

Cabinet Report



Listening Learning Leading



Report of Head of Corporate Services – James Carpenter

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Wards affected: N/A

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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