

Minutes of Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 27 November 2024

Overview and Scrutiny Committee Draft Digital Strategy 2025 – 2029

Consideration was given to a report of the Head of Strategy and Innovation which set out the draft digital strategy. The digital strategy is a high-level set of aims and objectives around how the council will further use digital technology to enable access to services in a way that meets the needs and expectations of residents and service-users now and into the future. It also set out a commitment to the community leadership role the council can play in supporting wider digital inclusion amongst our different communities across Test Valley.

In developing this strategy, it is recognised that there is an ever-increasing expectation and need to move forward with this work at a greater pace to meet current digital standards and be an organisation with the skills and capacity to provide excellent digital services for our communities and workforce.

The report outlined the steps taken to produce a new digital strategy and the proposed areas of focus, priorities and outcomes and to invite Councillors to comment and discuss these ahead of its submission to Cabinet for approval in January.

The following priorities form the basis of the new strategy:

- Resident/customer centric approach to digital services - provide easy and fit for purpose digital access to our services and information.
- Digitally enabled workforce (Enabling our staff to work in a modern and efficient way, to respond to our communities needs and provide high quality services.)
- Effective and responsible use of data
- Digital inclusion and accessibility (Support our communities and partners with digital skills and enable digital access to services)

The Committee recognised the relevance and focus of the proposed priorities set out in the draft strategy. However, to scrutinise the draft strategy in more detail the committee would have liked to have seen a greater level of detail in regards timelines, performance indicators and resource implications.

The Head of Strategy and Innovation explained that the document was still in the early stages and that the detail would follow subject to the direction of travel that the priorities point towards being approved. The strategy will be underpinned by a comprehensive programme of work which the committee could review at a later stage.

Councillor Daas proposed and Councillor MacDonald seconded the recommendation set out in the agenda:

1. That the draft Digital Strategy (attached as an Annex to the report) is noted and endorsed.

2. That the draft Digital Strategy be recommended to Cabinet.

Upon being put to the vote the motion fell.

Following further discussion, the committee agreed that they would like to see more detail in the digital strategy including:

- Action planning, setting out specific projects
- Resource planning
- Timelines
- Benchmarking and best practice

The strategy will be considered by Cabinet in January and it was confirmed that feedback given by the committee will be shared with cabinet as part of the report that goes forward.