SUBJECT:	DIGITAL AND DATA STRATEGY
MEETING:	CABINET
DATE:	17th JULY 2024
DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED: ALL	

1. PURPOSE:

1.1 To present to Cabinet the Council's Digital and Data Strategy for approval.

1.2 The strategy outlines how its use of digital and data will transform and modernise services, improve efficiency and effectiveness, and support the delivery of the wider Community and Corporate Plan.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

2.1 To endorse the vision, themes and aims of the Digital and Data Strategy.

2.2 To approve the delivery plan and to note business cases for further and future investment will be prepared for consideration as required and to the extent that they cannot be managed within the Council's existing budgetary framework, capacity, and resources.

2.3 To delegate authority to the Deputy Chief Executive and Chief Officer – People, Performance and Partnerships, in consultation with the Leader as the lead Cabinet member with portfolio responsibility, to oversee the implementation and monitoring of the strategy.

3. KEY ISSUES:

3.1 The digital landscape is evolving rapidly, and the council needs to keep pace with the changes and opportunities that it brings.

3.2 The council also needs to harness the power of data analytics and insights, and the potential of automation and generative AI capabilities, to inform its actions and decisions, do things differently, and to deliver better services for its users.

3.3 It is important to draw the distinction between being digital enabled and data driven and aligned with the Council's aspirations. Being digitally enabled will involve the Council updating and transforming its processes, systems and services using digital platforms and tools. On its own this allows services to be provided more **efficiently**.

3.4 Being data driven leads to the Council using digital products and services to collect data about Monmouthshire residents and communities. But beyond simply collecting data to

analyse that data to understand resident intentions, preferences and needs and using these insights to provide services that are more **effective** in meeting those needs.

3.5   The council faces significant financial pressure and increasing demand, and the efficient and effective utilisation of digital and data can be a key enabler in meeting these challenges.

3.6   The council has developed a Digital and Data Strategy, which sets out its vision, themes, aims, and actions for the next three years. The vision being:

"The Council is digitally enabled and data driven, delivering excellent services and inclusive outcomes for its residents and communities"

3.7   The strategy's themes create the "stretch" in the strategic aims and ambitions. They are expanded on more fully in the strategy and maintain a focus around:

   i.   User-centred design and service delivery
   ii.   Data analytics and insights
   iii.   Information and data governance

3.8   The strategy is then underpinned by three strategic aims:

- Working with partners to develop and maintain strong foundations to support delivery of the strategic vision.
- Using data analytics and insight, digital advancements and a user-centred focus, to re-think how needs are met.
- Equipping and empowering the organisation and communities to get the most out of digital and data technology.

3.9   The strategy is aligned with other enabling strategies (People, Customer and Financial) which are either in place or in development and which support the delivery of the Community and Corporate Plan with its clear purpose: to become a zero-carbon county, support well-being, health, and dignity for everyone at every stage of life.

3.10   The strategy will be supported by a detailed and prioritised annual delivery plan, which will include the activity, expected outcomes and measures of success for each action. The action plan will be reviewed and updated regularly to reflect the changing needs and priorities of the Council and its stakeholders.

3.11   The strategy will be subject to regular evaluation and feedback, using both quantitative and qualitative methods, to assess its effectiveness, impact, and value. The results of the evaluation will be communicated to members, staff, residents, and partners, and will inform the continuous improvement of the strategy.

3.12   The implementation and monitoring of the strategy will be overseen by the Digital, Data and Technology Board, which will include representatives from the Digital Design and Innovation team, the Data Insight team, the Information Security and Governance team, the Shared Resource Service, and other relevant service areas. The board will report to

the Strategic Leadership Team and the Cabinet on the progress and outcomes of the strategy.

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

4.1 The Integrated Impact Assessment for this strategy is appended. A summary of the key impacts and considerations are provided below:

a) Addressing digital exclusion barriers such as skills, confidence, access to connectivity and devices will support those with protected characteristics and/or those suffering socio-economic disadvantage to become digitally included.

b) The use of accessible digital solutions can support the development and further use of the Welsh language – e.g. translation services, Welsh language learning apps and bi-lingual provision of public facing solutions such as online forms, the My Monmouthshire App and Chat Bot – Monty.

c) The strategy aligns with the ways of working and well-being goals set out in the Well-being of Future Generations Act (Wales) 2015 e.g. increasing the skills and competency of the workforce; providing 24/7 access to information; using data insights to inform decision making which can positively impact health, community cohesion, tackling inequality and resilience. The strategy also recognises the potential environmental impact of increased use of cloud technology and will ensure this is understood and mitigated against.

d) The strategy will ensure information and data security whilst also providing opportunities to use insight appropriately to safeguard vulnerable residents.

5. OPTIONS APPRAISAL

5.1 Option 1: Do nothing. This option would mean that the Council would continue to operate as it is, without a clear and coherent direction for its use of digital and data. This option would have significant risks and disadvantages, such as losing out on the opportunities and benefits that digital and data offer, falling behind the expectations and standards of the users and the regulators, and failing to address the challenges and pressures that the council faces.

5.2 Option 2: Adopt the Digital and Data Strategy. This option would mean that the Council would have a strategic framework for its use of digital and data, aligned with its purpose and objectives. This option would have significant advantages and benefits, such as improving the services and outcomes for the users and the communities, enhancing the operational efficiency and effectiveness of the council, and supporting the delivery of the Community and Corporate Plan.

6. EVALUATION CRITERIA

6.1 The strategy will be evaluated using the following criteria:

- The extent to which the strategy delivers its vision, aims, and actions.
- The extent to which the strategy contributes to the delivery of the Community and Corporate Plan.
- The extent to which the strategy improves the services and outcomes for the users and the communities.
- The extent to which the strategy enhances the operational efficiency and effectiveness of the council.
- The extent to which the strategy addresses the challenges and risks that the council faces.
- The extent to which the strategy meets the expectations and standards of the users.
- The extent to which the strategy demonstrates best practice and innovation in the digital and data field.

An annual Delivery Plan will be reviewed as part of the council's service planning and performance monitoring activity.

7. REASONS:

7.1 The reasons for adopting the Digital and Data Strategy are:

- To set the strategic direction for the council's use of digital and data.
- To align the Council's use of digital and data with its purpose, priorities and objectives.
- To maximise the opportunities and benefits that digital and data offer.
- To address the challenges and pressures that the council faces.
- To meet the needs and expectations of the users.
- To demonstrate best practice and innovation in the digital and data field

8. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

8.1 The strategy will require the allocation of staff time and expertise from various service areas, such as the Digital Design and Innovation team, the Data Insight team, the Information Security and Governance team, the Shared Resource Service (SRS), and other relevant service areas.

8.2 The Council will also proactively seek out opportunities to strengthen collaborations with external partners and will work closed with neighbouring local authorities and the SRS to remove duplication, maximise resources and deliver on shared ambitions around the use of digital and data. Similarly, the Council will seek to work with other local authorities, public sector partners such as ABUHB, Gwent Police, the voluntary sector, the Centre for Digital Public Services Wales, the WLGA Digital Team, and private sector partners to deliver on its strategic ambitions.

8.3 Delivery of the strategy is anticipated to generate savings and efficiencies for the council, by reducing costs, increasing productivity, and improving outcomes.

8.4   There is however recognition that the council may need to invest in skills and capabilities to deliver this strategy. Business cases for investment and alternative delivery models will be prepared for consideration as required.

9.   **CONSULTEES:**

Cabinet
Strategic Leadership Team
Directorate Management Teams

10.   **BACKGROUND PAPERS:**

Appendix 1 – Digital and Data Strategy
Appendix 2 – Intergrated impact assessment

11.   **AUTHOR:**

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