

Report on	Digital Strategy for Mid Ulster District Council
Date of Meeting	8 October 2020
Reporting Officer	Ursula Mezza & Barry O'Hagan
Contact Officer	same

Is this report restricted for confidential business?	Yes	
If 'Yes', confirm below the exempt information category relied upon	No	X

1.0	Purpose of Report
1.1	To consider the procurement of specialist support to develop a Digital Strategy for the Council.
2.0	Background
2.1	The Council continues to have substantial corporate and service improvement objectives relating to the provision of services digitally, together with several technological projects which will impact positively on the quality of digital services, specifically in new systems for finance, payroll, human resource management, planning and full fibre connectivity. Hardware and storage refresh will also take place in the current year.
2.2	The pandemic has also had an impact on the adoption of technologies internally (e.g. Teams, Zoom) to support remote working and remote access to networks, while the Council's marketing and communications approach to external communications continues to be 'digital first', helping to extend the Council's digital footprint via digital media, including responsive, accessible web sites and its social media channels.
2.3	While the Council has, therefore, made significant progress in terms of its digital infrastructure, digital processes and digital service provision, it does not currently have a formal Digital or ICT Strategy (the latter also forming an existing Internal Audit recommendation which is to be actioned).
3.0	Main Report
3.1	A digital strategy will provide a road map towards becoming a 'digital council', that is, one which considers all of its services and how they are modelled and delivered, designing and re-designing them as required on the evidence-based needs of its citizens, supported by the appropriate technology.
3.2	A formal strategy will allow the Council to move beyond the traditional concept where 'digital' is viewed as the purview of specific services (most commonly ICT and Marketing & Communications) and interpreted narrowly as making services available online.
3.3	It will ensure that the digital direction of the Council is viewed holistically from an organisational perspective. This means digital work will be allied to other corporate

	strategies, applied consistently in the support of the delivery of corporate priorities and have measurable outcomes which contribute to the achievement of corporate objectives.
3.4	Given the pace of technological change and digital developments, together with ever-increasing pressures on finite resources and changing customer expectations in terms of contact, connection and service delivery, a strategy will also provide a framework through which to 'future proof' the Council's digital planning.
3.5	Ultimately any strategy should be visionary enough to carry Council through changes in the digital economy in a way that continues to bring a digital edge to the business.
3.6	The proposed strategy would align with the government's 'Making Lives Better: A Strategy for Digital Transformation of Public Services 2017-2021' (see Appendix 1) and cover a period of no more than 4 years.
4.0	Other Considerations
4.1	Financial, Human Resources & Risk Implications:
	Financial: The cost of strategy development work is not anticipated to exceed £25,000. The work is not currently within existing budgets.
	Human Resources: Progress to date has been achieved in-house using existing resources. However, the Council does not have the capacity to deliver a timely strategy within a reasonable window without other projects and services being adversely impact. The strategy project will be led by ICT and Marketing & Communications and will be owned corporately and by each service impacted.
	Risk Management: The Council will formulate and manage a risk register for the project as part of the wider controls with implementing same in conjunction with the supplier. The recommendation in its own right will address the risks identified by Internal audit previously not addressed.
4.2	Screening & Impact Assessments : Not applicable
	Equality & Good Relations Implications: Not applicable
	Rural Needs Implications: Not applicable currently
5.0	Recommendation(s)
5.1	That the Committee agrees to recommend the procurement of specialist services to develop a Digital Strategy for Mid Ulster District Council and approves the allocation of reserves from the current year.
6.0	Documents Attached & References
	Appendix 1 : Dof : Digital Transformation Strategy 2017-2021