

Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council's Digital First Programme

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform the Overview & Scrutiny Committee of the reasons for establishing the Council's Digital First programme; the structure and governance of the programme; and the progress of the workstreams so far.
- 1.2 In addition, the report details the future activities and next steps that will be taken along the digital improvement journey.

2.0 Background

2.1 The IT service in Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council (BMBC) was outsourced in large parts between 2006 and 2015 through a contract with Bull.

2.2 During 2015/16, the acquisition of Bull by Mouchelle triggered a termination clause which saw the service brought back to the council. As a result, a combination of removing the profit element of the contract and rationalising staff numbers realised £3M per annum in efficiencies for the council.

2.3 In 2017, the appointment of a new Service Director for IT saw a fundamental review undertaken of the service with regards to its capacity to deliver IT development to the organisation. Key among the findings of this review were:

- a serious lack of investment by previous partners in the underlying IT infrastructure of the council
- an overly complex system of applications caused by a lack of strategic management of IT
- the majority of capacity within the department (approx. 80%) absorbed by maintenance and fixing of hardware and software rather than deploying new functionality
- a lack of engagement with other Business Units leading to frustration with the IT Service and lack of understanding of Business Plan priorities
- No transparency of the IT Service workload leading to a perception of the service not delivering on important pieces of work
- an overall lack of a digital culture

2.4 These findings are against a backdrop of an increasingly digital world where the majority of our workforce, partners and customers expect to be able to interact online with the council from a variety of devices and locations.

2.5 Following on from the review, the business case for the Digital First programme was created to start to address these deficiencies in the council's digital offer. The vision is to "fundamentally change the way that the council 'does digital' with a disruptive approach to introducing improved technology solutions, business processes and governance arrangements across the council."

Digital First

2.6 The business case for Digital First sought investment of approximately £2.5M, over a three year period, across a number of workstreams. These workstreams and their vision statements are shown below:

Business Intelligence

Intelligence First: Using information to make better and more informed decisions



Contracts and Commissioning

Value First: Supporting you to achieve the best value from contracts



Data Management

Data First: Providing accurate and open data



Digital Customer Services

Customers First: Easy to use digital access to council services



Digital Skills

Skills First: Supporting you to develop your digital skills



Enabling Technology

Technology First: Providing modern technology to support our digital future



ITIL Processes

Quality First: Delivering high quality digital services for our customers



Networks and Connectivity

Connectivity First: Providing a high speed, secure wireless network to support your work



Paperless Office

Digital First: Creating an efficient and modern working environment



SAP Modernisation

SAP First: Making our SAP systems work for you



- 2.7 The business case and programme structure was approved by the Senior Management Team (SMT) on 6 February 2018 and the Digital Leadership Team (DLT) was formed to oversee progress and provide digital leadership to the council.
- 2.8 The Digital Leadership Team (DLT) consists of representatives from across the council, Berneslai Homes and Norfolk Property Services (NPS) Barnsley. DLT members hold senior leadership roles and have sufficient authority to make strategic decisions, allocate resources and lead culture change within their own business area and wider organisation.
- 2.9 Its overall purpose is to be collectively responsible for effective strategic leadership of the digital agenda, through effective decision making; driving forward digital initiatives and leading & championing culture change both within the organisation and to our customers, businesses and the community.

- 2.10 The basic premise of the Digital First programme is to use digital technology as an enabler for transformation of the organisation. Projects within the programme are subject to individual business cases which must be approved by DLT before their commencement. To date, 16 business cases have been approved.
- 2.11 Of equal importance has been the support provided by a comprehensive communications plan and, more recently, Change Management Officers, all of which seeks to address the culture changes required to ensure the benefits outlined in business cases are realised.
- 2.12 Although the programme has a net financing requirement of c£2.5M, there have been additional funding requirements as a consequence of higher than anticipated costs of projects relating to SAP (see para 3.27) and higher than anticipated costs of Microsoft implementation since the original business case was drafted in 2017/18.

3.0 Current Position

- 3.1 Work is progressing against all of the workstreams identified above, in line with the business cases submitted to the DLT. A summary is provided for each workstream in the following paragraphs:

Business Intelligence – Using Information to Make Better & More Informed Decisions

- 3.2 The Business Intelligence (BI) workstream seeks to assist in the implementation and rollout of business intelligence tools and processes to assist the council in decision making. This is based not only on the vast wealth of data it holds in its own core systems but, perhaps more importantly, data from partners and other sources. Appropriate use of business intelligence allows not only a retrospective view of performance and metrics but also detailed trend analysis and, increasingly, the use of artificial intelligence (AI) to allow predictive analytics to be layered to data. The speed of processing and the amount of data that can be processed helps in pinpointing potential areas of concern and potentially changing the way the council deploys its resources.
- 3.3 The project is marked as ‘delivered’ within the programme as interactive data dashboards that show performance data (Power BI) are now deployed for use across the organisation and processes are in place to prioritise information which will be published. The project was delivered within its budget and ahead of plan. As with most Digital First projects the initial work is based on providing enabling tools. Work will be ongoing via the Business Improvement & Intelligence Team to ensure that business intelligence is embedded in the organisation.

Data Management – Providing Accurate & Open Data

- 3.4 The Data Management workstream was one of the earliest parts of the programme to conclude and was a prerequisite to the Business Intelligence workstream. The premise of the programme was to introduce processes to enhance stewardship of our data, elevating it to being treated as a valuable resource. As such, datasets have been cleansed to improve the quality of the data held by the organisation, and made fit for purpose by the Business Intelligence processes outlined above.
- 3.5 Processes have been designed and approved by the Information Governance Board, including introducing the concept of data being made available to the public wherever possible via an open data website. This means that the public can access and use council data. As such, the default for our data is that it should be made freely available, with owners justifying reasons for this not being the case. A small number of our datasets have been made available via a publicly accessible website called Data Mill North, the subscription to which was a key part of the business case. More data will be made available in due course as more datasets are managed through our framework.

Digital Skills – Supporting You to Develop Your Digital Skills

- 3.6 The digital skills workstream was established in recognition of the fact that without addressing gaps in our workforce's digital skills, investments in technology run a much higher risk of not realising their business benefits. The investment centred on extending the temporary contracts of Digital Champions to ensure that capacity is retained in the council, with work ongoing to map the council's extensive range of skills training to requirements.
- 3.7 An important part of the project has been to seek to derive a baseline of digital skills for the council, undertaken as part of the employee Talkabout sessions in May 2018 and direct engagement with services. The UK Basic Digital Skills Framework, introduced by the government to upskill adults, was used as this was deemed an inclusive approach, setting out five categories of 'Essential Digital Skills' for life and work:
- communicating
 - handling information and content
 - transacting
 - problem solving
 - being safe and legal online
- 3.8 A total of 1,204 employees, representing approximately 40% of the workforce, and 29 Elected Members completed the survey which identified three key areas where results indicated skills or confidence were less than the UK average and required targeted support to raise employees' competence and confidence. As a result, the Spotlight on Digital Skills SharePoint site was launched to provide handy hints, tips and 'how to' videos, as well as various digital skills sharing campaigns; digital support clinics and on tour digital support clinics. New courses were also introduced to support the use of Microsoft OneNote - a digital notebook, and the wall mounted Tango touchscreens.

ITIL Processes – Delivering High Quality Digital Services to Customers

- 3.9 Information Technology Infrastructure Library (ITIL) is a set of detailed practices for IT service management that focus on aligning IT services with the needs of business. The workstream in this instance seeks to implement industry standard practice across the IT service in order to improve productivity and prepare the service for reconfiguration in 2021/22.
- 3.10 The workstream also implemented a new 'Digital Hub' as a new means of logging calls with the IT Service Desk, tracking performance and showing areas that are appropriate for automation and process redesign. As a workstream reporting to DLT the project is marked as closed but now forms an integral part of the 'business as usual' activities in the service.

Paperless Office – Creating an Efficient & Modern Working Environment

- 3.11 The first deliverable of the Paperless Office workstream was the move of the organisation's paper archives from leased and staffed premises at Shortwood. By rationalising the archive and moving the residue to an outsourced provider, savings of £230,000 per annum have been realised. The archives are now kept in suitable conditions and retrieval managed under contract.
- 3.12 The SharePoint Documents and Records Management (DRM) programme of work brings about a significant change in how we store and think about our information. The programme will help people understand the key difference between documents and records and how we should store such types of information to ensure we are compliant under regulations, such as General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). It will also introduce new structure to how we store information, making it easier to find, report on and ensure everything is in the right place for when it's needed. As part of this work, we will cleanse information, removing that which is no longer required or should no longer be held by us, again making information easier to find and reduce our risk of fines from the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO), the organisation tasked with ensuring that businesses within the UK are compliant with strict data protection principles.

3.13 The next phase of the Paperless Office workstream is to implement measures across the council to drastically reduce our printing, stationery and postage costs. Through simple measures such as limiting colour printing, ensuring appropriate print requests are sent to the central print room and reducing the number of printers in operation in our buildings, savings can be realised for zero investment. This is a prime example of the overall programme's desire to challenge cultural norms and move us close to a #Digital First culture.

Contracts & Commissioning – Supporting You to Achieve the Best Value from Contracts

3.14 The Contracts and Commissioning workstream was established to ensure a rigorous process around management of IT contracts was established and became 'business as usual'. This initial activity was concluded relatively early in the programme's life and IT contracts are now subject to robust management arrangements.

3.15 The aim of the Contracts & Commissioning workstream is to:

- realise efficiencies
- reduce the number of suppliers
- comply with both the Council and Government rules and regulations
- change our relationship with suppliers to being partners rather than simple contractual arrangements

3.16 The workstream has been resurrected to report to DLT on progress being made towards the Service's aspiration to rationalise the council's licensing through 2020/21 and 2021/22, which will also contribute to required efficiencies. The programme is funded, in part, by savings realised from the rationalisation of existing IT systems, assisted by other workstreams such as SAP Modernisation and Enabling Technology. However, as the start dates for some major projects have slipped, there is a greater risk that software savings will not be realised in line with the programme end. DLT will be kept apprised of the situation in detail via the Contracts and Commissioning workstream.

Digital Customer Services – Easy to Use Digital Access to Council Services

3.17 The Digital Customer Services workstream was established in order to transform the way that our customers interact with us when using our on-line services. By providing easy to use digital access to information and transactions the council can maximise the number of customers who interact on-line, contributing to our corporate 'channel shift' key performance indicator. By allowing easy on-line access we will release capacity in our voice and face-to-face channels to be able to deal with complex cases or more vulnerable customers, or those who simply cannot use on-line services.

3.18 As a local authority we provide more than 600 different services for our customers. Some of these can be accessed via digital channels which remove the need for more traditional phone calls, paper forms and officers having to double key details into our business systems. However, for many of our services we don't currently have a digital contact option and in the past the effort of building each new one has been a lengthy process consuming a great deal of our IT software developer resources which are in short supply.

3.19 A different approach was needed to remove our continued reliance on limited resources and to enable us to make significant progress in developing our digital customer service offer. Our in-house IT development team have been building our new Digital Customer Services Platform (DCSP), a user-friendly tool giving non-technical officers the ability to independently design, build and deploy new processes on digital channels. It will also introduce new digital access channels including support for voice assistants (Amazon Echo, Google Home etc.), automated chat bots, social media interactions and a customer portal offering status updates and tracking capabilities.

Enabling Technology – Providing Modern Technology to Support Our Digital Future

- 3.20 Enabling Technology will build the foundations for a range of Digital First services that will not only delight our citizens but also empower our teams and make the most effective use of our resources. All staff will get the latest Microsoft productivity software (primarily 'office suite' of Word, Excel, PowerPoint) which includes collaboration tools such as 'Teams' to enable much more efficient working; and servers and core software will be modernised, making it less susceptible to security risks and more economic to run. We will establish our 'cloud' presence which means in the future we will be less susceptible to outages and loss of data, our IT services will be more resilient and employees and Elected Members will be able to securely work in a flexible and mobile manner.

Networks & Connectivity – Providing a High Speed Wireless Network to Support Your Work

- 3.21 Projects within the Networks and Connectivity theme are fundamental to the success of other Digital First themes.
- 3.22 As the Council is regenerating its public service delivery across the borough with the new Glassworks retail area, new markets and Library @ the Lightbox, the opportunity exists to include digital regeneration as part of this development. Our network needs updating to give us the tools to become a more modern and agile organisation. The redesign will:
- improve and increase wireless network access for all employees, making it easier for them to work when and where they need, to support a fully mobilised workforce
 - provide a better response to our customers and reduce timescales in providing networks to support our business needs
 - allow for better control of our network; and support our compliance with security standards that we are assessed and measured against - including things such as card payments
 - support wider partnership working and data sharing across different networks
 - reduce power consumption currently supporting the network
 - improved security and resilience of internet connection
- 3.23 There are two work packages to this theme; Enabling Digital Mobility and Digital Links. The Enabling Digital Mobility work package will deliver new and upgraded Wi-Fi access to replace equipment and processes that are now out of date and no longer compliant with regulatory requirements. Digital Link enhances this concept by delivering it to the council's satellite sites where connectivity has traditionally been poor, putting them on an even footing with the main town centre office buildings and ensuring that internet services provided by Enabling Technology can be accessed effectively.

SAP Modernisation – Making Our SAP Systems Work for You

- 3.24 SAP is a major component within the council's core systems. It is accessed by the entire workforce for purposes ranging from raising orders for goods to booking leave and reporting sickness absence. The system was first implemented in 2005 and has not been subject to a significant 'look and feel' upgrade throughout this time.
- 3.25 The SAP Modernisation workstream is designed to modernise our workforce's experience of interacting with the council through major upgrades to expense claiming and Human Resources (HR) systems. Much of this will be cloud based which gives resilience and reduces the internal workload associated with maintaining systems, as well as removing the need to upgrade hardware.
- 3.26 The workstream has already delivered the 'Concur' expenses claim package which has transformed not only the way that expenses are claimed but has also meant that expenses are repaid within three days of being approved. The solution also gives far greater transparency of claims and has highlighted areas where the council can seek to reduce its costs.

- 3.27 The work package to upgrade HR functionality to SAP Success Factors will start the delivery phases of the project in January 2020. Success Factors will transform employee interactions with a modern 'look and feel' and access from anywhere with a network connection. It will also rationalise several systems and reduce the number of passwords required.
- 3.28 This will leave components of SAP on legacy systems which will be subject to review within the next 12 – 18 months and the overall design of the system finalised. The objective though is to remove as much physical infrastructure as possible, minimising maintenance costs moving forward.

Measuring Success

- 3.29 The Digital First programme has been designed around a significant number of business cases, all of which detailed benefits arising from the work packages described. DLT will move to analysing the benefits realisation through the latter stages of the initial programme and report back on success measured against these described benefits.

Programme Legacy

- 3.30 All workstreams deploy processes or technology which will have a significant 'shelf life' in the council. Perhaps more importantly the desired culture shift can be seen to be taking place with many more employees engaged and interested in all things digital.
- 3.31 In addition, as part of the programme, Change Management was introduced to the council as a discipline for the first time, with the employment of two Change Management Officers. Despite their small number, the impact of the Change Management function has been huge, especially in terms of measuring readiness for change and preparing for change.

4.0 Future Plans & Challenges

- 4.1 The Digital First programme was designed to 'kick start' a digital transformation in the council by raising the profile of digital and deploying enabling technologies to all areas of the business. While its success can be measured to a certain extent during the life of the programme, the real challenge comes in ensuring that the momentum created is maintained.
- 4.2 The existing governance structures will therefore be tasked with continuing to ensure that the benefits identified in agreed business cases have been and continue to be realised.
- 4.3 Although the Digital Leadership Team was initially created to oversee the Digital First Programme it does not need to cease to exist when projects are completed. The emphasis of the Board will change from programme governance to oversight of the organisation's digital journey and playing a role in prioritising IT resources to ensure that the service delivers in line with corporate priorities.
- 4.4 A part of this will be to ensure that tools that are available / have been deployed are utilised effectively and ways of working are changed to suit. As a simple example, the vast majority of the workforce will be mobile enabled. If we fail to ensure our ways of working reflect this we will not realise the benefits outlined in not only the Digital First Programme but also associated programmes of work such as asset rationalisation and smart working.
- 4.5 A priority for the Business Unit will be to effectively implement new ways of working and workforce structures to support the new technology deployed and allow IT to operate as efficiently as possible. To continue our digital journey, capacity must be maintained in order to develop new solutions, which gives the challenge of balancing these requirements.
- 4.6 These internal changes can, however, be facilitated through utilising tools deployed and new technologies such as Robotic Process Automation (RPA) and Chatbots. By using these to perform repetitive tasks the Business Unit can ensure that its human resource is adding value to the organisation.

- 4.7 As digital moves at an increasing speed there will be a necessary building of capacity in the areas of robotics, artificial intelligence, analytics and cloud compute. The reconfigured service must reflect these newly required capabilities. In addition, we should look to the future and become more proactive in the management of our IT assets.
- 4.8 We must also recognise that digital moves at perhaps an even faster pace for our customers. The challenge here is to keep our offer current while ensuring that we do not leave people behind. The Customer Experience Service within the Business Unit will continue to keep this at the forefront when developing solutions and will improve the way it involves end-users in these developments. A task and finish group is established to look at making our customer experience consistent, and is working on a customer charter to outline what a customer should expect when they contact us. Our digital solutions will be designed to appeal to those who are capable of using them. A shift by our customers to more digital transactions means capacity is made available to deal with more complex queries and those who are unable to use our digital offerings.
- 4.9 Future plans can therefore be summarised as:
- Monitor benefits realisation from the Digital First programme
 - Maintain governance over our digital ambitions
 - Reconfigure the IT service to support the council using Digital First tools and meet its required efficiencies
 - Enhance our horizon scanning capabilities
 - Automate internal processes and use our experiences to roll automation out to the wider council
 - Improve and further digitise our customer offer while giving due to consideration to the excluded

5.0 Implications for Local People

- 5.1 A digital council will inevitably be a more efficient council and this helps to ensure that the organisation continues to be a high performer by giving us the ability to re-target resources, or remove repetitive / low value tasks and change the emphasis of our valuable human resources' work.
- 5.2 Our residents will increasingly expect the ability to transact with the council online and the tools developed and currently being deployed will enable this across a far greater range of services.
- 5.3 Digital exclusion is an issue for Barnsley, and the council must seek to minimise it by ensuring the right people are involved in changes and developments. This will also include ensuring service designs take into account excluded residents.
- 5.4 We must be mindful, though, that increasingly external organisations are offering digital only ways of contacting and transacting with them. There is a role for the council to play in supporting individuals along their digital journey. This may be our own workforce or our customers through sessions in libraries or with digital champions.
- 5.5 While a drive to digital has benefits to the organisation we shouldn't forget that there is a cashable benefit to people who make the move 'online', giving even more motive to assist people in their journey.

6.0 Invited Witnesses

- 6.1 The following witnesses have been invited to attend today's meeting to answer questions from the committee:
- Andrew Frosdick, Executive Director – Core Services
 - Dave Robinson, Service Director, Customer Information & Digital Services
 - Kay Deacey-Coulton, Head of IT Service Improvement
 - Cllr Alan Gardiner, Cabinet Spokesperson – Core Services

7.0 Possible Areas for Investigation

7.1 Members may wish to ask questions around the following areas:-

- What are the drivers of success and what success stories have been achieved from the programme so far?
- What risks are associated with the programme and what are the implications for the organisation if the programme is not completed?
- What lessons have been learned to carry forward to future projects?
- How do you ensure that the programme is flexible to accommodate all sections of the organisation and that no-one is left behind, including Elected Members?
- How do you assess whether the projects are achievable, affordable and value for money?
- What are the barriers to the success of the programme?
- What other systems or areas of work have had to be put on hold in order to ensure the success of the Digital First programme?
- How do we compare digitally with other local authorities and are there any areas of good practice that could be replicated?
- What work has been done to ensure we will be safe from cyber security threats in the future, especially when using new technology such as the cloud?
- How have you measured the quality of the projects that have already been delivered?
- What can Members do to support the Digital First Programme?

8.0 Background Papers and Useful Links

8.1 Digital First Communications & Engagement Strategy available upon request

Department for Education - Essential Digital Skills Framework:-

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/essential-digital-skills-framework/essential-digital-skills-framework#introduction>

9.0 Glossary

Blog	A regularly updated website or webpage, typically one run by an individual or small group, that is written in an informal or conversational style
Business Intelligence	The infrastructure that collects, stores, and analyses the data produced by a company's activities
Change Management	The process, tools and techniques to manage the people-side of change to achieve the required business outcome
Chatbots	A computer program designed to simulate conversation with human users, especially over the Internet but increasingly via voice over telephone
Cloud Computing	Using a network of remote servers hosted on the Internet to store, manage, and process data, rather than a local server or a personal computer
DCSP (Digital Customer Services Platform)	Solution built by our internal development team to enhance our customers' experience when transacting with the council online. The aspiration is that ultimately it will be the 'one stop shop' for our customers dealing with the organisation

Digital Champions	The council team that support the process of digital inclusion. This is generally considered at a very practical level: that of showing a person how to do something online, in a way that helps them increase their skills and confidence
DLT (Digital Leadership Team)	The 'programme board' for Digital First, the purpose of which is to oversee progress towards the programme's objectives as stated through various business cases
DRM (Document & Record Management)	The supervision and administration of digital or paper records, regardless of format
Employee Talkabout Sessions	Regular update sessions available for all BMBC workforce to attend
GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation)	A legal framework that sets guidelines for the collection and processing of personal information from individuals who live in the European Union (EU)
ITIL (IT Infrastructure Library)	A set of detailed practices for IT service management (ITSM) that focuses on aligning IT services with the needs of business
Open Data	Data that can be freely used, re-used and redistributed by anyone
Predictive Analytics	The practice of extracting information from existing data sets in order to determine patterns and predict future outcomes and trends
Productivity Software	Software used to produce information, and designed to increase productivity
RPA (Robotic Process Automation)	Refers to software that can be easily programmed to do basic tasks across applications just as human workers do. The software robot can be taught a workflow with multiple steps and applications, such as checking a form for completeness, filing the form in a folder and updating a spreadsheet with the name of the form. RPA software is designed to reduce the burden of repetitive, simple tasks on employees
SAP	The Council's Enterprise Resource Planning System, primarily used for Financial, Works Management and Human Resources purposes
SharePoint	A web-based collaborative platform that integrates with Microsoft Office. Used primarily as a document management and storage system but highly configurable and used by the council for Intranet and collaboration purposes
Smart Working	A business and people focussed approach to flexible working. It is a way of organising our work styles that aims to improve performance and outcomes through a combination of flexibility, autonomy and collaboration, using a range of practices, technologies and working environments

10.0 Officer Contact

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