

DIGITAL AND IT STRATEGY 2019-2024

2020 REVIEW

Version control

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Governance Committee	Policy and Strategy		date approved	June 2019	
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Strategic Alignment

The Digital and IT Strategy supports all five priorities and helps deliver each of the underlying ambition statements.

Consultation and Distribution Record

Consultation Process	The sub policies which support the overall strategy are subject to their own consultation exercises, the details of which are contained within the individual documents.
Stakeholders	Contacts identified for each service
Distribution	Transformation and Digitalisation Committee

Change record

Date	August 2020	Author	Alison Meenagh
Change made	Annual update of strategy for consideration at Transformation & Digitisation Committee		

foreword

The first Digital and IT Strategy for North Lanarkshire was approved in May 2019. For the first time, the strategy brought together separate but related plans and policies to help deliver a one council, place based approach to ensure we continue on our route to inclusive growth.

We ASPIRE that North Lanarkshire is the place to Live, Learn, Work, Invest and Visit.

Inherent in this is our vision for 'digital first' to become the default for all customer enquiries, requests and applications. To support this vision, plans for a Customer Service Hub and a new website are well underway. The council's Covid-19 Recovery Plan and continuing social distancing requirements reinforce this digital first approach and provide further impetus to change the way we deliver services.

Since last year North Lanarkshire, along with the rest of the world, has seen many changes resulting from Coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic that will impact on our communities and services. Our intention to embrace these changes, take advantage of ICT to renew council services and establish working from home as the default position mean we are well placed to become a leading digital authority.

The Digital and IT Strategy has therefore been reviewed to support this intention and updated to reflect the developing economic and cultural situation.

Kenneth Duffy

Convener, Transformation and Digitalisation Committee



introduction & context

North Lanarkshire Council

North Lanarkshire Council is Scotland's fourth largest local authority with an inspiring shared ambition for inclusive growth and prosperity for all.

While trends show improvements in some indicators of economic growth, investment, employment, and educational attainment, there are still unacceptably high levels of deprivation and child poverty, and clear areas of inequity and inequality.

Over recent years we have had one of the strongest and fastest growing economies in Scotland with Gross Value Added (the measure of the value of goods and services produced) increasing by 2.4% in 2018. Historically we have had higher levels of employment with unemployment claimant figures reducing from a high in 2012 of 11.2% to 3.8% in March 2020. Coronavirus (COVID-19) saw claimant count rise to 6.9% in June 2020.

Our population is expected to increase by 990 people by the year 2028, compared to a growth of 1.8% in Scotland. The population is then predicted to decrease by 1.2% (4,010 people) between the years 2028 to 2043.

While qualification levels have been rising, 15.1% of 16-64 year olds in 2019 had no qualifications which restricts their ability to access new and developing employment opportunities. 26% of children live in poverty (after housing costs which includes costs such as rent, service charges, ground rents, mortgage interest and buildings insurance). It is against this backdrop that we are planning large scale regeneration and infrastructure projects to drive inclusive economic growth, increase skills and generate jobs and training opportunities for people to live, learn, work, invest and visit in North Lanarkshire. Through our varied initiatives, we will effectively embrace, expand and use technology to ensure council services are designed and delivered to support the changing needs of our communities and businesses. This Digital and IT Strategy helps enable our vision.

The strategy will be invaluable in the council's recovery following Coronavirus (Covid-19). Although we have been forced to make changes to service delivery this has provided an opportunity to review all service areas.

A large proportion of our workforce has been successfully working from home, using digital technology. There is a need for this way of working to continue, both to mitigate against the ongoing threat of coronavirus and to realise efficiencies in our properties, transport and travel costs. We are currently assessing required changes to services in our Recovery Plan for North Lanarkshire, with every service being analysed and evaluated against key factors such as risk and statutory responsibilities. Vital services, and those directly supporting the response to coronavirus, will be a priority for recovery. Where digital assistance has been highlighted as essential to recovery, these services will also be a priority for Business Solutions. All services have been mapped against the Scottish Government's route map.

It is likely that our services will be very different; the operation of council buildings will be altered to ensure compliance with health and safety guidance, and, assisted by digital technology, our staff will all work more flexibly again supported by digital technology.

National Context

As part of our ambition to be the place to Live, Learn, Work, Invest and Visit, we aspire to be a leading digital authority. Digitisation provides a great opportunity for the council to address some of the inherent features of our economy and, through shifting the way we interact with customers, visitors and businesses, could help to alleviate the challenging financial climate facing us for the foreseeable future.

IT can no longer be thought of as a support service, and the Digital and IT Strategy, and its governing principles, aim to highlight how technology will be used to transform service delivery. It cannot, however, be written in isolation and to this end, several national strategies and policies have influenced its development.

Most recently the guiding principles for the recovery of council services following the Coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic are governed by guidance and regulation from the Scottish Government.

The Scottish Government’s Digital Strategy ‘Realising Scotland’s full potential in a digital world: a digital strategy for Scotland’ aims to ensure that Scotland is recognised throughout the world as a vibrant, inclusive, open and outward-looking digital nation.

The UK Government’s Cloud First Policy recommends that when new or existing services are being procured, councils should fully evaluate cloud solutions before considering any other option.

A Digital Service Standard, produced by the UK Government, provides essential criteria to help create and operate good digital services. It is used to check whether a service is good enough for public use.

Future Telecoms Infrastructure Review, produced by the Department for Digital, Culture, and Media & Sport includes a street works toolkit to help councils deal with increases in internet and mobile data traffic.

Local Context

At a local level we are undergoing major transformation to meet the current and future needs and demands of our customers and communities.

The [Plan for North Lanarkshire](#) sets the direction for the council and our partners, stakeholders and communities – it encompasses a shared ambition for inclusive growth and prosperity. To deliver this ambition our work is focused on five complementary priorities and their underlying ambition statements.

<p>Improve economic opportunities and outcomes</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ensure a housing mix that supports social inclusion and economic growth. 2. Refocus our town centres and communities to be multi-functional connected places which maximise social, economic and environmental opportunities. 3. Maximise the use of our marketable land and assets through improved development in business and industrial infrastructure. 4. Market and promote North Lanarkshire as the place to live, learn, work, invest, and visit. 5. Grow and improve the sustainability and diversity of North Lanarkshire’s economy. 	<p>Support all children and young people to reach their full potential</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. Raise attainment and skills for learning, life, and work to enhance opportunities and choices. 7. Enhance collaborative working to maximise support and ensure all our children and young people are included, supported, and safe. 8. Engage children and families in early learning and childcare programmes and making positive transitions to school. 9. Invest in early interventions, positive transitions, and preventative approaches to improve outcomes for children and young people. 10. Engage with children, young people, parents, carers, and families to help all children and young people reach their full potential. 	<p>Improve the health and wellbeing of our communities</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 11. Increase economic opportunities for adults by understanding, identifying and addressing the causes of poverty and deprivation, and the barriers to financial inclusion. 12. Ensure our residents are able to achieve, maintain and recover their independence through appropriate supports at home and in their communities. 13. Improve preventative approaches including self-management and giving people information and choice over supports and services. 14. Ensure the highest standards of public protection. 15. Encourage the health and wellbeing of people through a range of social, cultural, and leisure activities. 	<p>Enhance participation, capacity and empowerment across our communities</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 16. Transform our natural environment to support wellbeing and inward investment and enhance it for current and future generations. 17. Ensure we keep our environment clean, safe and attractive. 18. Ensure our digital transformation is responsive to all people’s needs and enables access to the services they need. 19. Improve engagement with communities and develop their capacity to help themselves. 20. Improve the involvement of communities in the decisions, and development of services and supports, that affect them. 	<p>Improve North Lanarkshire’s resource base</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 21. Continue to identify and access opportunities to leverage additional resources to support our ambition. 22. Facilitate a North Lanarkshire-wide approach to asset rationalisation, including with communities and partners. 23. Build a workforce for the future capable of delivering on our priorities and shared ambition. 24. Review and design services around people, communities, and shared resources. 25. Ensure intelligent use of data and information to support fully evidence based decision making and future planning.
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The Digital and IT Strategy is central to all five of the priorities and will help deliver, to a greater or lesser extent, all of the ambition statements. It will guide services to transition from the current traditional IT estate to a new and agile digital service delivery.

Town and Community Hubs

Planning for the regeneration and reimagining of our towns and communities is underway with eight Town Hubs planned across North Lanarkshire. These will serve the requirements of each town community and could include education, public services, culture, sport, and leisure services, together with partnership and flexible work spaces, and commercial opportunities.

Community Hubs will be created in localities providing more localised services to complement those on offer at the larger Town Hubs. These smaller hubs will be tailored to meet the specific needs of each local community and will incorporate existing community assets as part of our wider asset rationalisation programme.

Digital NL plays a key role in developing the hubs to ensure they have the latest connectivity and digital technologies to connect learners and communities to a range of opportunities and to develop skills for employment, learning, life, as well as enabling digital access to council services.

Strategic Planning

2.1 Programmes and Projects

The Digital and IT Strategy comprises a number of innovative projects and programmes designed to exploit emerging technology to the benefit of our communities, services and employees. It is imperative these do not operate in isolation. The purpose of the Digital and IT Strategy is to provide an overall strategic approach to ensure each takes account of common issues and outcomes and that these are reflected in individual projects. This will ensure we maximise the achievement of our priorities as listed in 1.3 and also contribute to national priorities as detailed in 1.2.

Programme and Projects	
<p>Digital NL</p>	<p>Digital NL is the council’s Transformation Programme which supports the delivery of the Plan for North Lanarkshire. DigitalNL is radically transforming the delivery of council services to residents and businesses. It has three key aspirations: the digitisation of council services, upskilling our staff and residents, and stimulating economic growth.</p> <p>The council is transitioning to a range of hosted (cloud-based) solutions, delivering services over the Internet rather than having physical infrastructure on site.</p> <p>Digital First is the basis for all service redesign and device allocation. Redesign is based on business objectives and planning assumptions developed to renew services. As part of our Covid-19 Recovery Plan services are supported to choose secure, robust and efficient solutions which satisfy our required standards and specifications and align with our enterprise architecture principles, illustrated within the final pages of this strategy.</p>
<p>SmartNL (Digital Infrastructure)</p>	<p>SmartNL, now renamed Digital Infrastructure, is the twin tracked transformation programme to Digital NL. Through delivering next generation digital infrastructure, this project aims to stimulate inclusive economic growth and investment in digital skills.</p> <p>Through providing the affordable connectivity required to attract new businesses and tackle areas of digital exclusion, this project creates an environment that fosters innovation and supports people and businesses to live, learn, work and operate in smart and digital ways. A communications technology partner will help us shape our digital connectivity and deliver smart services and intelligent solutions.</p> <p>Driven by our ambitions, we will develop fully integrated digital services that are responsive to changing demand and meet residents and service users’ needs. Our digital infrastructure, including the rollout of 5G across North Lanarkshire, will transform our current and future estate, deliver Smart Towns and enable ‘the internet of things’ as standard across our homes, streets, communities and towns.</p>
<p>Digital Skills</p>	<p>To ensure no individuals or communities are excluded from the real and long-lasting infrastructure transformation, we will develop and deliver digitally confident communities with people and businesses that have the connectivity, confidence and skills to use digital services. Through our Employability Strategy, and working with schools, New College Lanarkshire, Routes to Work, businesses and local communities, we will build a digital ready and sustainable workforce that ensures inclusive growth for all.</p>

Programmes and Projects

Customer Service Hub	<p>The Customer Service Hub is central to our digital transformation and our drive to make North Lanarkshire a leading digital authority. A new approach to service delivery means 'digital first' will become the default for all customer enquiries, requests and applications. Ultimately, the hub will handle enquiries for all service areas.</p> <p>This radical shift in the way we engage with customers requires new ways of working, increased use of technology and empowering front-line staff to resolve an ambitious 80% of enquiries first time.</p> <p>Information feeds between the Customer Service Hub and Business Intelligence (BI) Hub will allow a two-way flow of business intelligence with the BI Hub providing performance data and the Customer Service Hub relaying information on service need and customer demands to inform service prioritisation and improvement.</p>
Business Intelligence (BI) Hub	<p>The BI Hub is a new capability within the council developed through two aspects, a Core Hub for corporate requirements and a Service Hub for service specific needs. The BI Hub focusses heavily on ambition statement 25, so aims to ensure council services have access to data and information which enables fully evidence-based decision making.</p>
Website	<p>We have been improving digital access through our Digital NL programme, but as part of our road to recovery post Covid we will prioritise making more services easily available online. This will include the launch of a new website later in 2020 which will make it easy for residents to request services and find information.</p> <p>The new website will give the council far more flexibility to highlight relevant content to service users in a way that is based on customer need. In turn, it will be easier for customers to navigate and will maximise the opportunities for self-service to reduce demand on council services.</p> <p>Communication via the website and social media will proactively push enquiries towards self-serve solutions. Pro-active communication feeds and messaging will pre-empt enquiries and provide services without any requirement for customers to engage with a council service or visit an office.</p>
Intelligent Automation	<p>Following the successful introduction of Robotic Process Automation (RPA) in Revenue and Benefits and Housing, further bots will be developed and deployed in other areas of the council, prioritised in line with recovery planning assumptions. A bot to support processing of Free School Meals ensured payments were made ahead of the new school year and further bots will be introduced including in the Employee Service Centre to handle HR queries from council staff.</p>

<p>Digital Platform</p>	<p>The design and build of a new Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system on Microsoft Dynamics is complete. This supports the wider development of increased functionality through the new website, greater opportunities for customers to self-serve through digital channels and the Customer Service Hub.</p> <p>The CRM system will be introduced in line with the service sprints, with Waste Solutions, Fleet and Built Environment the first services to move to the new system. Future redesign will be prioritised in line with the Council’s Recovery Plan.</p>
<p>Digital Workplace</p>	<p>The introduction of Microsoft Office 365 across the council will change how staff work. M365 was rolled out to early adopters in July 2020 with the full roll out starting in September 2020 and ending in March 2021.</p> <p>Along with providing the ability to collaborate and work more effectively, M365 offers secure, anytime, anywhere access to files and data that we need to support our move towards flexible and agile ways of working. This new technology will improve productivity, increase collaboration and optimise employee engagement.</p>
<p>Digital NL Stakeholder Engagement and Communication</p>	<p>Engagement is key to service design being reflective of stakeholders’ needs, views, and aspirations. This programme ensures people are consulted and involved in developing and delivering stakeholder awareness and training, aligned to system and technology changes.</p>
<p>Open Data</p>	<p>The Scottish Government defines open data as non-personal, non-commercially sensitive data that is easily discoverable, accessible and able to be freely used, re-used and redistributed by anyone. It should be made available via the internet in an electronic format which supports its use.</p> <p>The council has large amounts of open data it makes available to help public bodies and others improve their services and to enable the council to be more accountable and transparent.</p>
<p>Benefits, performance and success</p>	<p>A Benefits Management Approach for the council has been developed. A detailed Benefits Tracker has been implemented for all financial and non-financial savings associated with the Digital NL Programme.</p> <p>Community benefits linked to the digital contracts for the Business and System Integrator partners have been developed and implemented.</p> <p>Overall performance management is contained within the council’s Strategic Performance Framework in line with The Plan for North Lanarkshire.</p>

2.2 Policies, frameworks and plans

The projects and programmes above are supported by a number of policies, frameworks and plans.

These documents retain their nomenclature for reasons of convention, but are classed as sub policies of the Digital and IT Strategy. All these documents are kept under review in line with the principles of the Strategic Policy Framework, and reflecting the pace of change which will arise as Digital NL moves into business as usual, all will be assessed for potential rationalisation.

Policies, Frameworks and Plans		date available	review frequency
ICT Acceptable Use Policy	ICT brings significant benefits but also introduces significant risk. This policy provides a safe framework for using ICT without exposing the council or our employees to risks.	Sep 2020	2 years
Information Governance Framework	To deliver services we hold large volumes of information on organisations and individuals. This creates risks which we manage through our Information Governance Framework. The framework comprises policies of Data Protection, Information Classification and Handling, Information Risk, Information Security and Records and Management Information.	June 2020	2 years
Data Protection Policy	This advises on the council's responsibilities for collecting, processing and holding personal data on living individuals.	June 2020	2 years
Information Classification and Handling Policy	This defines how council information is classified, handled, stored and disposed of, for both paper and electronic media.	June 2020	2 years
Information Risk Policy	AThis defines the council's framework for formal information risk management by establishing accountability and responsibility for information risk identification, analysis and mitigation.	June 2020	2 years
Information Security Policy	This sets out the framework of controls by which council employees and related parties will protect their information assets.	June 2020	2 years
Records and Information Management Policy	The policy ensures records are managed effectively and efficiently to enable the council to comply with its statutory and regulatory obligations.	June 2020	2 years
Records Management Plan	This plan applies to North Lanarkshire Council and North Lanarkshire Licensing Board, and is required to meet the requirements of the Public Records (Scotland) Act 2011. The Plan covers all public records, from creation and acquisition to archive and destruction. Records range from physical paper based to data held through electronic solutions.	Nov 2020	5 years

2.3 Associated Strategies, Policies and Plans

The Digital and IT Strategy does not exist in isolation but rather works in association with a number of other strategies including the Workforce for the Future strategy and underpinning programmes of work such as PO61.1 Employee Learning and Development and PO62 Digital Workforce and Skills Programme.

The overall objective of these programmes is 'to enhance leadership development and employee learning and development through further development of the Learn NL provision and supporting digital learning platform' and 'to develop and deliver a digital workforce strategy and skills programme to build a digital ready workforce across North Lanarkshire'.

These are supported by distinct and fully linked initiatives delivered within the council (in regards to DigitalNL and our own digital workforce transition), in our Education service, (building digital skills and capabilities in our young people) and outwith the council (supporting residents, communities and businesses).

In light of COVID 19, these programmes have accelerated to facilitate larger numbers of home and agile working, improve staff experience and maximise workforce well-being and productivity - whilst by default further increasing digital literacy.

Work will continue on the rollout of the full functionality of mySelf including the facility to clock in and out remotely and the use of a chatbot to enhance user accessibility. The introduction of learning pathways to support our migration to M365 will also drive users towards our digital platforms again increasing digital literacy and supporting workplace effectiveness and efficiency.

A new employee website myNL details all ICT related policies and guidance, and the implementation of LearnNL, the new digital learning platform will continue to facilitate an enhanced level of digital self-service and digital learning.

As we go through recovery and into the redesign of our services these platforms will provide a range of resources and supports. This includes access to mental health and well-being, financial well-being, lifelong learning, personal and career development. Also, access to new virtual learning sessions and blended learning programmes delivered within a more modern and dynamic smart learning environment – key to addressing digital skills gaps, building 'in work' progression, and supporting new and more flexible ways of working.

Oversight and Impact

3.1 Governance

The Digital and IT Strategy, and its sub-policies, are monitored and reported through the Transformation and Digitisation Committee. Individual programmes and projects within the umbrella of this strategy are approved, and thereafter monitored, at the relevant council committee as specified within the Programme of Work.

From an operational perspective, IT architecture, solutions and devices will be prioritised, developed, managed and maintained through key corporate working groups, the most noteworthy of which are the Enterprise Architecture Governance Group (EAGG) and Data Governance Board (DGB).

The EAGG is responsible for maintaining the integrity of our enterprise architecture, and will therefore provide oversight of all IT-related projects and solutions to ensure such are fit for purpose and comply with all relevant standards, specifications and principles.

The DGB has responsibility for ensuring the council can comply with its statutory responsibilities in respect of information governance, which include, but are not limited to the Data Protection Act 1998, Freedom of Information Act 2000, Public Records (Scotland) Act 2011 and General Data Protection Regulations (2018).

Appendix 1

Enterprise Architecture Principles

	Ref.	Principle	Description
Business Principles	BP01	Primacy of Principles	These principles of information management apply to all 'services' within the council.
	BP02	Reuse before Buy, before Build	Software, platforms, infrastructure and data will be reused wherever possible; purchased as commodity solutions if necessary and only built if there is a unique requirement that cannot otherwise be met.
	BP03	Seek architecture approval	All projects and programmes will be subject to architectural approval at key stages throughout the delivery lifecycle.
	BP04	Maximise value and benefit to the council	Information management decisions are made to provide maximum benefit to the council.
	BP05	Compliance with statutory obligations	Council data and information management processes comply with all relevant internal and external laws, policies, and regulations.
	BP06	Solution cost must be fully understood and demonstrate robustness, affordability and sustainability	Total Cost of Ownership (TCO) for the expected lifecycle use of the solutions is included into all enterprise architectural change proposals from the outset.
	BP07	Solutions have an owner	All solutions must have a named Designated Responsible Owner (DRO) and where appropriate Technical Responsible Owner (TRO).
Covid-19	BP08	The solution enables service delivery during Covid-19	Proposals relate directly to enabling and delivering the Councils workforce recovery planning
	BP09	Workforce change	Proposals consider workforce recovery planning and the Managing Workforce Change Policy, in particular the transition to a workforce less dependent upon dedicated office space and compatible with home working.

Data Principles	DP01	Data is an asset	Data is an asset that has value to the Council and other parties and must be managed accordingly.
	DP02	Data has an owner	Data will have a named Information Asset Owner accountable for the data quality and currency.
	DP03	Common data definitions	Data is defined consistently throughout the council, standardised, understandable and distributed.
	DP04	Information security	Data is protected from unauthorised use, disclosure and change.
Application Principles	AP01	Solutions will be usable	Applications should be simple to use. The user experience should be such that they can focus solely on business activity.
	AP02	Sustainability	All applications must be designed to ensure sustainability of use within the council.
	AP03	Technology Independence and Certification	Applications should be technology independent and operate on a variety of devices.
	AP04	Systems will talk to each other	Applications will be constructed as a collection of Open Standards based services that use Application Program Interfaces (API), enabling them to be combined to meet business needs.
Technology Principles	TP01	Use less software	Technical diversity is minimised to control cost and complexity.
	TP02	Cloud first	The council will adopt a cloud first approach to solutions, in the following order of preference. 1. Software As A Service (SaaS) 2. Platform As A Service (PaaS) 3. Infrastructure As A Service (IaaS)

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