

Midlothian Council Digital Strategy and Midlothian Council's Strategy for Digital Learning**Report by Gary Fairley (Head of Finance and Integrated Service Support) and Grace Vickers (Head of Education)****1 Purpose of Report**

The purpose of this report is to ask Midlothian Council to consider and approve the Midlothian Council Digital Strategy and the Midlothian Council's Strategy for Digital Learning. The two strategies are being submitted together to highlight the close alignment of digital services across corporate and education sectors.

2 Background

Midlothian must take full advantage of the opportunities offered by technology to make its services fit for purpose in the 21st century.

Midlothian citizens expect excellent digital services, while our staff and our learners must be equipped with the relevant knowledge and skills to live and work in a period where the fast pace of change is the new normal.

To influence expectations and deliver services, Midlothian must re-align its strategies for the digital age.

There are significant demands on the resources in Midlothian Council, therefore it is essential to identify key objectives, priority projects and actions to ensure that demands are met and that adequate resource can be allocated, as required.

Midlothian Council must ensure that Council employees have the skills and time to conceive and implement innovative digital solutions to support today's challenges.

The Council is expected to deliver a wide range of objectives and a diverse range of services in partnership with a complex web of public, private and voluntary sector agencies. The challenges in coming months and years are even more wide reaching, as a result of local government financial pressures combined with the fast pace of digital transformation across society.

Together, the Midlothian Council Digital Strategy and Midlothian Council's Strategy for Digital Learning aim to align Midlothian Council's capabilities with business requirements over a 4-5 year period; although the main focus is on the next 3 years. High-level priorities and actions have been identified to complement the strategy documents and governance and approval will be via the Digital Strategy Group.

It is recognised that the strategies are working documents and additional priorities may be included from time to time.

3 Report Implications

3.1 Resource

It is necessary to adequately plan for the demands on council resource, as failure to do so could seriously affect the ability of the Council to deliver on its key objectives, including any efficiency savings which may result from delivery of digital technology, learning and services.

The digital strategies in themselves do not commit further resources but between both documents provide a framework to which we can consider future investment priorities.

All new projects in support of the strategies will require a robust business case so that future investment decisions can be prioritised in line with agreed strategic priorities.

The successful implementation of the Midlothian Council Digital Strategy and Midlothian Council's Strategy for Digital Learning will help to deliver transformational change and better outcomes for all.

3.2 Risk

Failure to adequately plan for the required skills and demands on Council could seriously affect the ability of the Council to deliver on its key objectives.

3.3 Policy

Strategy

The two strategies - Midlothian Council Digital Strategy and Midlothian Council's Strategy for Digital Learning set out a clear framework to deliver, digital leadership, digital services and the digital foundation and link to national and corporate objectives.

Consultation

No consultation has been carried out in relation to this report, although there has been significant consultation on the strategy documents themselves; both strategies have benefited from input from members of the Digital Strategy Group and the Digital Learning Strategy has been written in consultation with parents, teachers and learners.

Equalities

Midlothian Council has a commitment to equality for all its customers. In designing and redesigning services, we will adhere to standards to be agreed for digital services and we will meet our equality duty. In alignment with the Digital Learning and Teaching Strategy for Scotland, our vision is to deliver equity of opportunity across schools ensuring that every child has the same opportunities with regards to use of digital technology and

access to digital. Midlothian Council will also promote equity and digital inclusion, thus ensuring that children and young people from our most disadvantaged communities have access to the technology and digital literacy skills that support full participation in modern society.

Sustainability

Failure to adequately plan for the digital age could seriously affect the ability of the Council to deliver on its key objectives.

4 Summary

The Midlothian Council Digital Strategy and the Midlothian Council's Strategy for Digital Learning both set out the goals and objectives for the Council and aim to align resource capabilities with business requirements over a 4-5 year period. It is essential that staff and Elected Members acknowledge the capabilities of and constraints upon staff.

5 Recommendations

Midlothian Council is asked to

- approve the Midlothian Council Digital Strategy (2016-2021) and Midlothian Council's Strategy for Digital Learning (May 2016)
- note that further reports will be presented to CMT for any resources requirements arising from the digital transformation programme endorsed by the Digital Strategy Group.
- endorse governance for all new projects that support these strategies to be approved and verified by the Digital Strategy Group.
- note that the strategies will ensure that all new digital projects must be supported by a strong business case and an identified Digital Leader who will be responsible for overseeing the programme \ project.

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