Report Title	Delivery of the Digital Strategy		
Committee	Strategy and Resources Committee		
Committee Date	5 July 2021		
Committee Chair	Councillor Ruth Dombey - Leader of the Council		
Lead Member	Councillor Sunita Gordon, Lead Member for Resources		
Report From	Richard Simpson, Strategic Director of Resources		
Report Author(s)	Steve O'Connor, Assistant Director, Digital & IT		
Ward(s) Affected	Council Business		
Ambitious for Sutton priorities	Being Active Citizens Making Informed Choices Living Well Independently Keeping People Safe		
Open/Exempt	Open		
Signed	R Simpson	**Date**	22 June 2021

1   Summary

1.1   The Digital Strategy was approved by this Committee on 14 January 2019. This report sets out the progress made on the delivery of the Digital Strategy and how it is supporting the Ambitious for Sutton priorities. Over the last year the Digital Strategy has supported the Council's response to the Covid pandemic, is improving the online experience for residents and is ensuring that Sutton is leading the way in using Smart Cities technologies to improve service for residents. The report also looks forward to the Digital priorities for 2020/21 and the emerging themes for the next Digital Strategy in 2022.
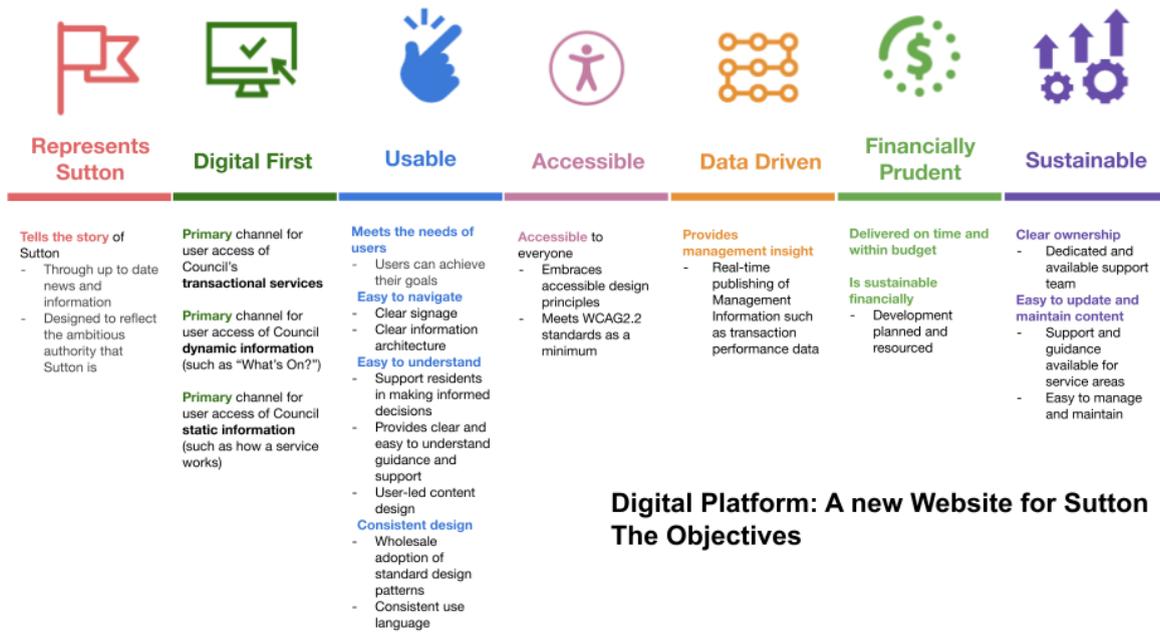
2   Recommendation(s)

2.1   To note the progress made on the delivery of the Digital Strategy and the work to update and refresh the Strategy.

2.2   To agree the priorities set out in para 3.18.

3 Background and Key Information

3.1 The Digital Strategy published in 2018 covered a period up to 2021. It centred on three broad areas of delivering an:
- Enabled workforce
- Enabled Customers
- Enabled Communities

3.2 The strategy helps the Council to be more agile and productive through improved processes and online services along with using data and technology to encourage growth and investment in Sutton.These themes in turn support and enable the Ambitious for Sutton priorities. This paper will update on these three themes and how the work delivered supports the Ambitious for Sutton priorities. The impact of the Digital Strategy is set out in the paragraphs below.

3.3 **Enabled Workforce**: The Digital Strategy set out to use data and technology to enable the Council to be more agile, flexible and productive. The Covid 19 pandemic has highlighted the importance of this objective and the value in having the technology in place to enable a truly flexible workforce. With the first lockdown in March 2020 the majority of Council staff needed to move to working from home virtually overnight. The Digital Strategy's focus on an enabled workforce and specifically the Council's investment in the Google platform and the underpinning technology behind this enabled the council to make this transition overnight. Staff had the technology to work from anywhere. This included ensuring the Council's democratic processes could continue, enabling remote Council meetings and Committees to take place. Behind the scenes the IT team ensured that the network capacity was in place to support this change in working practises and the IT Support team supported staff across the Council in having the equipment they needed to work effectively from home.

3.4 Alongside the overnight move to home working, the Digital & IT team were closely involved in building digital services to support the wider response to the pandemic. Working collaboratively with teams across the Council new digital services were created to enable residents to request help and support and for local businesses to apply for grants. Alongside this, innovative digital solutions were implemented to improve how key response services were delivered. A digital solution (ViaVan) was implemented to provide real time mobile allocation of deliveries to over 1000 residents in Sutton, speeding up delivery. Hospital discharge processes updating the Council's social care system were automated and able to run 24/7, speeding up hospital discharge processes.

3.5 As we move out of lockdown the Digital & IT team are directly supporting the Workwell programme, focusing on the technology and training needed to support a more hybrid way of working where some of our workforce are in the office and others are working from home. The Workwell programme is looking at how the Council uses its office space in the future. A further programme is underway to refresh our IT infrastructure and remove any dependencies on specific Council properties. This programme will migrate more of our services into the Cloud giving us more flexibility to scale and deploy services in the future.

3.6   **Enabled Customers:** The Digital Strategy committed to using data and technology to redesign how we deliver our services to truly meet the needs of our users (including our residents, local businesses and partners). To do this effectively the Digital & IT Service has been developing key digital capabilities.These capabilities include developing skills in user research to ensure that the needs of the users of our services are truly understood.. We have also introduced skills in service design to develop digital services that are clear, accessible and simple to use.

3.7   A project is underway to design and deliver a new website for Sutton by the end of this year (2021). The new website is being designed to better meet the needs of residents across the borough. Making it easier for residents to interact with the Council online and find the information they need. The project supports all aspects of the Ambitious for Sutton priorities with particular focus on Making informed choices. The project completed an extensive 'discovery' phase before Christmas, speaking to residents, Councillors, local business and officers to understand what they need the website to deliver for them.

3.8   The discovery work has informed the priorities for the project and what the website design needs to deliver. There are 7 objectives. The first two focus on the purpose of the website, from representing Sutton effectively as a modern, ambitious borough through to designing the website as the primary channel for residents to access Council services and information. The second set of objectives focus on usability and accessibility, ensuring the website is designed for our residents, is simple to navigate and that content is simple to understand with a clear and consistent design that ensures the website is inclusive and accessible to all. The final three objectives set out to ensure that there is a sustainable model to manage and maintain the website, using data to continually iterate and improve the site. The objectives are summarised in the diagram below:

Delivery of Digital Strategy

Sutton

Represents Sutton	Digital First	Usable	Accessible	Data Driven	Financially Prudent	Sustainable
Tells the story of Sutton - Through up to date news and information - Designed to reflect the ambitious authority that Sutton is	**Primary** channel for user access of Council's **transactional services** **Primary** channel for user access of Council **dynamic information** (such as "What's On?") **Primary** channel for user access of Council **static information** (such as how a service works)	**Meets the needs of users** - Users can achieve their goals **Easy to navigate** - Clear signage - Clear information architecture **Easy to understand** - Support residents in making informed decisions - Provides clear and easy to understand guidance and support - User-led content design **Consistent design** - Wholesale adoption of standard design patterns - Consistent use language	**Accessible** to everyone - Embraces accessible design principles - Meets WCAG2.2 standards as a minimum	**Provides management insight** - Real-time publishing of Management Information such as transaction performance data	**Delivered on time and within budget** **Is sustainable financially** - Development planned and resourced	**Clear ownership** - Dedicated and available support team **Easy to update and maintain content** - Support and guidance available for service areas - Easy to manage and maintain

**Digital Platform: A new Website for Sutton
The Objectives**

3.9   The Website project is now gathering feedback on potential designs with the plan to have a first iteration of the new site ready for testing later in the summer. There will be opportunity for Councillors and residents to provide feedback over the coming months. The project plans to launch the new website in November 2021. Not all of the current website content will change by November 2021 and work will continue on reviewing and updating content for several months after the go live of the new website design.

3.10   Alongside the new website project, work is underway to improve online transactional services and promote the use of digital services instead of needing to call the council. The initial focus is on transactions related to Waste services, which account for over 25% of calls into the Call Centre. New digital street based waste services are planned to go live in June/July including, reporting fly tipping, graffiti removal and reporting a street cleaning issue. New online services for residential waste are being worked on and planned to be implemented later this year.

3.11   In addition to the website project an Information and Advice Hub is being developed to support residents in making informed choices through a more joined up online offer to improve access for residents and professionals to details on local services, information and advice. Creating a 'one stop shop' for information and advice will seek to give residents greater ownership of their own wellbeing and make it easier to obtain the most relevant information, whilst making it easier for providers to promote their offer through a single channel.

3.12   **Enabled Communities**: The Digital Strategy set out a Smart Cities approach to encourage growth, automation and improve the use of data. A key aspect of this work has been improving digital connectivity in the borough. Over the last year there have been

four areas of focus, Social Broadband connectivity, digital inclusion, mobile data coverage and the Internet of Things programme.

3.13 The work on Social Housing Broadband has connected 3,606 residences to full fibre connectivity as a result of the Social Housing Wayleave Agreement that has been put in place. Alongside the full fibre connectivity the broadband providers have also installed free Wi-Fi into public spaces including Shanklin Community Centre, Thomas Wall, Crownbourne Court and Milton House enabling free connectivity to the internet in these public spaces contributing to improving digital inclusion in the borough.

3.14 Over the last year there has been a focus on digital inclusion to support home schooling. The Council has worked with an initiative from the Department of Education to distribute digital resources to Sutton's vulnerable and disadvantaged children and young people. To date this has distributed 450 laptops, 123 tablets and 86 4G Routers Alongside this the Council is part of a Donated Device Repurposing Scheme to safely distribute donated devices to Sutton schools. To date this has distributed 210 devices to 11 Sutton schools enabling children to stay connected and learn at home during the pandemic when they would otherwise have missed out on schooling.

3.15 Digital connectivity is increasingly important in attracting business and residents to the borough. Work is underway to bring the latest mobile connectivity to Sutton and improve high street 4G coverage. As well as boosting the network for users in these high-demand locations today, the infrastructure is also 5G-ready (providing next generation high speed connectivity to residents and businesses). These access agreements will allow major mobile network operators to make use of council-owned streetlamps and CCTV columns for deploying world-class wireless technologies.

3.16 Sutton is the lead borough for the South London Partnership 'Internet of Things' InnOvaTe programme. The South London Partnership was awarded £4 million over 3 years to "pilot and research" ways to generate economic growth, support local businesses and help people live better, healthier lives using "Internet of Things" (IoT) and other innovative technologies. The programme has adapted and is now focused on economic recovery and the Covid -19 response through:

● Enabling new ways to manage and mitigate new challenges

● helping drive local economic recovery and adaptation

● generating insights about transformation over time

3.17 Sutton is leading the way across the South London Partnership with 5 IOT projects live, with a further 9 approved and in development, with many more ideas being evaluated all the time. The projects are all focused on real world challenges and outcomes, including:

● Post Covid we need to keep our high streets safe and help revitalise them.
● We need improved data to support the way we plan and monitor the effectiveness of traffic and cycle schemes
● We have roads in the borough that are prone to serious flooding

Delivery of Digital Strategy

- Are our school streets initiatives improving the air quality around schools?
- We have on average 319 fly tips a month across the borough
- Many of our car parks have overhead barriers to prevent illegal use of the car park, but they are sometimes circumvented.
- We don't know how well disabled parking bays are used so it is difficult to make decisions on requests to relocate, remove or install more.
- We don't know how many people are using our parks so we can't tailor our services like bin emptying, toilet cleaning, etc. to the number of people using them.

Some examples of the projects underway include:

- Using movement sensors to measure footfall and traffic through our High streets to aid with planning of the economic recovery and measures such as social distancing.
- The same movement sensors have also been deployed to gather road traffic data, including estimated journey times, types of vehicles using the roads and how junctions are operating. The same sensors will also gather data on the use of cycle lanes.
- Sensors to be put in to monitor gullies in locations prone to flooding. The sensors will monitor water levels and will enable early warning of potential flood risk and proactive action to avoid disruption. The project will also look at linking the sensor data to weather forecasting to provide more accurate early warning.
- Air quality sensors are being installed onto school streets to help measure the impact of school streets initiatives
- Monitoring well being in the home to promote independent living. A simple heat and humidity sensor is used to determine activity in the home and can alert caregivers if there is no activity. This project has already shown its value, with two alerts being triggered when no activity in the home was dedicated where the resident had fallen and caregivers were able to assist. The sensors also identified possible cases of fuel poverty enabling the Council to assist the resident in getting help.

3.18   There a five key digital priorities for the coming year 2021/22:

    1.1.1   To launch the new Sutton website,

    1.1.2   To deliver new digital services to enable residents and businesses to transact with the Council, starting with Waste services.

    1.1.3   To continue the work on IOT and digital connectivity in the borough

    1.1.4   To support the Workwell plans, including the migration of services to the cloud to remove dependency on onsite facilities.

    1.1.5   Service transformation through the Ambitious for Sutton Transformation programme. Digital is working closely with the People Directorate developing a range of digital transformation projects.

3.19   Work will begin in this financial year on developing the next iteration of the Digital Strategy for Sutton. This will build on the work of the current strategy. Emerging themes include being digital first in how services are designed, whilst recognising the need to maintain non digital channels. Ensuring services are user centred, accessible and that digital inclusion is designed into our offer. To continue to develop as a digital borough through connectivity and IOT and finally to develop more use of data to better inform service delivery.

4   Benefits to Sutton and its Residents

4.1   Digital and IT underpin much of the Ambitious for Sutton programme and the work set out in this paper directly benefits residents. Residents' digital expectations are rising all the time and this has only accelerated through the pandemic. The pandemic has made the use of video calling commonplace and many have relied on digital services to keep in touch with people. Online shopping has gone mainstream. All of which raises people's expectation of what they can do online and they will expect the Council to offer simple, convenient and effective digital services.

4.2   Ensuring that the Council has a digitally enabled workforce is critical to the successful delivery of Council services. The success of the Council's technology in supporting the move to home working in the last year is testament to this. As we move forward our technology and digital skills will need to continue to evolve and adapt as we move into more hybrid ways of working through the Workwell programme.

4.3   The website will deliver improved access to Council services and information to residents and businesses in the borough. Delivering more services through digital channels will reduce pressure on the Sutton Customer Contact Centre, freeing up the phone lines for those who cannot get online for any reason or those who need more in depth help. The move to more online transactions are also expected to deliver savings as processes become more automated and call volumes fall.

4.4   The work to ensure that Sutton enjoys excellent digital infrastructure through fibre connectivity and mobile signals directly supports the Council's growth plans and helps to attract and retain businesses in the borough. This work, along with the provision of devices contributes to addressing digital exclusion in the borough with more connectivity being provided into social housing and public buildings.

5   Implications

5.1   The work set out in this paper will underpin how Sutton delivers its services to the borough in the future. Digital is no longer an add on, it is now a touchpoint for services across the Council. As resident digital expectations continue to grow the Council risks being unfavourably compared to others if it does not prioritise it's digital services.

6   Finance and Legal Commentary

Finance Comment

6.1   The Capital Programme has an allocation for Digital and service transformation projects. This is £2.7m in 2021/22 and £1.3M in 2022/23. This will support the funding of the

priorities set out in this paper.

Legal Comment

6.2   When purchasing digital systems the Council will need to ensure that it complies with the Public Contract Regulations 2015 (if the value of the contract is over the threshold amount) and the Council's Contract Standing Orders.

6.3   With regards to digital systems that are being implemented to be used by residents and other external stakeholders, the council needs to ensure that they are not excluding access to those who fall under the protected characteristic under the Equalities Act 2010 and comply with its public sector equalities duty.

Legal Risks

6.4   None for the purposes of this report.

7   Appendices and Background Documents

Appendices

Appendix Letter	Appendix Title
A	Digital Strategy 2018-2021

Background Documents

Date of Expiry	Background Document
N/A	N/A

8   Consultations

Consultees	Yes/No	Officer	Date of Comments
Finance	Yes	Carol Worne Strategic Finance Business Partner	22/06/2021
Legal	Yes	Fabiola Hickson Head of Law, Procurement and Information Governance	09/06/2021