

# Agenda



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Date: 21 October 2021  
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## A meeting of the **Cabinet**

will be held on Friday 29 October 2021 at 10.30 am  
135 Eastern Avenue, Milton Park, OX14 4SB

To watch this virtual meeting, follow this link to the council's [YouTube channel](#).

### **Cabinet Members:**

#### **Councillors**

Emily Smith (Chair)	Helen Pighills
Debby Hallett (Vice-Chair)	Judy Roberts
Andy Crawford	Bethia Thomas
Neil Fawcett	Catherine Webber

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Patrick Arran  
Head of Legal and Democratic

# Agenda

## **Open to the Public including the Press**

### **1. Apologies for absence**

To record apologies for absence.

### **2. Minutes**

**(Pages 4 - 10)**

To adopt and sign as a correct record the minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 1 October 2021.

Vale of White Horse District Council  
Cabinet agenda - Friday, 29 October 2021

### **3. Declarations of interest**

To receive any declarations of disclosable pecuniary interests in respect of items on the agenda for this meeting.

### **4. Urgent business and chair's announcements**

To receive notification of any matters which the chair determines should be considered as urgent business and the special circumstances which have made the matters urgent, and to receive any announcements from the chair.

### **5. Public participation**

To receive any questions or statements from members of the public that have registered to speak.

### **6. Recommendations and updates from other committees**

To consider any recommendations to Cabinet from other committees.

### **7. Technology strategy**

(Pages 11 - 27)

To consider the head of corporate services' report.

### **8. Exclusion of the public, including the press**

To consider whether to exclude members of the press and public from the meeting for the following item of business under Part 1 of Schedule 12A Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 and as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006 on the grounds that:

- (i) it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraphs 1-7 Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act, and
- (ii) the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

### **Exempt information under section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972**

### **9. Minutes**

(Pages 28 - 29)

To adopt and sign as a correct record the exempt minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 1 October 2021.

### **10. Technology strategy**

(Pages 30 - 51)

To note the exempt appendices of the head of corporate services' report.

**11. Property, asset management and technical services IT solution**  
**(Pages 52 - 57)**

To consider the head of corporate services' report.

# Minutes

## of a meeting of the

# Cabinet



held on Friday 1 October 2021 at 10.30 am  
in the First Floor Meeting Space, 135 Eastern Avenue, Milton Park, OX14 4SB

### Open to the public, including the press

#### Present in the meeting room:

Cabinet members: Councillors Emily Smith (Chair), Neil Fawcett, Judy Roberts, Bethia Thomas and Catherine Webber  
Officers: Steve Culliford and Mark Stone

#### Remote attendance:

Cabinet member: Councillor Andy Crawford  
Officers: Patrick Arran, Harry Barrington-Mountford, Pat Connell, Angela Cox, Andrew Down, Adrian Duffield, Simon Hewings, Jeremy Lloyd, Catrin Mathias, Adrianna Partridge, Cheryl Reeves, Cathie Scotting, Toby Warren, and Alison Williams  
Guest: Councillor Nathan Boyd

### Ca.25 Apologies for absence

Councillors Debby Hallett (Vice-Chair) and Helen Pighills had sent their apologies for absence.

### Ca.26 Minutes

**RESOLVED:** to adopt as correct records the minutes of the Cabinet meetings held on 21 July and 6 August 2021 and agree that the Chair signs them as such.

### Ca.27 Declarations of interest

Councillor Emily Smith declared a personal interest in item 12 – revision of the Science Vale Enterprise Zone accountable body memorandum of understanding – in so far as she was a director of the Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership.

### Ca.28 Urgent business and chair's announcements

None

### Ca.29 Public participation

None

### **Ca.30 Recommendations and updates from other committees**

Cabinet received and noted an update from other committees. The paper, also published alongside the agenda, contained some recommendations, which Cabinet considered under each relevant item below.

### **Ca.31 Community infrastructure levy charging schedule adoption**

Cabinet considered the head of planning's report, which proposed the adoption of the community infrastructure levy charging schedule. A review of the charging schedule had taken place, including stages for public consultation and independent examination.

The Cabinet member reported that the independent planning inspector had concluded that the council had provided sufficient evidence that showed the proposed rates would not threaten delivery of the local plan. The inspector also concluded that the draft charging schedule would provide an appropriate basis for the collection of community infrastructure levy in the Vale and therefore recommended that the draft charging schedule should be approved.

Cabinet also noted that Scrutiny Committee had supported the proposals.

Cabinet concurred and looked forward to the charging schedule taking effect and bringing community infrastructure benefits to the Vale.

**RECOMMENDED** to Council to:

- (a) adopt the Community Infrastructure Levy Charging Schedule (set out at Appendix 2 to the head of planning's report to Cabinet on 1 October 2021) and the Community Infrastructure Levy Instalments Policy (set out at Appendix 3 to the report), with an implementation date of 1 November 2021; and

**RESOLVED** subject to Council approval of (a) above, to:

- (b) authorise the head of planning, in consultation with the Cabinet member for corporate services and transformation, to make any necessary further minor changes to the documents or a change to the implementation date for the new Community Infrastructure Levy rates.

### **Ca.32 Developer contributions supplementary planning document adoption**

Cabinet considered the head of planning's report, which proposed the adoption of a revised developer contributions supplementary planning document. The report set out the outcome of the consultation on the revised draft document. Changes had been made, as a result of the consultation. Scrutiny Committee had supported the proposed document.

The Cabinet member recommended that the developer contributions supplementary planning document was adopted so that it could come into force alongside the revised community infrastructure rates within the charging schedule. This would help the council deliver the necessary infrastructure to support development across the Vale, as set out in

the local plan. Cabinet agreed, noting that the document would form a supplement to the adopted local plan.

**RESOLVED:** to

- (a) adopt the Developer Contributions Supplementary Planning Document;
- (b) authorise the head of planning, in consultation with the Cabinet member for corporate services and transformation, to make any necessary further minor changes to the document; and
- (c) agree the proposed approach to preparing a separate section 106 internal protocol document, for use by councillors and officers.

### **Ca.33 Strategic property review**

Cabinet considered the interim head of development and regeneration's report on the strategic property review. This provided an overview of all council assets and the alignment of council business, capital and property asset strategies to ensure that property assets were optimised to meet the council's corporate plan objectives.

Underpinning the delivery of the review outcomes was a land and property asset disposal policy to provide a documented process to support dealing effectively with the council's land and property assets. The Cabinet member believed that the policy would allow the council to:

- take transparent decisions on its land and property assets
- implement the corporate plan's aims
- maximise capital and/or revenue from existing assets
- reduce costs associated with managing the portfolio
- understand potential financial risks/liabilities in holding council-owned assets in the short, medium and long term
- improve efficiency in running the estate, thereby contributing to financially effective delivery of services

The Cabinet member also believed that there was a need to ensure that all relevant services were included in property-making decisions. Setting up an asset management group would provide internal governance and enable inclusivity for cross-council service delivery. Formal decisions would be taken in accordance with the council's constitution, following advice from the asset management group.

Cabinet supported the proposal as this would allow the council to better manage its assets, improve the use of those assets, improve the energy efficiency of the buildings, and support the corporate plan.

**RESOLVED:** to

- (a) note the update on the strategic property review;
- (b) approve the Land and Property Asset Disposal Policy;
- (c) approve the council approach to transfer of assets from developers; and

- (d) note that in line with proposed processes set out in the Land and Property Asset Disposal Policy, an Asset Management Group (an advisory non-decision making group) will be set up to review, check and challenge the recommendations from the strategic property review prior to formal decision being taken on disposals of assets.

### **Ca.34 Tree planting policy**

Cabinet considered the interim head of policy and programmes' report on a policy for planting trees on council land. The joint policy outlined how South Oxfordshire and the Vale would protect, plant and manage trees on council land, and how the community would be supported with their tree planting initiatives.

The council had previously sought to increase tree cover, protect trees on their land, and help to achieve their respective carbon neutral targets. The policy also set out how community groups could apply to plant trees on council land.

Cabinet welcomed the policy, as it would support communities that wished to plant trees on council land. Cabinet asked that a review of the tree planting policy was carried out in six months' time, or after the approaching tree planting season, to allow the council to learn from its experience.

**RESOLVED:** to

- (a) approve the policy for planting trees on council land; and
- (b) conduct a review of the policy in six months' time.

### **Ca.35 Partnership grant scheme - future options for the scheme**

Cabinet considered the head of corporate services' report on a review of options for the partnership grants scheme. The options were to:

1. continue with the status quo, funding the three organisations currently in receipt of a partnership grant, delivering information and advice services for 12 months (within the constraints of the budget)
2. commission an organisation to provide the advice and support services currently provided by the existing recipients or some of them
3. develop a policy for the funding that reflected the new corporate priorities and invite all local voluntary and community sector organisations to apply
4. close the current scheme, or reduce the value of the scheme, given the council's other financial pressures.

The Cabinet member recommended a blend of options 1 and 2 to allow the council to continue to support the three partnerships with grants over the next 12 months but allowing the council time to commission advice and support services in the future. Cabinet supported this as it would allow the council to define what services it wished to commission with the voluntary sector.

**RESOLVED:** to

- (a) commission information and advice services from 2023 onwards (budget permitting); and

- (b) extend the current partnership grants to Oxfordshire South and Vale Citizen's Advice Bureau, Wantage Independent Advice Centre (now known as Vale Community Impact), and Community First Oxfordshire towards the provision of services across the district in 2022/23.

### **Ca.36 Revision of Science Vale Enterprise Zone accountable body memorandum of understanding**

Councillor Emily Smith declared a personal interest in this item as she was a director of the Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership. Councillor Smith took no part in the debate on this item. In her absence, Councillor Bethia Thomas chaired the meeting for this item.

Cabinet considered the report of the deputy chief executive – partnerships. This sought an amendment to the Science Vale Enterprise Zone accountable body memorandum of understanding with Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership Limited and Oxfordshire County Council. The memorandum detailed the retention and distribution of business rates growth income from the Science Vale Enterprise Zone (also known as EZ1), which covered Milton Park and Harwell Campus.

The Cabinet member recommended that the Cabinet agreed to revise the memorandum of understanding. There had been a number of changes to the governance and corporate structure of the Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership, which were relevant to the memorandum. Its wording no longer accurately recorded the way in which the council worked with the partnership and the county council. Cabinet supported the recommendations.

#### **RESOLVED:** to

- (a) enter into a revised memorandum of understanding with Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership and Oxfordshire County Council for the retention and distribution of business rates growth income from the Science Vale Enterprise Zone; and
- (b) to authorise the deputy chief executive – partnerships, in consultation with the Cabinet member for strategic partnerships and place, to finalise terms of the revised memorandum of understanding and to enter into it.

### **Ca.37 Procurement strategy**

Councillor Emily Smith returned to the meeting room and took the chair for the remainder of the meeting.

Cabinet considered the head of finance's report, which proposed a new procurement strategy. This set out guidance on how the council should procure goods and services, whilst at the same time supported the council's priorities and strategic themes.

The Cabinet member for finance reported that the council had not had a procurement policy to date. The adoption of the strategy and action plan would give the council clear direction and guidance of matters to be considered and procedures to followed when purchasing goods, services and works. In turn, this would help deliver the corporate plan objectives. Additionally, it would minimise the risk of non-compliant procurements, which could be subject to challenge. This would bring better value for money. The strategy also



included an ethical procurement statement setting out the standards the council would require of contractors and suppliers.

Cabinet welcomed the new strategy, its ethical procurement statement and action plan, noting that these documents could be reviewed and updated in future.

**RESOLVED:** to

- (a) approve the joint procurement strategy and the actions within it, as set out in Appendix 1 to the head of finance's report to Cabinet on 1 October 2021;
- (b) approve the procurement action plan and the actions within it, as set out in Appendix 2 to the report; and
- (c) approve the ethical procurement statement and the actions within it, as set out in Appendix 3 to the report.

### **Ca.38 Quarter 1 Performance Report 2021**

Cabinet considered the interim head of policy and programmes' report, which set out the first quarterly performance report following adoption of the corporate plan and adoption of the performance management framework.

The report demonstrated the progress made in the reporting period. Scrutiny Committee had reviewed it and had made suggestions for improvements, which Cabinet welcomed. The report would be adapted and improved over time. It was also hoped that in future, the quarterly reports could be published earlier, within six weeks of the end of each quarter.

Cabinet thanked officers for their work in producing the first quarterly report and looked forward to the second quarter report, after which there would be a further review.

**RESOLVED:** to approve the performance report for quarter 1 of 2021.

### **Ca.39 Treasury management outturn 2020/21**

Cabinet considered the head of finance's outturn report on the council's treasury management activities in 2020/21.

The Cabinet member reported that, despite a difficult operating environment, the council continued to make investments during 2020/21 that maintained security and liquidity, whilst providing a return that mostly exceeded market benchmarks. The Joint Audit and Governance Committee had considered the report and was satisfied that the treasury activities had been carried out in accordance with the treasury management strategy and policy.

Cabinet concurred, noting that during the year, the council's performance had exceeded its budget target during a difficult year with the Covid-19 pandemic. The strong performance had been the result of cash balances being higher during the year and with better interest rates than expected. In addition, there had been no breaches of the prudential limits. Cabinet welcomed the report and thanked officers for their work.

**RECOMMENDED** to Council to:

- (a) approve the treasury management outturn report for 2020/21; and
- (b) approve the actual 2020/21 prudential indicators within the report.

#### **Ca.40 Exclusion of the public, including the press**

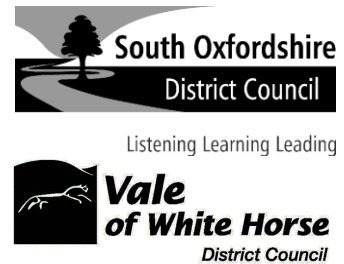
**RESOLVED:** to exclude members of the press and public from the meeting for the following item of business under Part 1 of Schedule 12A Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 and as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006 on the grounds that:

- (i) it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraphs 1-7 Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act, and
- (ii) the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

#### **Ca.41 Inter-authority agreement**

Cabinet agreed in principle to enter into an inter-authority agreement with South Oxfordshire District Council to share the occupation of office space in the proposed new building at Didcot, and agreed to recommend Council to budget for this council's share of the fit out costs.

# Cabinet Report



Report of Head of Corporate Services – James Carpenter

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Wards affected: N/A

South Cabinet member responsible: Andrea Powell

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Vale Cabinet member responsible: Debby Hallett

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To: CABINET Dates: VALE 29/10/2021 SOUTH 04/11/2021

## Joint Technology Strategy update

### Recommendation

Cabinet to note the update on the projects incorporated in the Joint Technology Strategy and to support the continuing implementation of the programme.

### Purpose of report

1. To enable Cabinet to consider the updates on the projects in the Joint Technology Strategy and support its implementation

### Corporate objectives

2. South - Investment and innovation that rebuilds our financial viability
3. Vale – Building Stable Finances

### Background

4. The Councils previously agreed a Joint Technology Strategy in October 2018, including a series of projects that formed an implementation programme.
5. We are taking this opportunity, linked to our post COVID operating models, and our future state transition into the new office environment and service delivery to once again share details of the Strategy to ensure clarity and oversight.

6. Members will be aware that the Joint Technology Strategy forms a key tenet of the customer transformation work identified in the corporate plans and puts a clear focus on embracing digital for service excellence.
7. The report attached at Appendix A sets out in detail an overview of the digital and IT landscape, our own IT environment, as well as setting out a series of technological principles and a roadmap to support our business strategy.
8. There are key themes explored within this, including its role in supporting democratic engagement, and supporting a capable and empowered workforce for the digital age.
9. The Joint Technology Strategy facilitates the Councils moving forwards in delivering its corporate plan objectives and the wider delivery of Council services supported by the most appropriate IT solutions and infrastructure.
10. Members will note from the table overleaf (Extract from Annex B) that a number of projects have already completed, and others are at various stages of advancement. The approval of the implementation of the individual projects will come to respective Cabinets in due course.

Programme	Project	Sponsor	Project Manager	Status
Platform	Connectivity	James Carpenter	Simon Turner	Scheduled
	Unified communications	James Carpenter	Simon Turner	Scheduled
	End user environment	James Carpenter	Lee Brown	Active
	Follow me print	James Carpenter	Simon Turner	Complete
	End user device	James Carpenter	Lee Brown	Active
Corporate systems	Enterprise Resource Planning	Simon Hewings	Simon Turner	Active
	Information management	Adrianna Partridge	Lee Brown	Scheduled
	Business intelligence	Harry Barrington-Mountford	Lee Brown	Scheduled
	Spatial data management	James Carpenter	Lee Brown	Active
Customer Systems	Web sites	James Carpenter	Andy Roberts	Active
	Mobile apps	James Carpenter	Lee Brown	Scheduled
	Customer relationship mgt	James Carpenter	Lee Brown	Active
	Bookings	James Carpenter	Lee Brown	Scheduled
	Consultations	James Carpenter	Shona Ware	Scheduled
	Community grants	James Carpenter	Shona Ware	Active
	Call centre	James Carpenter	Simon Turner	Active
	Lottery	James Carpenter	Simon Turner	Complete
Place and People systems	Regulation	Liz Hayden	TBC	Scheduled
	Revenues	Simon Hewings	Paul Howden	Complete
	Democracy	Patrick Arran	Steve Corrigan	Complete
	Economy	Chris Traill	Melanie Smans	Active
	Place management	Suzanne Malcolm	Lee Brown	Active

11. There is a strong positive message around the work completed to date, examples such as HR and Finance both being back in-house and delivering better services, enabling the councils to have control of the direction of travel now; the ongoing cloud journey has resulted in a number of applications being more resilient, up to date and better supported, but this is an ongoing programme, and we cannot escape the issue of technology debt set out in the financial risks section below.
12. The Technology Strategy is considered to be an essential tenet supporting the move to a more customer centred approach to service delivery.

## **Climate and ecological impact implications**

13. The Joint Technology Strategy enables the Councils to take a positive position, through the use of digital means, in its efforts to tackle the Climate Emergency by improving the efficiency of service provision. This is covered in the attached strategy document and has the ability to help reduce the carbon footprint of the organisation.

## **Financial implications**

14. Any council decision that has financial implications must be made with the knowledge of the councils' overarching financial position. For both councils, the position reflected in the councils' medium-term financial plans (MTFP) as reported to Full Council in February 2021 showed that they are both due to receive less in revenue funding than they plan to spend in 2021/22 (with the balance coming from reserves including unallocated New Homes Bonus). For South this gap is £4.3 million and at Vale it is £2.6 million.
15. The funding gap at both councils is predicted to increase to over £5 million by 2025/26. As there remains no certainty on future local government funding, following the announcement of a one-year spending review by government, and as the long-term financial consequences of the Coronavirus pandemic remain unknown, this gap could increase further. Every financial decision made needs to be cognisance of the need to eliminate the funding gap in future years.
16. Any further investment beyond the already approved cost envelope will come forwards as a part of the approval process for specific projects, and through existing transformation budgets. It should be recognised by Members that both Councils have a specific issue with technology debt. This is the underinvestment in the business applications over the past decade (Concerto, Abritas and Unit4 are examples).
17. The recent garden waste issue identified clearly the impact of not having a CRM solution, from both a customer service and communications perspective. There is no systems administration capability either in the councils or provided by Capita under the IT contract, at least for some systems. Furthermore, many other systems are on rolling annual contracts, and a degree of consolidation and re-tendering is likely to be needed as we transform services to perform more effectively. Additional cost burdens, or savings can not be quantified at this stage, but there is expected to be a strong invest to save business case for investment.

## **Legal implications**

18. The principal legal implications are by way of the procurement routes that necessarily need to be followed to invest in, for example, consolidating IT systems. Appropriate procurement channels will be followed and legal support sought as required.

## **Risks**

19. Having a clear Joint Technology Strategy in place ensures that the Councils can meet the needs of the newly adopted corporate plans from a technological perspective. A number of the projects in the adopted Joint Technology Strategy are under way and /or completed, additionally time has moved on, and technological advances (such as the advent of the usage of TEAMS) need to be better reflected in our plans. As drafted,

the Joint Technology Strategy proposed sets out the best estimate of our needs, our required direction, and the projects and investment needed to deliver based upon what we need and what we know. It will remain a document that is under review as we progress.

20. In proceeding, there is a degree of risk that advances in technology progress at a pace that out strips our strategy, ensuring our Joint Technology Strategy is responsive and reviewed regularly will ensure that it remains fit for purpose.
21. There are continued risks associated with cyber security and the Councils IT estate, as set out through appropriate governance mechanisms such as the Corporate Risk register. Whilst risk in these areas by its nature is always likely to be disproportionately high, having an effective Joint Technology Strategy in place enables us to build effectively on the resilience and security measures we have in place.

## **Other implications**

22. No other implications

## **Conclusion**

23. Having an up to date and refreshed Joint Technology Strategy supports the delivery of the corporate plan, and additionally the delivery of services to our residents, businesses and communities. The refreshed Joint Technology Strategy is recommended to Cabinet for agreement.

## **Appendices**

- **Appendix A** – South and Vale Joint Technology Strategy - Embracing digital to deliver service excellence including:

Annex A - current enterprise architecture and the state of our technology assets in terms of delivery platform, customer systems, corporate systems and people and place-oriented systems.

Annex B - comprising the four programme plans and the component projects to ensure their success

Annex C - sets out the target enterprise architecture for our technology platforms following completion of the programmes

**Appendix A**

# **Joint technology strategy**

**Embracing digital to deliver service excellence**

**Document details:**

Status: V1.4 Version submitted to Cabinet

Date: 04/10/2021

## 1.0 Executive summary

- 1.1 There can be no doubt the digital revolution and the COVID-19 pandemic has fundamentally changed our expectations and those of our residents and businesses in terms of how we need to deliver services now and in the future. Our technology environment will need to be able to support how we transform to meet those customer expectations in South Oxfordshire and the Vale of White Horse.
- 1.2 Within our councils we will need an IT environment that not only supports deep collaboration (software that enables teams to get things done together with minimal friction and with an absolute focus on a joint goal) and which continues to enable our staff to work flexibly but securely, anytime, anywhere and with colleagues from other organisations. Our IT delivery capability will need to support user centred service design from beginning to end in an environment that demands rapid development, implementation and change (Agile) but ensures provision is accessible, secure and robust. It also needs to be delivered in collaboration with and led by our business drivers.
- 1.3 We cannot do this in isolation. Many of the services we provide are part of a more holistic experience involving other providers: health; housing; welfare; crime prevention and reduction; transport; education; and environment. Collaboration across the technology and information landscapes will be essential if we are to make the transition from institutionally driven service provision to consumer driven digitally enabled provision.
- 1.4 The enablers to support this transition will require deep collaboration across:
- Information sharing and governance – providing access to data in a transparent and accessible way
  - Connectivity – enabling ease of access and connectivity across our domains
  - Identity management, authentication and security – to enhance our cyber security approach
  - Strategic asset utilisation and management – to deliver best value
  - Interoperability – to ensure the effective integration of our technology platforms and solutions to deliver for our customers and end users
- 1.5 The councils have some excellent foundations on which to build:
- Our longstanding shared service arrangement across the two councils, one of the most successful and sustainable in the UK.
  - Our successful partnerships for community support and economic growth with the public, not for profit and private sectors working together to attract significant inward investment and generate jobs growth.
  - The core IT platform built on Office 365 and the full deployment of mobile working capability as part of adapting to meet the COVID-19 pandemic, setting the scene for concluding the move to the Cloud and enabling multi-agency end user computing.



- A sharp focus on successful service delivery for our residents and businesses as part of the DNA of our organisations, reflected in our continued positive resident feedback.
- 1.6 But how we currently deliver services is not designed around the needs of our residents and businesses which means we do not have visibility of how or whether we are operating in the most effective or efficient way, by avoiding repeat activities, being proactive in tackling issues at source or by shaping places and the economy to improve people's lives and prospects and tackling climate change.
  - 1.7 This strategy describes the wider landscape in which we need to evolve and embrace the digital opportunities transforming how we and our residents and businesses live, work, learn and spend our leisure time. It then sets out where the councils' IT environment is today and updates the core technology principles the councils use and reshapes the roadmap for the next 4 years to enable South Oxfordshire and the Vale of White Horse District Councils to be at the forefront of digitally enabled public service delivery.
  - 1.8 Lastly, it sets out what we will do to establish a digitally capable workforce fit for the future. It will complement our customer transformation journey putting in place the building blocks to support a more fundamental shift to consumer centred service delivery which meets the expectations of businesses, residents and visitors to our Districts in the digital age.

## 2.0 Background

2.1 Our councils continue to work well, delivering high quality services to our residents and businesses:

- The councils' are on a journey to a new office environment following the fire of 2015, , continuing to place our services at the heart of our communities, whilst recognising the impact the advances in technology, and the changed behaviours that have evolved out of the COVID-19 pandemic
- The 5 Councils Partnership contract has been reshaped to better suit our needs, resulting in the return to the councils services including Human Resources, Payroll, Finance, Procurement and Customer Services with many of the related systems upgraded so they are fit for the future and Cloud based

2.2 The core technology services provision being delivered through the 5 Councils Partnership contract supports mobile and flexible working, based on the Microsoft 365 platform in the Cloud. It has allowed our councils to operate effectively throughout 2020 whilst our offices were closed, through working from home and connecting and engaging digitally with our delivery partners, residents and businesses.

2.3 We cannot stand still though, we must embed digital in our business plans for the future and that requires our technology strategy to be an enabler and not a blocker, releasing the potential that exists to deliver user centred services better, cheaper and faster than we do today, not constrained by physical assets and open to collaboration with others yet still secure.

2.4 We certainly have the ambition, capable workforce and political drive to move in this direction. Our revenues and benefits service is a long-standing high performer nationally, our community facilities have been essential to the work being done to combat Covid19 in terms of health and wellbeing at a time when our residents and businesses have been under tremendous pressure. Our regulatory and enforcement services are embracing mobile working and demanding greater flexibility to drive up performance and productivity and our economy continues to grow strongly through effective strategic planning and partnerships.

### **3.0 The IT landscape today and digital disruption**

- 3.1 Our technology platforms are mainly made up of contracted out services across all levels of the enterprise environment, in common with most local authorities and a reflection of the markets from which we source our services. There has also been considerable consolidation across the local government technology marketplace over the last 3 years, coupled with a move to Cloud delivered Software as a Service model. Whilst this has reduced the number of products in the market, it has improved integration and interoperability as well as reducing the need for datacentre and application deployment as separate elements of IT service provision. The infrastructure-free end user experience is now a reality.
- 3.2 Digital disruption has changed service expectations of residents and businesses who now demand always-on provision, on-line, built around them and not the provider and matching the experience provided by the retail, entertainment and financial sectors.
- 3.3 Local government and the wider public sector will have to go through the type of whole systems transformation already experienced by other sectors, driven by:
- A very different workforce strategy approach, much more flexible and digitally competent to meet future service demands.
  - Service design and delivery built around the customer (and/or consumer) rather than structured service lines and across traditional public service structures, aligned to marketplaces (home based care, leisure, health, lifelong learning, work, lifestyle).
  - Connectivity that provides universal high-speed coverage for all residents and businesses.
  - Multi-modal (transport) and multi-environmental services (workplaces and home) designed to maximise space, minimise time and energy waste and simplify access.
  - Adoption of recognised best practice benchmarking to provide ongoing assurance of best value.
- 3.4 One reality of the digital age is radical, rapid and ongoing change in crime and exploitation. We need to keep pace with and counter those changes to ensure we continue to support and protect the most vulnerable in society as well as helping to keep our communities safe more generally. Cybercrime has also become much more corporate in terms of targeted attacks at the commercial and government levels, requiring a more dynamic and proactive approach to IT security as well as greater awareness in the workforce about the risks and pitfalls of cyber security.
- 3.5 Another reality of this age is the Climate Emergency and technology can either contribute to or mitigate against its causes. Mobile and flexible working reduces the need for dedicated office space and can also reduce travel needs, both in turn reducing the Councils' carbon footprint. The same goes for greater self-service, on-line and available as required, better meeting

customer expectations whilst reducing travel needs. On technology itself, the Cloud service providers are pursuing carbon neutral to carbon negative energy programmes, smart building management and asset utilisation for renewable energy generation and the move to intelligent street management all contribute to reducing the demand for carbon-based energy.

3.6 So, what does this mean for the councils' technology provision going forward? Putting services on-line based on how providers expect them to be used and operating proprietary IT systems are no longer sustainable and at odds with what our customers expect. Equally our staff and public services more generally need to be able to take advantage of what digital solutions can provide to meet those expectations and deliver right first time, safely, transparently and when they are needed. The measures for the future are:

- **Delivery** - based on user need and fulfilled on a “once and done” or “right first time” basis
- **Productivity** - A workforce that delivers those services designed around user need, made possible by end user technology that works everywhere, all the time and with the minimum manual involvement
- **Trust** - transparent service delivery with informed consent for the data required and how it's used
- **Access** – services available where and when they are needed by those who need them
- **Energy efficient** – managing our technology and physical estates effectively and driving carbon neutral/negative adoption for our services and Districts.

3.7 Best value will be delivered through these measures, by minimising the failure demand of repeated customer contact, maximising workforce capability and service reach and ensuring effective community and business engagement through trust.

## 4.0 The councils' IT environment and latest activity

- 4.1 Our technology platforms today have moved away from our physical corporate estate and those of our delivery partners, although we are still reliant on dedicated network connections in places. Annex A shows the current enterprise architecture and the state of our technology assets in terms of delivery platform, customer systems, corporate systems and people and place-oriented systems.
- 4.2 Over the last 2 years, there has been a lot of progress in upgrading or retiring the legacy systems across the delivery platform and corporate systems. People and place-based systems however remain largely where we were 5 years ago, having evolved independently from wider technology developments and more in line with specific service delivery plans. We also have several systems being delivered through rolling contracts. These need to be tested in the market to ensure we are securing best value.
- 4.3 The recent implementation of the new finance IT system has also highlighted the technology deficit we have around customer-based IT systems. This has driven the creation of several bespoke solutions using the finance system as a delivery vehicle. In parallel, the in-sourcing of some place-based services have exposed duplication of some systems and a wider need to consolidate property and place-based data and systems to provide a more complete view of our assets. The current position with all these is not sustainable in the short term and requires urgent action:
- Acquisition and implementation of a customer relationship management solution
  - Consolidation of place and asset-based systems
  - Consolidation of housing related services into the main housing and rents management system
- 4.4 In the medium term, the platform, corporate systems, customer systems and people and place roadmaps will review our current systems against future business need in line with the Councils' Corporate Plans and with that identify the future technology demand.
- 4.5 Together these will inform the establishment of the four delivery programmes needed to realise this strategy.
- a) IT Platform (end user computing, networks and unified communications)
  - b) Customer services platform
  - c) Corporate systems delivery
  - d) People and place systems delivery

## 5.0 Technology principles and roadmap to support our business strategy to 2025

5.1 Our drive towards resident centric service provision requires a fundamentally different technology approach to the one we have today, underpinned by the following six principles for technology investment, design, delivery and use:

	Principle	Why	Benefits
1	<b>Cloud first for new and cloud migration for legacy</b>	<p>The marketplace for the provision of secure, resilient and legally compliant cloud services is mature and gathering pace as the standard platform for IT services as they are renewed across public services. Affordability and value for money over the life of a service is also tipping in favour of cloud thanks to increased competition.</p> <p>Suppliers are also withdrawing legacy on site services and only offering cloud models and newer entrants only offer cloud. As legacy proprietary platforms diminish, they become more expensive and there is a point at which it becomes financially viable to accelerate migration to the cloud.</p>	<p>Cost efficiencies will be realised through cloud based collaborative systems rather than organisation specific localised systems, especially across multiple agencies.</p> <p>Cloud will avoid the need for future capital investment in on-site technology provision.</p> <p>Cloud will support tackling the Climate emergency through energy reduction</p>
2	<b>Ubiquitous connectivity, superfast as a minimum</b>	<p>Proprietary network provision remains a significant blocker and cost for individual organisations, yet the technology, infrastructure and security required has evolved to allow ubiquitous connectivity whilst retaining security through role and device-based security models.</p> <p>On network speeds and coverage, the investments in superfast broadband for non-commercially viable geographies and the growth in fibre provision and competition means connectivity is much more widely available and we are not so dependent on corporate site provision.</p>	<p>Significant cost efficiencies through economies of scale on provision in terms of coverage and delivery method (voice, video, data, wired, wireless and mobile).</p> <p>More efficient estate use by removing limitations on buildings driven by the ability (or not) to connect to IT systems so staff can work anywhere.</p>
3	<b>Lightweight devices, always on and work anywhere</b>	<p>The end user computing (EUC) experience continues to be one of the greatest opportunities for increased productivity by supporting the ability to work anywhere and at any time.</p> <p>Superfast connectivity spans geographies meaning the need for dedicated office locations will diminish.</p>	<p>Speed and ease of access in an "always on" environment where people need to complete tasks drives out lost time through travel, waiting for technology to respond.</p>
4	<b>Role based security, works with partners and meets UK govt standards</b>	<p>Multi-agency working is a reality now and is only set to grow in future years. Role based security and federation with corporate environments offer the potential to make this experience seamless, especially as systems become more interoperable and data sharing matures into business intelligence around places and people.</p>	<p>Staff will be able to carry out their work across agency boundaries securely and legally.</p> <p>Information integrity and access will not be compromised when</p>

	Principle	Why	Benefits
		UK government standards are progressing well across these areas and we must adopt them rather than duplicate or compete with them.	sharing, supporting GDPR compliance.
5	<b>Line of business systems designed around the user, interoperable and compliant with recognised standards</b>	<p>Housing, transport, health, spatial development and social care integration will drive this agenda aggressively over the next 3 years as NHS digital and Sustainability and Transformation Plans (STPs) move into delivery and the ongoing financial pressures on local government services continue to bite. Again, we must adopt agreed international and national standards and not look to create proprietary solutions.</p> <p>In the economic and environmental arenas Internet of Things based technologies are establishing new standards for interoperability for new data sources to turn the ambitions around smart places into reality.</p> <p>On systems design and build, we will use the Agile project methodology and strengthen our digital skillsets around centres of excellence in IT, business intelligence and communications, following the Government Digital Service principles for service design and digital delivery.</p>	<p>Integrated services for vulnerable people will be developed across agencies, improving quality of provision and safeguarding.</p> <p>Whole systems solutions will be applied to spatial and economic development around geographies, working across delivery partners in all market sectors (private, public, not for profit).</p> <p>User centred design of services will make effective use of the potential that digital offers in delivering services faster, better and cheaper whilst reducing the need for carbon-based energy</p>
6	<b>Information governance across partners through cross agency governance structures</b>	<p>Information governance through strong partnership will be a powerful enabler for advanced analytics supporting better decision making.</p> <p>We must develop a focal point for multi-agency information sharing and to be the first point for developing joint analytics projects.</p>	<p>Provides a single repository for information sharing protocols across agencies, supporting compliance with legislation.</p> <p>Offers a platform for multi-agency analytics services to support better decision making and more fundamental service design based on places and people.</p>

5.2 To turn these principles into practice, we will establish a four-year roadmap (**Annex A**) to be delivered through four programmes with a high-level assessment of investment needs (existing and new), priorities, dependencies and risks:

- a) IT Platform (end user computing, networks and unified communications) (1 to 4)
- b) Customer services platform (5)
- c) Corporate systems delivery (5 and 6)
- d) People and place systems delivery (5 and 6)

5.3 **Annex B** comprises the four programme plans and the component projects to ensure their success. **Annex C** sets out the target enterprise architecture for our technology platforms following completion of the programmes. These will be used as a reference point for programme progress and support the development of collaboration opportunities with our public service delivery partners.



## **6.0 Supporting democratic engagement in a digital world**

- 6.1 Technology has fundamentally reshaped democratic accountability and engagement in recent years through the demands for transparency around decision making, the use of social media to discuss and debate the issues of the day and access to democratic meetings via video and other web-based delivery methods. The Covid19 pandemic has accelerated the change journey and there is considerable resistance to returning to the “old” ways of democratic engagement.
- 6.2 Our technology and digital services programme will unlock the potential it has to offer in enabling greater engagement with our residents and businesses:
- Our IT platform will continue to enable councillors to engage with their residents and conduct council business virtually, enhanced by improved end user computing capabilities and connectivity
  - The customer services programme will deliver a customer relationship management solution which enables residents and businesses to access multiple services digitally and based around their profile, also allowing the council to view them at the centre of services (with consent)
  - Corporate systems delivery will increase transparency around our finances as well as how decisions are made as well as automating much of the financial processing work between the councils and their residents, suppliers and businesses
  - People and places delivery will enable the councils to engage through digital consultation, virtual access to meetings and other democratic activities, increasing community involvement and again increasing transparency around how we do business
- 6.3 We will ensure our technology solutions are fit for the digital age and will support councillors and our staff in ensuring they are able to maximise their potential through training and effective user centred design of the solutions provided.

## **7.0 A capable and empowered workforce for the digital age**

- 7.1 Technology is an integral part of our lives and work, impacting on every employee, resident and business in our districts. It is our responsibility to ensure there are sufficient resources, skills and knowledge to meet business needs driven by our communities. We expect staff to have a minimum level of competence in using technology, through end user devices, web based and mobile applications and specialist operational equipment to be able to do their jobs effectively and productively. Training for technology is often delivered on-line interactively in the working environment. This expectation reflects the impact of digital on our personal lives and the expectations it sets for business systems to be as easy to use as consumer-based services.
- 7.2 Historically corporate technology has lagged consumer provision and usability, often due to the cost of replacing or changing legacy systems and design principles focussed on processing times, closed infrastructure and security and operational models rather than end user experience and interoperability based on open standards. The roadmaps for our IT going forward will tackle the legacy and with it we need to ensure our workforce and our service users take full advantage of the opportunities they'll unlock. They will be part of the transformation from concept right through to live operations: user centred design, build, testing and implementation as a flexible (Agile) delivery model.
- 7.3 Our technology services will not be working in isolation but as part of whole systems project delivery led by our Corporate Plan, with digital as an integral part of them. Whilst delivery is mainly outsourced, our strong intelligent client function will ensure our:
- a) Core technology platforms are run by effective, well trained and competent technical teams covering connectivity, data storage, security and integrity including "always on".
  - b) End user computing experience is customer centric, responsive and minimises staff downtime through technology faults.
  - c) Digital services are designed around the end user and meet the expectations of our residents and businesses, deployed through applications that operate seamlessly across services within and outside our organisation.
  - d) Analytics capabilities support better decision making and service fulfilment by maximising the potential digital offers to exploit our information assets and those we share with others.
- 7.4 We will unlock the digital capability of the rest of our workforce through:
- a) Establishing an effective Digital intelligent client function, including Systems Administration, to manage the multiple commercial and technical relationships across the IT Enterprise
  - b) Establishment of super user networks designed to include people in technology projects and digital development.

- c) Embedding digital by default into our service and business plans, working with teams to ensure user centred digital design is applied to how services should be delivered.
- d) The use of recognised project methodologies as part of whole systems change.
- e) Provision of high quality digitally enabled and deployed learning platforms to allow our staff to learn when and where they choose (e-learning).
- f) An enhanced and interactive social media environment for staff to collaborate and develop thinking and opportunities on how we can do things better, faster and cheaper.
- g) Active inclusion of staff and professionals who will challenge and validate that what we build and run is a positive force for tackling inequality rather than creating a digital divide.

7.5 To bring user centred design and build to life we will engage with our service delivery partners and users from the outset of a project and include them throughout the process.

7.6 Digital needs to be an integral part of the way our organisation works in the future. It is not something you do to services nor is just about technology. The reality is that most of our society is already digitally capable and that continues to grow, it is all too often our organisational structures that hold us back from unlocking its potential.

## Agenda Item 9

By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A  
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# Agenda Item 10

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