an increased expectation from and of services to have access to

reliable and forward looking technology which helps them do their job rather than constrains them. They require greater flexibility in the way they work and use technology to be more productive whether at their desk, in the field or from home. Services expect:

- Access to accurate, trusted and timely information to perform in their role and to assist decision making.
- Development of their services using technology to improve service delivery and achieve efficiency savings.
- To develop their knowledge and skills to deliver change.

3.4 Customer expectations

Post pandemic, customers are continuing to be increasingly dependent on digital services and in the same way they expect “on demand” access to commercially available day to day services their expectations of access to council services is also changing. This is driving a change in the way they expect council services to be delivered to them and in turn we must change to meet their expectations. This includes:

- Access to services at a time and place that is convenient to them and on their chosen device.
- While acknowledging potential compliance issues most of our customers expect public services to be “joined up” and at the very least with all Departments within the council. Sharing of data within the council and across partner organisations to deliver improvements to service delivery is imperative to the customer experience.
- Consistency and openness in all their dealings with the Council.
- Choice in how they access services. Although there is an expectation that we will provide online services there is a need to balance this with choice. While we aim to deliver online services in an easy to use manner and encourage the uptake of these online services there is a need to cater for those that prefer, or otherwise do not have access to, online solutions, although the expectation of delivering online solutions as opposed to face to face experiences has increased out of necessity due to COVID-19.

3.5 Technological change

Changes in technology provide contrasting challenges and opportunities for the council. New technology presents opportunities to deliver services in different ways but the challenges presented by new technologies whether from increased investment, skills or security requirements present other challenges that need to be managed. Technology developments that will impact on the delivery of this strategy include:

- Cyber resilience.

- Mobile technology developments and the blurring of devices from traditional desktop to smartphone.
- Supporting increasing numbers of technologies and user bases.
- The growth in cloud computing.
- The use of social media as a service delivery vehicle.
- The Scottish Governments R100 programme and the commitment to deliver superfast broadband access to 100% of premises in Scotland by 2021.

4 Principles

All developments within the strategy will be guided by a series of principles to provide consistency and clarity around the work undertaken.

4.1 Information management

ICT solutions will be developed to ensure they maintain the security, confidentiality and integrity of all personal data in line with the requirements of the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR), other security standards such as the Payment Card Industry Data Security Standards (PCI/DSS) and the Scottish Governments Cyber Resilience Programme.

We will

- Protect the data held through the implementation of best practice security standards.
- Engage with the Scottish Governments cyber resilience programme.
- Encourage the adoption of open data where possible.
- Improve data available for decision making.

4.2 Digital first

To continuously improve digital services with the focus on the customer we aim to adhere to the Digital First Service Standard and the 3 themes of user needs, technology and business capability / capacity for all digital services, processes and supporting ICT.

We will

- Develop systems and processes with the customer at the centre
- Encourage adoption of online, no contact services
- Communicate with our customers electronically where possible.
- Add efficiency to service delivery
- Do it once – share information where possible
- Develop the digital skills of our staff
- Prepare for the future by monitoring developments in technology

4.3 Reuse

The council utilise a range of systems to deliver services to the public and the core applications will become increasingly important as we pursue a joined up council. Where we are looking for change we will seek to reuse or improve existing applications rather than developing from scratch.

We will:

- Reuse solutions and reduce the total number of solutions supported
- Process redesign through the reuse of existing tried and tested solutions
- Reduce the duplication of data collected and establish a single view of our customer

4.4 Managed risk

There is a need to employ risk management to drive the service but a balanced approach will be required to avoid risks preventing or inhibiting progress to the detriment of our service users.

We will:

- Work with services to understand their requirements
- Keep services aware of the art of the possible
- Pro-actively look for solutions rather than inhibit development of council services
- Remove barriers where possible, but where there is a valid reason why requirements cannot be met, we will provide a clear explanation

5. Priorities

From the preceding drivers and principles of this ICT and Digital Strategy, 4 key priorities have been identified for this latest 5 year ICT and Digital Strategy.

- Transformation
- Decision Support
- Digital Culture
- Compliance

5.1 Transformation

The Council seek to transform services and introduce change for our customers while driving service efficiencies. To support these ambitions the ICT Service will aim to:

- a) Expand and enhance the provision of flexible and mobile working within the council whilst meeting new COVID requirements, by greater use of mobile devices and appropriate deployment and management of applications where required. The further development of cloud services

and mobile applications will deliver increased efficiencies with mobile working for staff to work at home and 'in the field'.

- b) Extend the availability of online services available to the public and provide a single view of their transactions with the council via the customer portal.
- c) Participate in the development of a shared network protocol with NHS to enable improved capabilities for shared working with IJB.
- d) Further develop the intranet to provide secure access to all staff wherever they are working and to promote the intranet as a staff engagement vehicle.
- e) Establish a digital culture within the Council. A more informed, mobile and technology or digital aware workforce is one of the main enabling factors for the transformation of service delivery. Employees must be provided with the tools to enable them to provide and manage the delivery of services anytime and anywhere. They must have the training and support to enable them to make best use of the tools available to them.
- f) Work with Education ICT Strategy Group to deliver the infrastructure to meet the objectives of the ICT Strategy for Schools and Curriculum Development to enhance and support education delivery. The current strategy set out to introduce the infrastructure necessary to build improvements. A review of the strategy has commenced and this will develop on the improvements made to the schools infrastructure. A revision of the Schools Strategy will be available later this year.

5.2 Decision support

Data can be one of our most valuable assets and although Moray Council holds vast amounts of data it is primarily held in departmental silos. To unlock the value of this data an open and transparent approach will be developed. Providing open and transparent access to data will provide employees the information to perform their role, managers with the data to manage the service, Elected Members with the data to make decisions based on timely and relevant information and also importantly enable the public to understand the reasons for the decisions we make. To support this priority we aim to:

- a) Continue with the development of a single trusted view of our customer to ensure consistency, accuracy and trust in the data held and to benefit the customer and provide further efficiency to council services.
- b) Share data, where appropriate, with council services and partner organisations to add value to council services.
- c) Enable digital dashboards for staff, elected members and the public to view data and better understand the underlying trends within their service and the actions required to address any issues and/or to improve services.
- d) Develop usage reports for managers to understand how their service is making use of ICT.

5.3 Compliance

The ICT service is subjected to an increasing number of compliance regimes including Public Service Network (PSN) accreditation, General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR), Payment Card Industry Data Security Standards (PCI DSS), Scottish Government Cyber Resilience programme and software licensing. There is a need to develop policies and procedures to ensure an ongoing approach to compliance within the council and this should be supported by a consistent and managed approach to staff awareness. To meet our obligations in relation to compliance and standards we aim to:

- a) Review our ICT Security Policy to ensure that security controls are adequate and up to date
- b) Continue to maintain our desktop estate to ensure it is built around a recent operating system version of operating system and that the office productivity toolset is delivered to the current Windows desktop
- c) Review our business continuity arrangements to mitigate against potential risk and to put ICT in a position to assist services to deliver essential functions in the event of a disaster.
- d) Migrate to the next generation secure email for PSN to continue to provide secure email solutions for communicating with government bodies.
- e) Adopt an industry standard methodology to for the delivery of our support service to introduce robust best practice processes and improved reliability and quality of service.

5.4 Plan for the future

Technology changes at an incredible pace and it is important that within the context of a 5 year strategy we continue to plan for opportunities that are presented from advancements in technology. To plan for the future we aim to:

- a) Investigate options to deliver efficiencies through the adoption of “cloud” / “online” services where they comply with PSN requirements, provide cost effective solutions which do not introduce unnecessary risk to the operation of the council.
- b) Review mobile application development tools and standards.
- c) Review the Unix server infrastructure to ensure we continue to deliver value for money.
- d) Review the potential for unified communications within the council to deliver further efficiency savings.
- e) Review the application portfolio with a view to rationalising the number of applications in use throughout the council, reduced the number of systems to be supported and consolidate the number of data sources.
- f) Consider and investigate new solutions as they appear on the market which would be beneficial to the operation of the Council.

- g) Consider the potential for the Internet of Things to deliver improvements to service delivery and efficiencies.

ICT AND DIGITAL STRATEGY 2020 - 2023

