

TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL

FINANCE, INNOVATION and PROPERTY ADVISORY BOARD

21 July 2021

Report of the Director of Finance and Transformation

Part 1- Public

Matters for Information

1 DIGITAL STRATEGY UPDATE

A report updating Members on progress with the delivery of the Digital Strategy

1.1 Introduction

- 1.1.1 At its meeting on 17 July 2019, Members of the Advisory Board considered and supported a Digital Strategy to cover the period 2019 – 2023. Subsequently, the Strategy was approved by Cabinet and Full Council.
- 1.1.2 A copy of the Strategy is attached at **[Annex 1]** for reference. The five core digital principles are:
 - 1) 'One Council'
 - 2) An Efficient Workforce
 - 3) Demand Management
 - 4) Economic Growth; and
 - 5) A 'Smart' Borough
- 1.1.3 The **mission** of our digital strategy is to deliver the priorities of the Council through challenge, innovation and transformation underpinned by technology. Members may also recall that the **vision** agreed is for TMBC to become an authority where the communities and businesses we serve are able to engage and transact with us seamlessly, irrespective of the services they access.
- 1.1.4 As we are now half-way through the duration of the Digital Strategy, this report updates Members on progress achieved so far.

1.2 Progress

- 1.2.1 Over the last two years (June 2019 – June 2021) the council has made significant inroads into achieving its customer centric digital ambition. The following progress against the core principles are to be noted:

One Council

- 1.2.2 Single web platform & Customer portal

On 29 June 2021, the Council launched its new cloud-based single web platform along with a unified customer portal. Customers are now able to access multiple council services including, Council tax, Housing benefits, Waste management services, Planning information, Parking services and Democratic Services that is relevant to them via ‘My Account’. The registration process is made intuitive and self-servable end to end, without any human interventions.

- 1.2.3 Inter departmental workflow

From June 2019 to February 2020, the Council commissioned Smarter Digital Services (SDS) within Tunbridge Wells Borough Council to map the business process of the majority of the frontline and back-office services within TMBC. The mapped processes are currently being re-engineered to improve the inter-departmental workflow based on the ‘art of the possible’ in terms of the Council’s investment in new technologies and enterprise solutions. It is envisaged that the completion of this across the Council will take place over the remaining two years of the strategy (2021-2023)

- 1.2.4 Enterprise Business solutions

The Council has made good progress in embracing the enterprise business solutions strategy by way of introducing the new unified customer portal along with the adoption of the existing Information@work application as the enterprise document management system, and Total Mobile as the enterprise mobile working platform. We have also procured, and are currently in the process of implementing, ‘Anywhere365’ system as the enterprise contact management solution across all services. These solutions will help ensure that quality of service experienced by our residents and businesses are of high standard and consistent across all council services.

Efficient workforce

- 1.2.5 Mobilisation

The Council has taken some great initiative in mobilising its workforce over the last two years. This has been evident throughout the pandemic, where the majority the Council’s services were able to function and meet its increasing operational and back-office demands. The further adaptation of the Total mobile

solution for end-to-end workflow management by our field-based officers will deliver efficiencies over the remainder of the digital strategy. This will also help the council adhere to GDPR compliance policies.

1.2.6 Process automation & system integration

As part of the Business Process Reengineering, over the next two years (2021-23) we will be automating various transactional and administrative workflows across all our frontline and back-office services. This will involve integrating multiple lines of business and corporate systems to improve efficiency by employing the Six Sigma methodology in developing new processes.

Demand Management

1.2.7 Self-serve

Through the introduction of the new ‘My Account’ via the customer portal, the Council has enabled a number of its services to be capable of ‘self-serve’ by residents, businesses and visitors. Over the next quarter (July – September 2021) we will be enabling the ‘My Account’ to be accessed via an App on customers’ mobile devices made available via Apple’s Appstore and Google Playstore. Whilst enabling our customers to easily access their accounts simply through their biometrics scanners on their mobile devices, similar to the industry standard mobile banking applications, this will further enable the Council to maintain proactive communication and notification to keep the customers informed.

1.3 Legal Implications

1.3.1 Procurement has been undertaken in accordance with all relevant legislation and good practice.

1.4 Financial and Value for Money Considerations

1.4.1 The Invest to Save Reserve has provided opportunities to support the implementation of digital solutions as identified through the digital strategy. In addition, the Transformation reserve has also been used for some projects.

1.5 Risk Assessment

1.5.1 The risk of not progressing the digital agenda is that the Council may not be providing services in the ways that our residents wish.

1.5.2 It has already been evident during the past 2 years that digital solutions can help to manage demand pressures and make limited resources/capacity go further.

1.6 Policy Considerations

1.6.1 Customer Contact

1.6.2 Human Resources

1.6.3 Communications

1.6.4 Community

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Nil

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