SOUTH HOLLAND DISTRICT COUNCIL

Report of: **Cllr Malcolm Chandler, Portfolio Holder for Strategy, Governance and Transformation**
Maxine O'Mahony, Executive Director - Strategy and Governance (Monitoring Officer)

To: **Cabinet – 12 March 2019**
South Holland District Council – 27 March 2019

Author: **Sarah Barsby, Shared Executive Manager Information**

Subject **ICT & Digital Strategy and Digital Work Programme 2019-2022 and Digital Work Programme**

Purpose: **To adopt the new ICT and Digital Strategy and recommend to Council the transfer of funds to ensure the delivery of the Digital Work Programme.**

Recommendation:

1) That the draft ICT and Digital Strategy be approved, and implemented from April 2019 to align with the Council's new Corporate Plan;

2) That the Digital Work Programme associated with this strategy be approved, subject to recommendation 4 below being agreed at Council on 27 March 2019;

3) That the strategy's progress be reported to the Council's Performance Monitoring Panel on a six monthly basis, or as appropriate;

Recommendation to Council:

4) That in order to deliver the Digital Work Programme, a transfer of £331,613 from the Council's investment and growth reserve be approved.

1.0   BACKGROUND

1.1   The ICT and Digital Strategy (Appendix A) has been designed to support the wider aims of the South Holland Corporate Plan and its priorities. In particular, it makes a key contribution towards helping the Council to 'provide the right services, at the right time and in the right way'.

1.2   It builds on the work already undertaken as part of the ICT Programme, launched in 2017 following a Council decision in 2016 to invest in:
- Creating a new ICT infrastructure to deliver improvements to its ICT services
- Enhancing security and disaster recovery
- Putting foundations in place for staff mobile working and improved information sharing

With most of those projects now complete, the ICT Programme has helped the Council build a secure and resilient foundation in preparation for the digital improvements it wants to make to not only the way customers access services but how those services are designed and provided – to be more responsive, efficient and cost-effective.

1.3 The Council recognises the potential of digital technology to transform the district and lives of residents while generating long-term savings. However, to maximise the benefits that digital technology can bring, the Council wants to increase the scope, and in some areas, the pace, of this work.

1.4 CPBS has been fully involved in the creation of this strategy as the Council's service provider, and consultation has also taken place with East Lindsey District Council, as a shared client of CPBS.

1.5 The Strategy has been presented to members through Portfolio Holder briefings, Strategy Board and at several member engagement sessions after which FAQs were created and circulated to all members. It has also been to the Joint Performance Monitoring and Policy Development Panel twice for comment, feedback from which has been incorporated into the draft strategy presented in this report. Following these member engagement sessions, feedback from the February meeting of the Joint Performance Monitoring and Policy Development Panel was to recommend the strategy to Cabinet and Council, requesting that its progress be reported to the Performance Monitoring Panel on a six monthly basis, or as appropriate.

2.0   STRATEGY

2.1 The strategy outlines the approach that the Council will take to develop and roll out digital technologies that support efficient and cost-effective service delivery, ensuring those solutions work for our customers.

2.2 Setting out the next steps to achieving digital improvements as part of a three-year vision for the Council, the strategy works towards implementation of an integrated ICT platform, allowing every service to access, process and analyse data from a single source – helping to drive service improvement and delivery.

2.3 It focuses on technology as an 'enabler' for the strategic transformation of the Council's core business processes, redesigning services and enabling access to them in the most cost-effective way, with the aim of giving customers choice and meeting their modern needs within the resources the Council has available.

2.4 The strategy will be underpinned by a Digital Work Programme (Appendix B) and an ICT Work Programme which will be brought forward in 2019/20, forming part of the Council's Service Level Agreement with CPBS (ICT Service).

2.5   Strategy development
The draft strategy has been developed in consultation with senior officers, and the portfolio holder for Strategy, Governance and Transformation. In addition, it has been shared with CPBS, as the Council's delivery partner for Customer Services. CPBS has confirmed it is supportive of the strategy's intent and that its current operating model is capable of meeting the strategy's requirements.

2.6   Strategy vision
The strategy's vision is to provide high quality, easy-to-use services that are designed with customers in mind, delivered efficiently with improved value for money.

By encouraging customers to self-serve, wherever possible and practical, the Council can focus its more intensive contact channels, like face-to-face, on those who need the most help and support to access services.

2.7   Strategy ambitions
Underpinning the strategy is a set of high-level aims which will help shape the way we:

- Improve digital opportunities for customers to help them access a better experience of Council services, and beyond
- Give staff and Members the right digital tools and training to work 'smarter'
- Minimise internal costs of services and ICT systems
- Generate revenue by:
  - Making it easier and more convenient to pay online
  - Using digital marketing to promote our traded services

2.8   Strategy themes
The ICT and Digital Strategy proposes to focus on – and group – future activity and projects around four key themes:

- Digital Foundation – Much of the ICT Programme work, so far
- Digital Customer – Where the Digital Team has been focusing its efforts, to date (Eg: website, online forms, book and pay, etc.)
- Digital Council – Giving staff and members the technology and tools they need to be effective/productive
- Digital Place (our wider district) – A longer-term ambition to digitise the district (Eg: better broadband, etc.)

3.0   STRATEGY PRINCIPLES
The strategy includes a number of key features, including:

3.1   Digital design principles
These align to government best practice standards and have been developed so that all council departments and their staff are signed up to working in a consistent way when reviewing or redesigning services.

3.2   Architecture principles
The approach the Council will take to the designing, sourcing and deploying of ICT and Digital systems will be defined by a number of key architectural principles, covering how the Council will:
- Use data to design better services
- Share learning and resources to reduce costs and speed implementation
- Use cloud hosting of services and data, where appropriate, rather than using physical servers
- Procure systems that 'talk to each other'
- Create a digitally capable workforce through training and development

The use of ICT and Digital by the Council **must add value to the customer**; whether that be a resident, elected Member, business, partner organisation or other service within the Council.

4.0 GOVERNANCE

The successful delivery of this strategy will be dependent on people as much as it will technology, and ensuring that all services are working in line with the principles, as set out in points 3.1 and 3.2 of this report.

Reporting to the Council's ICT and Customer Board, a new ICT and Digital Steering Group will be set up to prioritise developments, based on customer demand and savings to the back office; and engage with services to provide or improve upon their online service 'offer'.

A crucial part of the group's role will also be to ensure that the relevant support services are involved in purchasing (Contracts Team) or developing (ICT and Web teams) new systems, processes (Corporate Improvement Team) or ways of working (Learning and Development Team).

The ICT and Customer Board will be accountable for the delivery of the Digital Work Programme, outlined in section 6 of this report, below. Regular highlights reports will also be produced from this for the Executive Management Team.

The delivery of the work programme will be:
- Evaluated through inclusion in the Council's audit programme for 2020/21
- Reported on through status updates in Strategy and Governance Portfolio Briefing reports
- Monitored through regular updates to the Council's Policy Monitoring Panel, on a suggested six-monthly basis

5.0 DIGITAL WORK PROGRAMME

5.1 The delivery of this strategy and Digital Work Programme (Appendix B) is closely linked to the Customer Access Strategy 2019-2022.

5.2 The Digital Work Programme underpins both strategies by identifying corporate priority projects for digital service transformation and improvement, including:

- **Customer Services** (CPBS-led: enabling the re-engineering of all key service request processes, and the roll-out of self/assisted-service by replacing and improving CPBS's Customer Relationship Management system (shared with East Lindsey District Council). This will encourage a higher take-up of online services while reducing officer processing time.

- **'Report It' process re-engineering**: Re-working all online 'report it' processes (Eg; fly-tipping, missed refuse bag collections, etc), to improve customer experience and take-up of digital services, as well as reducing officer processing time.

- **Housing:** Integrate new Housing system (including Council House repairs) into Council's web platform by the creation of a tenants' housing hub. This will enable customers to self-serve, saving administrative time which officers can spend instead on supporting more complex enquiries or issues.

- **Economic Development:** creating an improved online business portal to improve support and advice to small and new businesses. This will help to promote the district as a place where businesses are encouraged and supported to locate and expand.

- **Revenues and benefits** (CPBS-led): Automating as many revenues and benefits processes as possible, to allow greater levels of assisted and self-service, improving customer experience and freeing up officer and saving officer processing time.

- **Licensing:** Integrate new licensing software into Council's web platform. This will enable residents to self-serve and save administration time which officers can spend on supporting more complex enquiries or issues. This will be delivered with a consistent 'look and feel' to match other online Council services.

- **EHT&C Website:** Provide a new more commercially-focused 'look and feel' to the EHT&C website to encourage more online visitors and course bookings.

5.3 Resource requirements

5.3.1 The total cost to the Council of delivering the Digital Work Programme is estimated at £331,613.

A high-level breakdown of the overall figure of £331k is provided in the table shown below.

Role	Term	Cost across full term
Project Manager	18 months	£54,975
Web Content Manager	2 years	£88,362
Web Developer	2 years	£88,362
UX / Design resource	2 years	£40,414
One-off costs to deliver		£59,500

This comprises staff resource of £231k, consultancy and contract staff of up to £40k, and systems and development costs (one-off) of £60k. It does not include the costs of the Public Protection or Housing systems which were the subject of separate reports.

Following advice from the Finance Team, this report proposes that the resource costs of £331,613 are funded from within the existing investment and growth reserve.

5.3.2 Staff resource

The £231k outlined above for staff resource will be used to employ a dedicated project manager who will carry out further analysis to quantify the full cost-efficiencies of the planned work to the Council. Prior to any project commencing, a fully-developed business case will be created, outlining cashable and non-cashable benefits.

This funding will also be used to appoint:

- 1 web developer (2 year, fixed term – employed by and based within the CPBS web team)
- 1 web content manager (2 year, fixed term – employed by and based within SHDC)

This is expected to provide the necessary capacity to support delivery of the programme within the three-year ICT and Digital strategy timeframe.

5.4   Return on Investment
Information detailed within Appendix C (attached) describes at a high level the main opportunity areas for efficiency savings to be generated as a result of implementing the proposed strategy. Three separate processes are analysed in detail and indicative savings figures, totalling potential savings of some £206k per annum, are provided. Given that many service areas are yet to undergo analysis and digitalisation we would expect that figure to increase as the programme is rolled out.

6.0   OPTIONS

6.1   Approve the draft ICT and Digital Strategy, to be implemented from April 2019, as well as the digital work programme associated with this strategy, subject to Council approving the transfer of funding from Council reserves. Additionally, agree the strategy and digital work programme's progress be reported to the Council's Performance Monitoring Panel on a six monthly basis, or as appropriate.

6.2   Propose changes to the draft ICT and Digital Strategy and/or digital work programme, or their reporting to the Council's Performance Monitoring Panel every six months.

6.3   Do nothing.

7.0   REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION(S)

7.1   The strategy sets out a clear plan for making best use of Council resources to meet the needs of its customers – residents, businesses, staff and elected Members – while achieving value for money for the Council.

7.2   Not only does the strategy aim to improve services, it also anticipates a reduction in costs over the three-year period, through increased productivity, rationalisation and re-procurement of systems and software, automation of service processes, and as more customers seek to access Council services online.

8.0   EXPECTED BENEFITS

8.1   By implementing an integrated ICT platform, the Council will be able to access, process and analyse customer data from a single source – helping to drive service improvement and efficiency.

8.2   By transforming the Council's core systems and business processes, Council services and staff will be able to operate in a more efficient and cost-effective way.

8.3   As more customers choose – and expect – to transact with the Council via its website, the Council anticipates being able to make significant savings to its operating costs.

8.4 By giving staff and elected Members the right digital tools and training, they will be to work 'smarter' and more productively.

8.5 By making it easier and more convenient to pay online, and by using digital marketing to promote our traded services, the Council will be able to maintain or generate revenue.

9.0 IMPLICATIONS

9.1 In preparing this report, the report author has considered the likely implications of the decision - particularly in terms of Carbon Footprint / Environmental Issues; Constitutional & Legal; Contracts; Corporate Priorities; Crime & Disorder; Equality & Diversity/Human Rights; Financial; Health & Wellbeing; Reputation; Risk Management; Safeguarding; Staffing; Stakeholders/Consultation/Timescales; Transformation Programme; Other. Where the report author considers that there may be implications under one or more of these headings, these are identified below.

9.2 **Corporate Priorities**
The strategy supports the Council's Corporate Plan priority of 'providing the right service, in the right way at the right time' by providing easy access to information, advice and support through multiple access channels, and by ensuring our business processes are as efficient and cost-effective as possible.

9.3 Equality and Diversity / Human Rights

9.3.1 Residents, businesses and visitors will continue to be able to contact the Council by any of the following channels:
- Web
- Telephone
- Post or email
- Face-to-face
- Social media

And the Council will contact them by web chat, telephone, post, email and social media.

9.3.2 Web:
South Holland District Council's website aims to conform to Level AA of the web content accessibility guidelines of the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) which particularly considers protected groups, including people with disabilities.
The Council's website also features the option of a 'Recite Me' toolbar, which makes content more accessible with reading and translation support. Text can also be downloaded as an MP3 digital audio file.

Residents with hearing or visual impairments can view the website content in extra-large font/text to assist people with visual impairments, and sound/audio buttons are designed to benefit those with hearing impairments.

The carers (including family and friends) of older frail residents and of children and young people will benefit from transacting and finding out about services online. Many carers try to balance caring with work and careers and they will be able to access the Council 24:7.

9.3.3 Telephone:
While the strategy aims to encourage more residents to contact the Council online, it does not reduce or change residents' access to telephone contact channels to raise queries or

access services. It aims to improve the current service by reducing customer demand for this channel, and therefore will be of benefit to all groups who continue use this as a way of contacting the Council. Adoption of the strategy will also enable the opportunity to review the existing telephone menu options structure and implement changes, with a view to providing a simplified customer experience.

9.3.4   Face-to-face:
Face-to-face services will be reconfigured to provide greater access to self-serve facilities and support to use these.

Face-to-face appointments will continue to be available to all customers, including those who feel they need them (Eg: for more complex enquiries and more vulnerable customers) at the Council's Priory Road office.

9.4   Financial
The strategy also takes account of the increasing financial pressures faced by local Government and the need for all councils – including South Holland District Council – to ensure they are delivering services as cost-effectively as possible.

For further financial detail, please see section 5.3.

9.5   Staffing
Please see section 5.3.2.

9.6   Risks
The risk of both proceeding and not proceeding with the Digital Work Programme are detailed in Appendix D.

9.7   Constitution/Legal
The ICT and Digital Strategy does not form part of the Council's policy framework, and is consistent with the Council's Corporate Plan.

However, the Digital Work Programme contains both direct financial and staffing implications. As such, this element is a non-executive decision which falls to the Council to determine.

10   WARDS/COMMUNITIES AFFECTED
All wards are affected by the strategy.

11.0   ACRONYMS

11.1   ICT – Information Communication Technology

11.2   GIS – Geographic Information System

11.3   CRM – Customer Relationship Management

11.4   W3C – World Wide Web Consortium

Lead Contact Officer

Name and Post:	Sarah Barsby Shared Executive Manager Information
Telephone Number	07870 157290
Email:	Sarah.Barsby@breckland-sholland.gov.uk

Key Decision: No
Exempt Decision: No

This report refers to a Discretionary Service

Appendices attached to this report:

Appendix A	Digital and ICT Strategy 2019-2022
Appendix B	Digital Work Programme – key projects
Appendix C	Digital Work Programme – Return on Investment (ROI)
Appendix D	Digital Work Programme – risk analysis