**High Peak Borough Council &
Staffordshire Moorlands District Council**

Digital Strategy 2022

Introduction

Since coming together as an alliance of two district councils in 2008, High Peak Borough Council and Staffordshire Moorlands Council have delivered savings of over £12 million for local taxpayers alongside improvements to public services.

In that time, Digital, Data and Technology change has significantly accelerated; offering opportunities to connect and collaborate with others, to learn new skills, to solve problems based on understanding the copious amounts of available data and to have a positive impact to people's lives.

In the last 10 years, we have consolidated a large proportion of our front facing services across both authorities, removing significant duplication. We have also consolidated some of our technology estate to drive more efficient and effective service delivery.

Alongside the Organisational Development Strategy and the Access to Services Strategy, this Digital Strategy lays out how High Peak Borough Council and Staffordshire Moorlands District Council, will work to:

- Maximise the opportunities we take to leverage Digital, Data and Technology in order to transform service delivery for our residents, businesses, visitors and partners
- Pursue consistency of experience, across all mediums, for our customers
- Ensure our services are Proactive, seamlessly linking our customers to the right employees with expertise to make a difference, both now and into the future
- Digitally curate our place, designing and developing our boroughs with residents, businesses and partners

Strategic Context

The development of the Digital Strategy has been informed by the following strategic context:

- The High Peak Corporate Plan 2019 – 2023
- The Staffordshire Moorlands Corporate Plan 2019 – 2023
- ICT Strategy 2014
- Customer Access Strategy 2016
- Service Plans 2020 – 2024
- Medium Term Financial Plan February 2021

This strategy sits alongside the Organisational Development Strategy and the Access to Services Strategy to ensure that the Councils have the appropriate approach to ensure that services continue to be provided effectively.

Reference has also been made to wider context from partners and other organisations within the region including:

- North East Derbyshire's Digital Transformation Strategy
- Derbyshire County Council's "*Modernising council services through digital transformation and channel shift*" 2020
- Staffordshire County Council's "*All together for carers*" joint council/CCG
- Staffordshire Chamber of Commerce mission, vision and values

Challenges and Opportunities

Digital data and technology underpin the delivery of the Councils' objectives and priorities. Effective use of technology and data will ensure our residents and businesses receive a unified customer experience with a clear understanding of their needs:
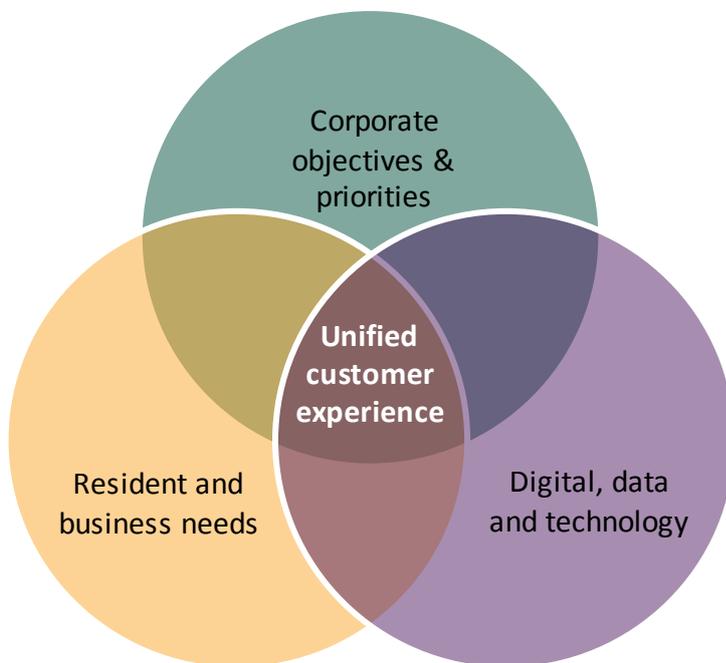
There are a number of significant challenges that an effective Digital Strategy can help resolve:

- Demand pressures as we come out of the pandemic
- Changing expectations for services to be more coherent, customer friendly and accessible, 'always on' and responsive to individual needs and preferences
- Differing and changing user requirements including an aging population and the increasing responsibilities around public health
- Ongoing financial pressures
- Devolution and new responsibilities from central Government which are creating demands to integrate services

There are a series of opportunities that the Digital Strategy presents to us:

- Putting people at the heart of their own use of council services
- The opportunity to mainstream the co-design of services
- Technology enabled change
- Prevention and proactive intervention, using data to analyse impact and insight
- The option to prototype, learn and scale
- Sharing across the sector
- A 'localisation' of our procurement
- Community focused delivery, partnering with subject matter experts

In developing the strategy it has also been important to consider the following:

- The leadership to manage the scale of change required
- Integration of people/process/technology
- Market dominance of software suppliers - limited incentive to change and consolidate
- Service level cultural and behavioural change
- Developing the digital skills of the workforce

Current ICT System Architecture

In order to assess the requirements for the development of the Digital Strategy we have undertaken a full analysis of our current ICT system architecture. This assessment has been focused on four key areas:
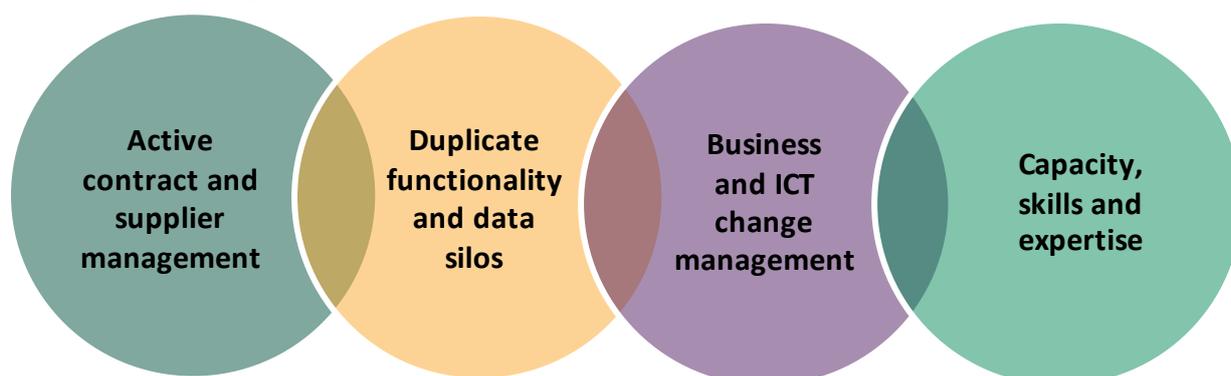
The current position with the Councils' systems can be summarised as follows:

- A significant number of the contracts for systems are coming to an end in the next 12-24 months
- Approximately a third of the Councils systems are out of data and have the potential for replacement

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- Whilst the majority of systems present no issues for service delivery, a significant number to present service delivery issues, primarily technical although some present through customer service
- There are a number of services that consider their current system is capable of a lot more than what it is used for. This can be due to lack technical skills and knowledge to support and explore the system, or in a number of cases the lack of resources.

The Councils are aware that at present applications are managed and procured and then often driven by suppliers. At the root of this is a lack of internal strategic ICT capacity and active contract management, meaning that solutions are looked at on a piecemeal basis rather than a joined-up view to determine opportunities across all solutions.

The convergence of contract end dates for a number of systems provides a unique opportunity to create a Component Architecture Project to define our current and future business requirements to ensure fitness for the future, and to exploit a smaller number of core systems overall. Over time this will reduce licensing, support and maintenance costs, as well as the contract management support required. It will however require up-front investment in requirement capture, market testing, procurement and implementation.

Many of the Councils systems include basic forms, workflow and case management type capabilities that are replicable in other ways. At present customer data is held in multiple systems which hampers the clear view of demand and is a barrier to offering a seamless online service to residents across service areas. The Component Architecture Project provides an opportunity to consider the overall architecture that would enable single view.

Digital Maturity

Fundamental to an effective transformative digital programme is that services are designed around user needs first. This design led approach is essential and is coupled with accessibility of services, an open innovative approach to technology, and finally an agile approach to delivery that recognises digital services as constantly evolving in maturity.

As a starting point for the development of the Digital Strategy it was important to gain insight into the extent to which the Councils and their ICT is digitally mature. In order to provide this insight, the Councils engaged SOCITM to conduct a Digital Maturity Assessment. This has examined in detail where best practice measures have been adopted and what degree of commitment has been invested in digital services.

A summary of the Digital Maturity Assessment for the Councils is summarised below:

SDMA – Alliance Digital Maturity Position
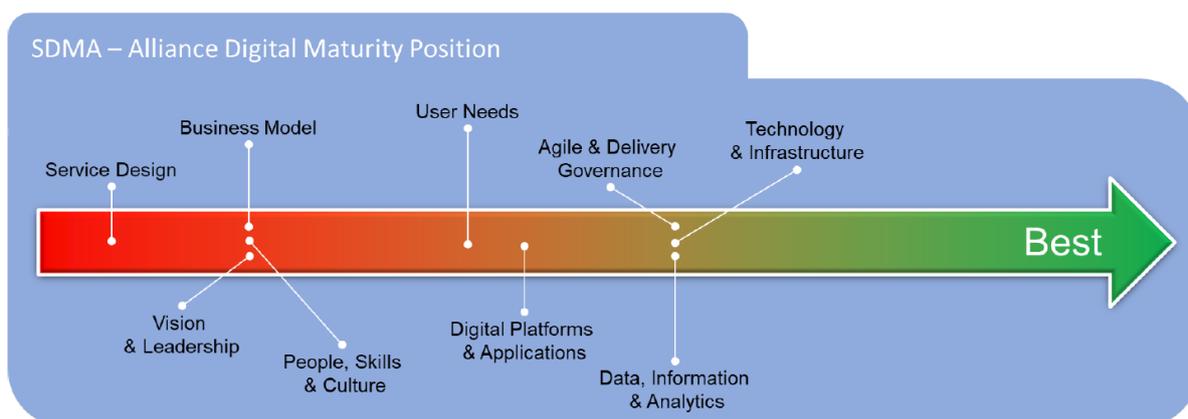
The key issue for the Councils that is confirmed by the maturity assessment is the need for the active management of business requirements and the alignment with ICT infrastructure. Currently, to a certain extent, each service manages their own needs in relative isolation, leading to missed opportunities to create a more consistent customer experience and to operate more efficiently.

There are a number of strategic recommendations that emerge from this assessment:

For effective digital services there is a need for the Councils to:

- Define and implement a Service Design approach and ongoing journey
- Build digital inclusion efforts across the community
- Measure all investment and delivery initiatives against KPIs
- Create a data management framework to drive the data agenda

In order to provide the foundations for the effective delivery of digital services the Councils should:

- Instigate a Digital Board
- Mobilise a Component Architecture Project (CAP), informing an overall architectural roadmap informed by the market
- Review the ICT contract arrangements with a view to consolidating and unifying contracts and services

In order to provide the organisational structure and processes to make the necessary changes the Councils should:

- Create and mobilise change, prioritisation and portfolio management capability across the Alliance
- Introduce Digital Business Partners
- Adopt a joined-up capability and capacity approach across both authorities
- Create a digital skills framework for employees and partners

Digital Strategy

Foundations:

A culture of *empathy* across both authorities, *understanding* user need when designing services

A *holistic* prioritisation across the organisation, targeting *big wins* first

Effective *procurement* and *contract management* practices

A *local* focus, developing real *community*-based partnerships

A *data management framework*, enabling better more open use of data

A centrally responsible *PMO* and *Benefit Realisation* approach, with a culture of *accountability*

Continuously improving our services based on *evidence* and *collaboration*

A *modern* infrastructure with *cross cutting* component capabilities

Vision:

'We will authentically deliver services that improve the lives of all our residents and businesses; through better design, use of data and innovation, and community collaboration'

In order to focus strategic energy and oversight, this vision will be delivered via four key pillars:

Digital Services - *Simple, proactive, effective and secure public services that are designed and delivered in partnership with our communities*

Digital Skills and Inclusion - *Giving our communities the skills, tools, access and confidence to engage digitally with us, whilst improving our non-digital experiences to match digital experiences*

Digital Collaboration and Connectivity - *Maximising the opportunities for digital, data and technology to enhance collaborative working, the local economy, individual opportunity and our residents quality of life*

Data and Intelligence - *Optimised data and intelligence is central to the way we configure, reconfigure, deliver and continuously improve our services*

What Will We Deliver and Why?

Digital Services

We will…	So that…
Instigate a Digital Board, inviting key partners from the region to be a part of the board	As a region we continue to drive a joined up Digital agenda, making long lasting decisions that will benefit our residents, businesses and visitors
Design our services and products with our communities and customers	Future customers journeys reflect the needs of all users, including those who are hard to reach or who are digitally excluded
Adopt a 'Digital by preference' approach to designing our services, whilst ensuring non-digital experiences match digital experiences	We truly become a digital organisation, serving our customer consistently across all channels
Ensure that all digital services are accessible and easy to use, regardless of the customer's platform of choice	Our customers can engage with our service wherever, whenever and however they like
Review, adapt or redesign our processes in line with future customer journeys, enabling continuous improvements for our customers	Our staff and partners are empowered to deliver services via our process, not blocked
Create and use a set of common design standards and service patterns	Our staff and partners are able to design consistent service delivery processes
Create an environment which allows public service leaders to flourish, understanding how digital, data and technology can be used	Succession planning in the organisation creates digital leaders for the future in our region, in turn making High Peak and Staffordshire Moorlands more attractive places to work
Provide our employees with the tools, technology and applications	Our staff deliver effective and efficient services, capable of adapting to changing user needs
Increase the use of flexible working, following the success of service	We deliver great, cost-effective services whilst ensuring the mental

delivery through the Covid-19 pandemic, in line with the OD strategy	and physical wellbeing of our staff is maintained
Become proactive in our engagement with customer cases and case management	You tell us once, we then manage your need appropriately from first contact to delivery
Introduce a more complete customer feedback, satisfaction and complaints methodology	Customer's know their voice will be heard and insights are used to improve services
Introduce an organisation wide Change and Portfolio Management approach, including a prioritisation approach that maximises our delivery efficiency	Resources are focused on delivering work that makes the biggest difference to our customers, whilst embedding changes in a sustainable way
Build a programme of work that targets three outcomes: removing the highest organisational risk, as a high a return on investment as possible, and improving our Customers' experience	We move from an organisation that generally focuses on tactical fixes to one focused on delivering the short and long term needs of our users

Digital Skills and Inclusion

We will…	So that…
Conduct a Digital Skills audit	We can baseline our Professional Digital, Data and Technology Skills programme for our staff
Review the Digital, Data and Technology skills across both authorities, comparing to those needed to drive the digital maturity agenda across both authorities	We can determine how to best structure our capacity and capability in order to maximise efficient and effective delivery
Work with those community members who are digitally excluded to understand their needs	We become more customer focused, data driven, transparent and efficient in the way we operate
Prioritise our engagement with communities, assisting them with their access to digital services alongside our local partners	We build early momentum as we transform our service, enabling real community engagement across the end-to-end process
Give our staff and our partners support in order to transact as digital advocates on behalf of our communities. This includes upskilling and knowledge transfer between organisations	Across organisational boundaries, digital advocates are created in the region
Introduce professional digital, data and technology skills and capabilities for our staff	We better support the professional development of our staff, maintaining and growing skills in the region aiding our local economy
Work alongside local enterprise partnerships and the CBI in the region to promote initiatives that invest in local skills and talent retention	A long term, flourishing and viable digital economy exists in our region
Ensure that our staff have access to the data and systems that make a difference to our customers whilst out and about	Vulnerable citizens who cannot travel are not left behind - they access personal assistance

Digital Collaboration and Connectivity

We will…	So that…
Increase the focus on Digital, Data and Technology demands across both authorities, prioritising cross cutting capabilities and the integration of those capabilities	We take a 'whole organisation' enterprise architecture view, delivering capabilities that enhance service delivery and increases efficiency
Foster existing and new relationships across our partner and voluntary organisations in our region	We strengthen our Digital Service offering in order to meet long term user need
Orchestrate an environment and a local ecosystem which invests in Digital, Data and Technology; paying particular attention to innovative local companies	We build a strong, resilient and importantly a local supply chain to meet our long term needs
Support seamless integration and interactions between internal applications and systems alongside wider integrations with our partners	Customer journeys become frictionless and easy to navigate
Target areas of high return on investment to invest in innovative and new technologies	We bring to bear the power of innovative local companies, whilst looking for opportunities to improve customer experience. For example, with chatbots and automation
Alongside county council colleagues, support and grow the application of wireless technologies	We support our ambitious climate crisis targets and look to improve outcomes for our vulnerable residents
Remove barriers that slow or stop service delivery, particularly in areas like data sharing and eligibility assessment for the vulnerable	We shorten the time between a request for help and fulfilment of that request
Work to strengthen the two-tier council system with our county council colleagues	Customers with needs from both organisations experience similar effective fulfilment of need

Data and Intelligence

We will…	So that…
Create a basic data management framework, underpinning our future data journey	All future data and intelligence builds on our foundational capabilities, growing our effectiveness
Champion the use of data and intelligence driven delivery across all service areas	We become more customer focused, data driven, transparent and efficient in the way we operate
Create and use a set of common data standards and patterns	Intra-council and inter-organisational working leverages data to promote positive outcomes for our users
Adapt our data governance regime, opening up opportunities to innovate whilst also keeping our customer and community data safe	We capture and retain only data that improves and aids service delivery, feeding into our continuous improvement mindset, allowing the organisation to make time critical decisions at point of need
Work towards the creation of a single view of our customers	We dramatically improve the effectiveness and efficiency of our service delivery and decision-making process
Determine the requirements for business intelligence and performance reporting, standardising and automating	We ascertain the effectiveness of our service delivery, our capacity and where we can most positively influence changes in our organisation
Work alongside local businesses to design our policies, based on the data we hold	We assist in creating an environment within which local businesses can thrive
Map our data, conducting a data maturity assessment	We understand where we can enhance our data capabilities and the capabilities of our partners data in influencing service delivery
Work with our partner organisations to share and combine data, where appropriate	Customers who require services delivered by multiple agencies do not experience unnecessary delays
Better utilise geographic, regional and location data when designing and redesigning our services	Our services continue to be as relevant as possible, meeting user needs

Action Plan

Year 1

Foundations	Create a Digital Board	Contract review and following consolidation activities
	Initiate CAP	Define business requirements — Outline case for change created

Foundations
- Create a Digital Board
- Contract review and following consolidation activities
- Initiate CAP
- Define business requirements
- Outline case for change created

Digital Services
- Design and define design principles and methodology – Architecture and Service Design
- Align Digital Services and Customer Experience KPIs alongside the Access to Services Strategy
- Create digital advocate group of residents and businesses in order to co-design services
- Customer Access Portal consolidation, including technology review of underpinning customer

Digital Skills & Inclusion
- Digital Skills Audit
- Digital Exclusion access review
- Align Digital skills and competencies framework to the Organisational Development Strategy
- Implement recommendations of digital skills audit and access review

Digital Collaboration & Connectivity
- Further cement relationships across regional government, regional businesses, and service providers
- Create community digital advocate members of Digital Board
- 5G investigations across the region
- Continued adoption of M365 capabilities across both authorities

Data & Intelligence
- Digital Maturity Assessment
- Data Management Framework creation
- Data review and Data discovery
- Early iteration of data design patterns created and shared across the region

Foundations	Digital business partners embedded
	RFI from Market, informing future CAP direction Full CAP business case CAP Procurement and Implementation
Digital Services	Discovery/ies into in application automation capabilities Chatbot and RPA discovery and alpha and early adoption
	Co-design and embed assisted self service and support a Customer Portal Co-design services across both authorities, across all channels
Digital Skills & Inclusion	Implement recommendations of digital skills audit and access review Staff information and communication more available and inclusive - possible intranet re-design alongside continued adoption of M365
	Build relationships with local educational institutes and providers of digital inclusion services
Digital Collaboration & Connectivity	Reduction of Not Spots across the region, driving out further mobility technology alongside county council colleagues
	Collaborate with local innovation hubs and industry, driving local investment hubs
Data & Intelligence	Initiate and grow the community based, regional data sharing methodology, both sharing out and sharing inwardly
	Determine the requirements for business intelligence and performance reporting, standardising and automating

Foundations	CAP Procurement and Implementation
Digital Services	Chatbot and RPA roll out as part of wider service re-design
	Co-design services across both authorities, across all channels
Digital Skills & Inclusion	Iterate and evolve the digital skills competencies and capabilities across the region
	Alongside local education providers and businesses located in our innovation hubs, launch a Peaks and Moorlands digital apprenticeship and learning pathway
Digital Collaboration & Connectivity	Internet of Things (IoT) and Smart City Technology discoveries across the region
Data & Intelligence	Grow the data and intelligence-based decision-making capability in both authorities
	Self-service standardised reports, established data warehouse and single view of a customer firmly business as usual