SUBJECT:	**Digital and Data**
MEETING:	**CABINET**
DATE:	**9th June 2021**
DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED:	**All**

1. PURPOSE:

1.1 To provide an overview of changes to staffing arrangements which create a new Digital Design and Innovation Team, strengthen our information governance arrangements and broadens the remit of the existing performance team to include data analytics.

1.2 To seek approval for the strategic direction that will be taken by these re-purposed teams as they utilise investment agreed as part of the 2021-22 budget process to transform how we meet needs and achieve our purpose beyond the pandemic and into the next stage of the development of our organisation and county.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

2.1 To approve the direction of travel set out within this paper which will enable the council to build on successes to date and move at greater pace to achieve services transformation in line with the strategic direction set within the Corporate Plan.

2.2 The costs to implement the proposals will be funded through £300k budget provision incorporated in the 2021/23 budget and Medium Term Financial with the remainder being met from existing service budgets.

3. KEY ISSUES:

3.1 In the coming years the council will need to adjust its delivery to fit the realities of a post Covid-landscape. Significant budget pressures will be a feature of our operating environment for many years to come as the UK exchequer grapples with the financial cost of the pandemic and public services begin to address the human cost. This challenge sits alongside the ambitious commitments of the council to address deep-rooted inequalities within our society through the social justice agenda and tackling climate change through a commitment to decarbonisation alongside long-standing policy priorities of education and support for vulnerable children and adults.

3.2 This provides the stimulus for innovation and radical service transformation. Many of the world's most successful companies are built on their ability to use digital, information and data to meet their customers' needs in ways which were unimaginable ten or fifteen years ago. We have already made good progress with digital transformation, the ability of our organisation to fully unlock the potential of these key assets will be integral to our viability and sustainability.

3.3 To do this we must ensure that these areas are sufficiently inter-connected and have the capacity and expertise to deliver on this ambitious agenda. Cabinet have already agreed to set aside £300,000 for the development of this work in the 2021-22 budget and this paper is providing further detail on how that funding will be used.

Enhancing Data Capacity and Capability

3.4 The financial constraints which we operate in mean that the data analysts within the performance team are presently focused almost entirely on statutory performance reporting. This leaves little scope to engage in the type of work that is needed to shape preventative services, create operational efficiencies and deliver data-led solutions that will help achieve the purpose and long-term policy priorities of the council.

3.5 A large part of public service is about managing and responding to information. We own, and have access to, millions of items of data; these are a strategic asset but only if used constructively. We will unlock this potential beginning in two specific areas:

- Getting better at the basics - Growing our data capability across the organisation through training and development opportunities for existing staff in all teams. This will include better use of software such as Excel, through to more sophisticated analysis tools such as PowerBI to generate better insight from existing datasets. It will result in more timely and concise reports, improved visualisation, insightful analysis and evidence-based business cases.

- Applying data science techniques – This includes combining data sets for a deeper understanding of our population, using data analytics to predict events that may happen in future so that we can target preventative services at an earlier stage and automating manual data entry and validation to generate efficiencies. We will also focus on increasing the publication of open data which can reduce Freedom of Information requests and add civic value. This will also see the better use of geo-spatial data to improve the efficiency of service delivery.

3.6 Our networks and geography mean we are well placed to access development opportunities through organisations such as the Data Science Academy at Cardiff University, the Data Science Campus at the Office for National Statistics, Data Cymru and the new InFuSe programme within the Cardiff Capital Region City Deal. We will identify opportunities for existing staff within the performance team and across the wider organisation to

enhance skill levels and take our capabilities to the next level. An annual development budget of £15,000 will be created to cover staff training and software licenses.

3.7 The investment made by council will see the creation of three new posts to deliver this work and enable the authority to realise these benefits while ensuring continued delivery of core activity:

- A trainee Data Officer to grow capacity in line with the commitment to create new employment and training opportunities within the authority's Apprentice, Graduate and Intern Strategy.
- A new Performance Officer Post will be added to the team to provide additional capacity to deliver statutory processes and free up existing staff members to focus on data-led solutions.
- The post of data scientist is being created but will be held vacant for up to twelve months while the groundwork is done to identify and define the problems and opportunities we want to the post holder to focus on and to prepare and cleanse the datasets they will work with enabling them to hit the ground running. In the interim, the resources identified for this post will be used to fund a series of short-term placements of data scientists from academic institutions and other partners who are keen to work on real world problems facing the Council and its communities.

3.8 There will be some adjustments to existing roles which will take on additional responsibilities. There is a need to ensure that salaries remain competitive and remuneration of existing staff reflects the responsibilities they will be expected to fulfil. Finally, the changes will also see the Geographic Information Service function transfer to the team which will bring additional expertise and synergies with existing work.

Re-aligning the Digital and Data Programme Office

3.9 The Digital & Data Programme Office (DDPO) was established 4 years ago to build digital and information capabilities across MCC. During this time the team has made huge strides such as enabling customers to self-serve via the My Monmouthshire app, developing a chatbot to enable queries to be answered 24/7 and putting in place systems that means the authority was quickly able to transition to remote working at the outset of the pandemic without any loss of productivity The team has grown in its expertise and scope and has taken on the inter-related functions of Data Protection, Freedom of Information, Information Governance and Schools Digital services.

3.10 The pandemic has vastly changed the way we work, with an increased need for digital networking, processes, file management and flexible working practices. Our customers require access to our services in the same way as they access any other service in their daily lives. 24/7 access to information and services has become the norm for them, and our customer facing presence needs to be at least one-step ahead of their needs. This is all

happening with a backdrop of an increased risk of cybercrime affecting our ability to provide business continuity in the event of a cyber-attack.

3.11 To build on these successes and accelerate progress the Digital Design and Innovation function will move out of the DDPO into their own unit managed by the current Digital Programme Delivery Manager. This Team will support specialist digital design as well as digital business innovation and improvement, capitalising on the digital advances made over the last few years in the way we work, as well as improving customer facing digital services.

3.12 The Digital Design Team will operate across the whole council, with each team member working with specified service areas developing knowledge and skills of the way each service operates. Recent service re-design and changes in management responsibilities have identified gaps in capacity for the digital design team. This gap is particularly apparent within services with high volumes of transactional work that could be automated, freeing up people to work on more specialist areas. The team also work on corporate digital projects that span the whole authority and those of our SRS partner organisations. These projects are large and complex and require a dedicated project resource to keep the projects on track and in scope.

3.13 In addition to basic operational improvement the Digital Design Team need to keep one-step ahead of future digital technologies and advancements in Artificial Intelligence and Robotic Process Automation. The current team doesn't have the resource to prototype and trial innovative advancements in technology and digital and will stand still or, even worse, fall behind if we don't address this gap.

3.14 In order to plug this gap we will add two Digital Design Trainee's to the team that can develop and grow in this niche and very new market. It is also proposed that the temporary post of Project Manager is maintained to complete the very large overarching digital projects within the roadmap of the Digital Design Team. The structure of the Digital Design Team can be seen in Table 2 in Appendix 2.

Re-alignment of the remaining functions of the DDPO

3.15 Geographic Information Systems display information and data in a map format. However, GIS is more than digital system and it can enable the Council to join up any spatial data to pinpoint where the council needs to focus its activities. It is an excellent decision making tool as well as providing information to help us in in service re-design and Emergency Planning. Our GIS function has been discharged by Newport City Council, overseen by the DDPO. However the DDPO have not had the capacity to fully captalise on the data and expertise from the Newport team. With the suggested changes to enhance data capacity and capability within the Policy & Performance Team, it makes sense that the relationship and arrangements with Newport are managed within the Policy & Performance Team. This will ensure that our graphical information can be combined with other organisational datasets to

provide greater insights. There are no budget implications with the move of these responsibilities.

3.16 The remainder of the functions of the Digital & Data Programme Office will stay, though there are changes need there in order to bolster our information governance and security.

3.17 Implementing SharePoint Online will mean that our workforce can access information from any device and any location. This project will also enable our information to be structured in such a way that it can be used to provide our Service Areas with useful and relevant information for the Data Analysis specialists to turn into data to aid decision making and policy formation. Sharepoint online has the functionality to set automated retention and deletion rules therefore ensuring that our data complies with GDPR.

3.18 The statutory functions of Freedom of Information, Subject Access Requests and Data Breach management have increased in complexity and volumes, and the current post holders are not able to keep up to date with demand at the same time as implement new digital processes and essential training. The Data Protection officer is a mandatory post in a Local Authority now also requires knowledge and understanding of cyber-security. A high calibre staffing team in this space is essential for a complex organisation such as our and will pay dividends in managing and mitigating both reputational and financial risks.

4 EQUALITY AND FUTURE GENERATIONS EVALUATION (INCLUDES SOCIAL JUSTICE, SAFEGUARDING AND CORPORATE PARENTING):

4.1 The proposals give the authority enhanced capacity to work in new ways. There are no specifics proposals that will have a direct impact on people with protected characteristics. However, as the authority accelerates its use of digital and data there will be a number of areas that specific projects will need to take into account. For example:

- Solutions may in future contain an element of artificial intelligence or AI. Research has shown that AI has the potential to reinforce existing biases.

- The need to be mindful of safeguarding in on-line solutions which could leave vulnerable people exposed to risk of exploitation.

4.2 The overall impact of digital and data will be positive. For example digital solutions make services more accessible, such as remote meetings which reduce the need for unnecessary car journeys and assisted living solutions which open up new ways of meeting the needs of older people and those with disabilities. Enhanced data capabilities also help understand problems experienced by certain groups and develop more bespoke solutions.

5 OPTIONS APPRAISAL

- Do Nothing – Not making any changes to the current structure would carry no short-term financial cost. However, there would be significant opportunity cost as the authority would be not make progress in these key areas of activity which would reduce our ability to improve efficiency and reduce costs in the medium term.

- Outsource – Joining with another person or organisation to deliver these services may result in some economies of scale. However, on balance, the increased flexibility, influence and ability to direct work according to Monmouthshire's priorities outweighs any potential saving.

- Improve in-house – This carries the highest short-term cost. However, this can be treated as capital expenditure due to the transformative nature of the investment. It provides significant opportunity to re-shape services and solutions which will result in financial and non-financial benefits in the medium to long-term.

6 EVALUATION CRITERIA

6.1 The success of these changes will need to be evaluated against the specific work programmes within the appended road maps. These are aligned with the corporate plan where digital and data feature prominently within the objective to become a future focused council.

7 REASONS:

7.1 To ensure that the organisation has the digital and data expertise needed to re-shape services to transform how we meet needs and achieve our purpose beyond the pandemic and into the next stage of the development of our organisation and county.

7.2 Together these will position the organisation to transform how we meet needs and achieve our purpose beyond the pandemic and into the next stage of the development of our organisation and county.

8 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

8.1 The total cost of the proposals will be £324,322. A sum of £300,000 was earmarked for digital and data in the Revenue and Capital Budget 2021/22 proposals agreed by Cabinet in March. This will be funded through flexible use of capital receipts in relation to costs associated with service reform. The remaining sum will be afforded from re-allocation of existing budgets within the service areas.

8.2 Digital services are flexing and changing at pace, and in order to maintain 'future readiness' our roadmaps and plans will flex too. As we move forward, there will be a requirement for additional investment to fund and resource key

digital projects. Business cases for these projects will give supporting data and evidence along with benefits and/or financial savings.

9. CONSULTEES:

Strategic Leadership Team
Cabinet
Digital Programme Delivery Manager
Performance Manager

13. BACKGROUND PAPERS:

None

14. AUTHORS:

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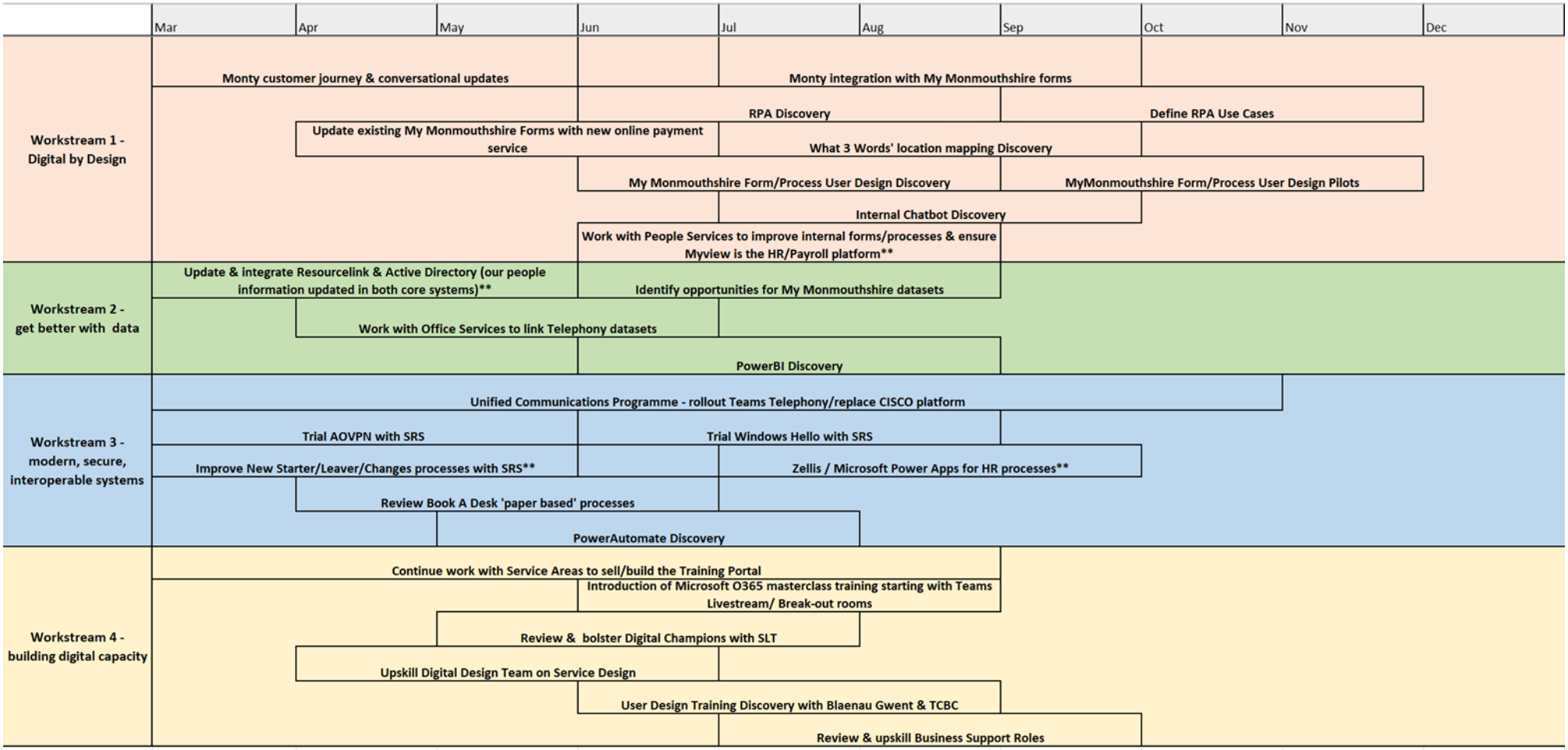
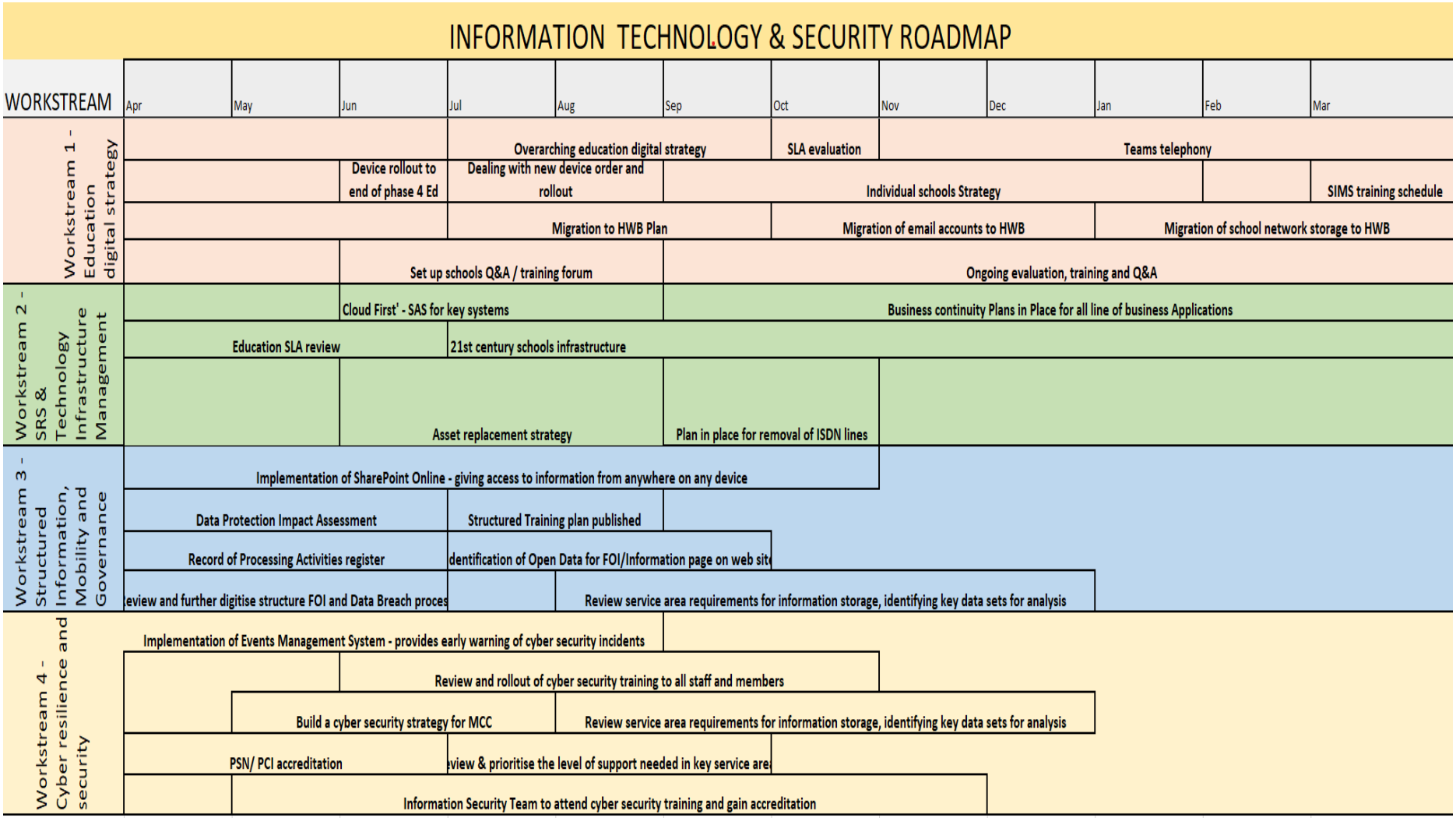
Strategic Direction – The Roadmaps

APPENDIX 1

Digital Design and Innovation Roadmap



Information Technology & Security Roadmap

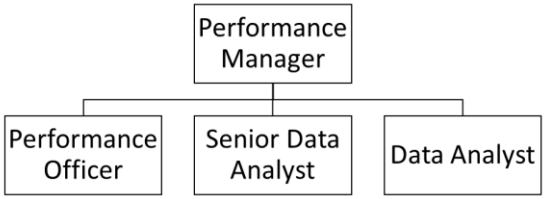


Data Capacity and Capability Roadmap

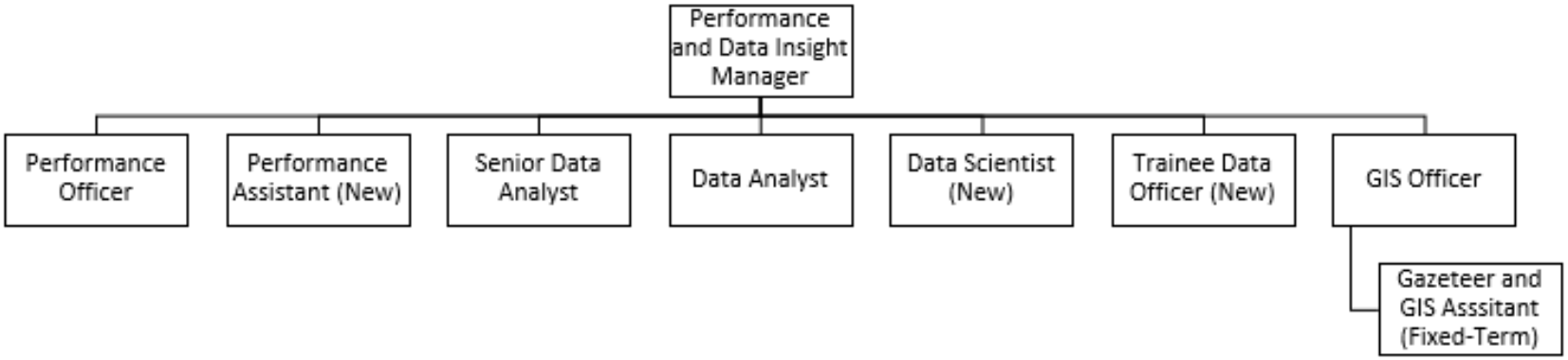
	Short Term	Medium-Term	Longer-Term
Increasing capacity and capability	• Build a network of data practitioners • Increase staff training and development to grow capability	• Increase the use of PowerBI for more powerful data analytics • Improve analysis and interrogation of data to deliver service optimisation	
Improved visualisations and publication of data	• Improve the timeliness and presentation of key performance information • Embed GIS capabilities within the new data team • Increase publication of open data	• Live data dashboards; respond to emerging trends; increased transparency and accountability • More data is published on maps, improved understanding of local challenges and opportunities • Pilot use of live data feed to enhance emergency /operational responses	
Delivering key data products	• Develop and publish Gwent-wide Well-being Assessment • Introduce new Social Services Performance Framework • Use MyMonmouthshire data to generate insights and inform service prioritisation	• Core datasets inform self-evaluation required under Local Government and Elections Bill	
Applying data science techniques	• Begin to scope data science projects that will achieve council priorities or deliver efficiencies • Build links with data science practitioners	• Combining datasets which are currently in inaccessible department folder structures using APIs or Robotic Process Automation	• Use of predictive analytics to identify potential problems before they occur and target preventative services • Enhanced understanding of community vulnerability to target preventative and emergency responses

STAFFING CHANGES **APPENDIX 2**

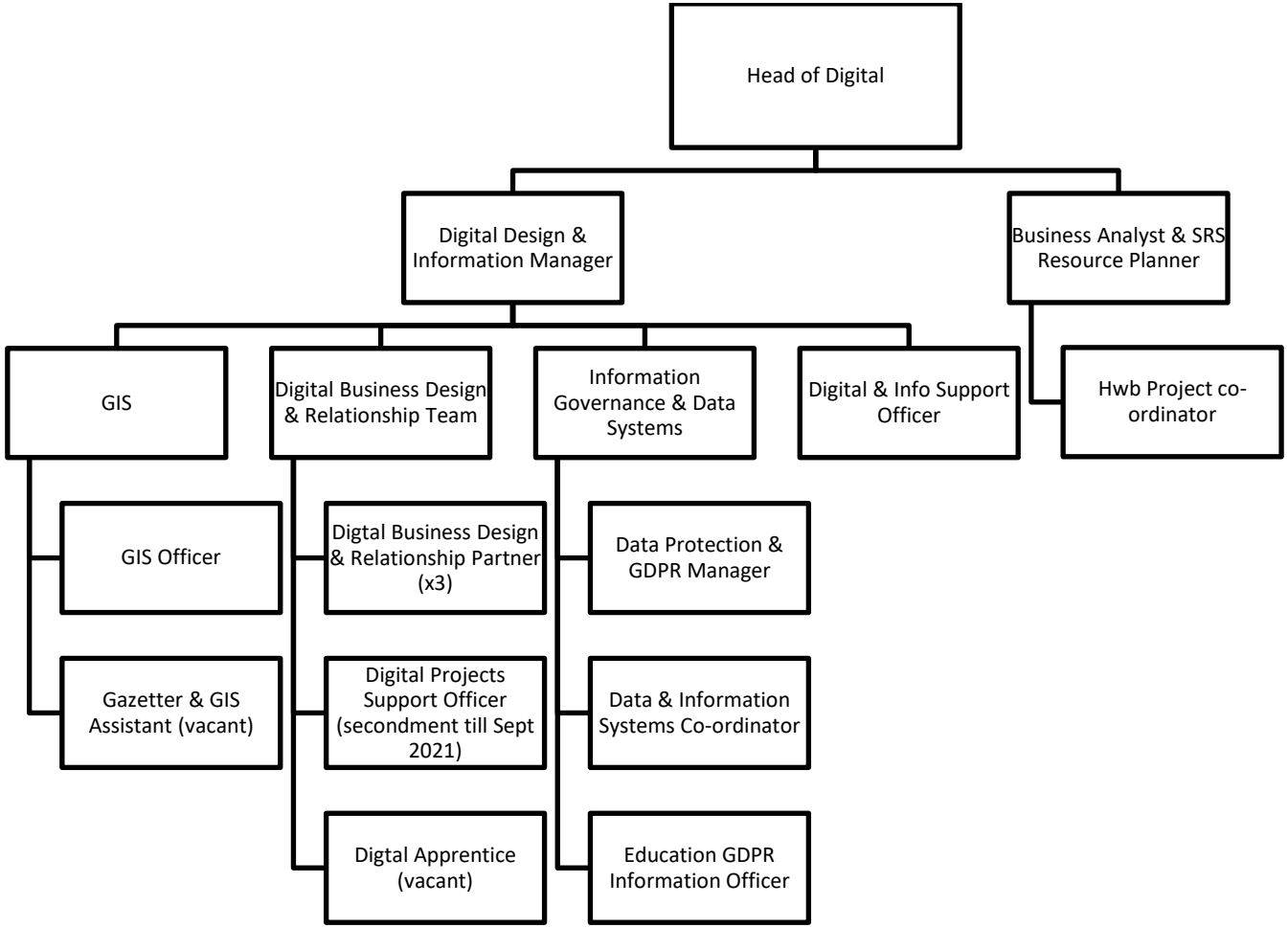
Performance Team - As is



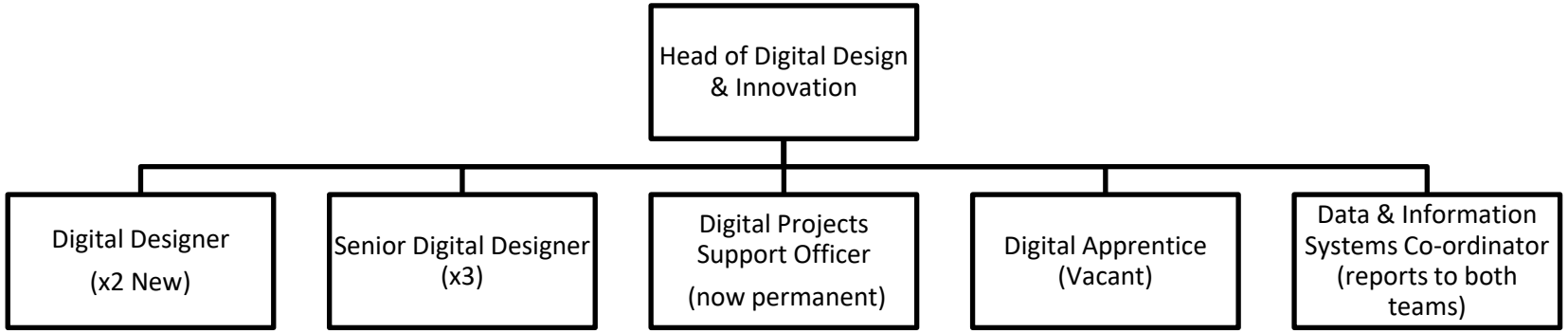
Performance Team – Proposed



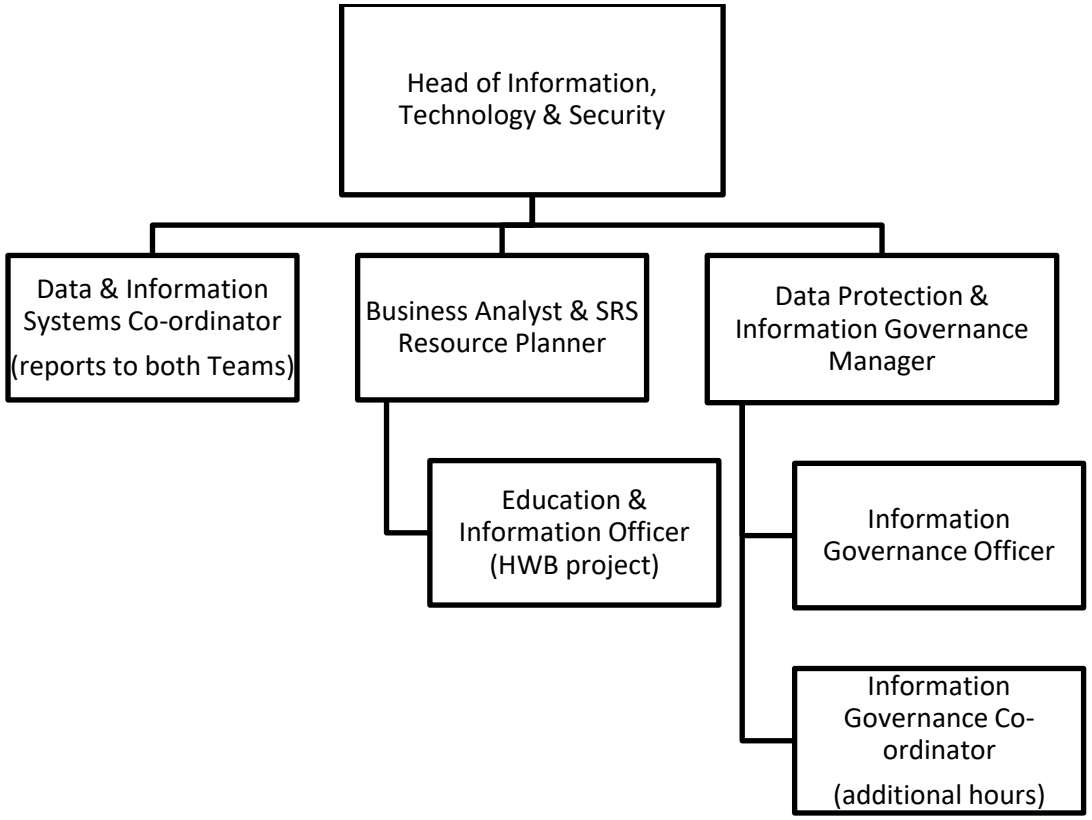
Digital Data Programme Office (as is)



Digital Design & Innovation (proposed)



Information, Technology & Security (proposed)



Total Costs of Proposals	324,322
Agreed as part of 21-22 budget	300,000
To be found from existing service budgets	24,322

* Posts costed at top of scale except where marked
# All new and re-graded posts subject to job-evaluation