DIGITAL ANGUS

Angus Council Digital Strategy 2025-2028

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1. Introduction

Digital and information technologies have transformed the world we live in on an unprecedented scale and we will continue to see exponential growth of emerging digital technologies transforming every aspect of our lives and how we engage and interact with the world around us. The effect of digital and information technologies has been to revolutionise travel, shopping, banking and social interactions and this consumerisation of digital has fuelled a desire and demand for technology to be used to modernise the delivery of public services.

Our Digital Strategy has been developed to support the Delivery of our Council Plan 2023-28 and our Angus Community Plan 2022-2030, and with a clear focus on ensuring technology is a key enabler, supporting the delivery of the Council's vision and priorities. Our strategy is not solely about digital technology, it is about supporting the delivery of people-centred services in a digital age.

Our Digital Strategy is based on research and engagement with all our services and our Digital Strategy is aligned with the Digital Strategy for Scotland, A changing nation: how Scotland will thrive in a digital world and Scotland's Digital Health and Care Strategy, Enabling, Connecting and Empowering: Care in the Digital Age.

The demand for our services has never been greater and the financial challenges we face are enormous, meaning there is little choice but to reimagine and redesign how we deliver all our services. Digital and information technologies will be a key enabler to support the delivery of high quality, customer-centric and future-focussed public services and our Digital Strategy provides a strategic framework to support the delivery of these services.

2. DIGITAL TO DATE

We have been on a digital journey for some time and have made gradual progress in the digitalisation of many council services. From our website, customers can Pay, Report, Request and Apply for many council services digitally and there has been a focussed shift towards self-service and automation and less reliance on face-to-face contact.

Our previous Digital Strategy focussed on being better, stronger, sustainable and smaller and we have seen positive and measurable progress, with an ever-increasing number of our services being delivered on-line, providing any time, any place on any device access.

Our technology roadmap placed significant emphasis on a shift to 'cloud' hosted and fully managed services, providing a sustainable technology infrastructure to deliver greater automation and self-service and for our Digital and Information Technology teams to focus less on managing equipment and focus more on delivering services.

The implementation of our previous digital strategy and technology roadmap has delivered many significant developments, providing benefits for our service users and creating a platform for further digitalisation and automation:

- We implemented Microsoft 365, providing a modern communication and collaboration platform.

- We have moved much of our technology infrastructure and software applications to a public cloud environment.

- We have invested in our Customer Relationship Management (CRM) platform, to simplify the online delivery of many council services and processes (Pay, Report, Request, Apply)

- We have migrated many of our core software applications to fully managed, cloud hosted versions, providing enhanced functionality and delivering improved resilience and reliability.

- We have started to rationalise our software applications architecture, realising a more joined up approach to service delivery and ensuring value for money for our technology investment.

- We have delivered a new telephone and contact centre system, providing efficiencies and additional channels for customer contact.

- We have delivered a Managed Detection & Response (MDR) service, helping to protect ourselves against cyber threats.

There has been good progress, however in an ever-changing digital world, there is so much more to do if we want to truly be a Digital Council. We want to make sure Angus Council builds upon progress we have made so far and that we design our services and the technology behind them to meet the fast pace of development and the growing need for simple, user focussed digital services.

3. Vision

Our vision is for digital and information technology to be a key enabler, supporting the delivery of transformational change, and empowering and developing our workforce to bring about improved outcomes for the citizens of Angus.

A key aim will be ensuring we develop a digital first approach, maximising our digital capabilities and opportunities, with development aligned to organisational goals and objectives.

Our Digital Strategy is not just about technology, it is also about ambition, leadership and people, with a clear focus on improving access to services for customers and underpinned by a culture of continual service improvement.

4. Principles

Our Digital Strategy will focus on 4 key guiding principles:

1. Digital First

Deliver digital and on-line solutions, providing end to end transactions designed to meet the needs of our customers.

2. People Centred

Ensure there is a user-centric and service-oriented approach in provisioning and supporting digital services.

3. Innovative and Sustainable

Understand how emerging technology can support innovation in service delivery whilst ensuring we achieve value for money for our investment in technology.

4. Continual Service Improvement

To be pioneering, future-focussed; to listen to the feedback of services and service users and continually find opportunities for improving services.

5. Themes

Our Digital Strategy is designed to support the delivery of our Council Plan with a focus on being a truly Digital Council. Our Digital Strategy has 9 key Themes and delivery within these themes will ensure digital and information technology will be a key enabler to support the transformational change required for the Council to continue to deliver sustainable and high-quality services to the people of Angus.

1. Digital Council

To ensure we adopt a digital first culture, reimagining and redesigning the delivery of all our services by maximising the potential of digital technologies.

What we are going to do:

- Design and embed a digital first culture across the organisation, defining the values, beliefs, behaviours and technology that will shape the way we operate and interact in an increasingly digital world.

- Foster an ethos of digital leadership across the organisation, promoting a strong principal where all parts of the organisation have a desire to proactively use digital and information technologies to enhance service provision and deliver value.

- Place a strong emphasis on people, focusing on organisational design, change management, adoption, and communication.

- Continue to drive the delivery of Public-Facing Digital Services, with a strong focus on automation and end-to-end digitalisation, delivering any time, any place on any device access to all Council services.

- Design and deliver a programme for the digitalisation of all internal processes, focussing on automation, efficiency, and minimising waste and duplication.

- Enhance learning and teaching through the use of digital technology, supporting the delivery of an enhanced curriculum, and ultimately improving the life chances of all our children and young people.

- Ensure the delivery of all our digital services are guided by the 14 criteria of the Digital Scotland Service Standard.

2. Digital Place

To work collaboratively to ensure Angus is a digital place, delivering enabling technology and innovation, providing opportunities to live, learn and earn, as individuals and as successful businesses.

What we are going to do:

- Develop a 'Smart Places' strategy, providing a framework to integrate technology into the built environment to improve health and social outcomes, grow the economy and enhance the local environment.

- Actively seek funding opportunities to deliver 'smart' initiatives, underpinned by enabling technology and smart infrastructure.

- Work collaboratively with the Scottish Government and key technology providers to ensure every home and business in Angus has access to superfast broadband.

- Work in partnership with the Scottish Government, the Scotland 5G centre and key technology providers to ensure the residents, businesses and visitors of Angus have access to the next generation of mobile connectivity, transforming how we live, work, and connect.

- Work with key partners to support a successful transition from analogue to digital telephony for the citizens of Angus.

3. Data Enabled

To collect, store, manage and share data and information, transforming our data into actionable insights and supporting evidence-based decision making.

What we are going to do:

- Develop and publish a data strategy, outlining our long-term vision for collecting, storing, sharing, governing, connecting, and analysing our data.

- Data Foundations - establish data principles, processes, and practices to enhance the reliability and interoperability of all our data.

- Data Governance - develop a robust data governance framework to assure ethical use, privacy, security, and policy compliance.

- Data Architecture - rationalise existing applications and enable key systems integration and data storage/warehousing to enhance data sharing and collaboration, internally and externally.

- Data Skills - foster a data-enabled culture across the organisation, promoting data literacy and skills development to provide our staff with the capabilities to maximise the value from our data resource.

- Data Analytics - Undertake data analysis, using appropriate tools, including Artificial Intelligence, to provide insights and reports that will support improvement/ change and better-informed decision-making.

- Develop a comprehensive set of data standards for both address and citizen data, supporting the implementation of a common core application infrastructure, to deliver whole organisation services.

- Investigate data sharing and open data, supporting opportunities for improved collaboration, delivering greater operational efficiency, facilitating innovation and to support strategic and economic goals.

4. Emerging Technology

To identify, showcase and support the implementation of emerging digital and information technology, delivering innovation, driving transformational change, and underpinning how Council services are delivered.

What we are going to do:

- Demonstrate how emerging technology can support the delivery of more efficient and effective services.

- Create a business case for a digital transformation programme, reimagining and redesigning how services are delivered underpinned by emerging digital and information technology.

- Investigate and deliver Artificial Intelligence (AI) as an enabling technology to accelerate digital transformation.

- Examine and implement intelligent automation technologies to fully digitalise many repetitive, high volume, manual tasks.

- Showcase and investigate where Internet of Things (IoT) technology can be used to support improved service delivery and provide enhanced data insights to drive further efficiencies.

- Investigate how drone technology can provide an opportunity to innovate and deliver services more efficiently, improve productivity and increase the safety of service delivery.

- Examine, design and deliver an advanced AI chatbot using Natural Language Processing (NLP) and Machine learning (ML) to deliver a high quality and cost effective, 24/7 support service to both our internal and external customers.

5. Digital Inclusion

To take a proactive approach in supporting digital inclusion, by designing digital services to be accessed by everyone, with a strong focus on accessibility and user experience.

What we are going to do:

- Develop a deep understanding of the challenges to supporting digital inclusion, including motivation, devices, connectivity, skills and confidence, and inclusive design.

- Ensure all services are designed in a way that makes digital access possible for everyone.

- Create a strong emphasis on digital inclusion, supporting the provision of tools and access for those who are excluded.

- Actively develop initiatives to increase digital inclusion within our communities, with a focus on digital skills, connectivity, access and infrastructure and accessibility.

- Work closely with the Digital Inclusion Alliance (DIA) when designing new digital services helping ensure no one is left behind or faces inequalities as a result of their digital situation.

- Create an 'Assisted Digital' support model, providing both access and support for using digital channels and services.

- Deliver digital assistive technology to enable people with disabilities to gain better access to information and services.

- Work with partners, and across our own services to ensure our citizens are not left behind in today's digital age, providing signposting and information to support the consumption of digital services.

- Actively work with citizen groups when designing new digital services to ensure digital inclusion is carefully considered during all stages of the service design process.

- Ensure all technology enabled services and processes are designed and delivered adhering to the principles of digital accessibility as set out in the relevant accessibility regulations for Public Sector Bodies.

- Strive to ensure our website and mobile applications meet the [Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG 2.2)](#) AA accessibility standard and publish and maintain an accessibility statement.

6. Digital Workforce

To ensure our staff have the appropriate digital skills and capabilities to support the delivery of innovative, technology enabled serviced delivery.

What we are going to do:

- Design and implement a Digital Maturity Model, aligning customer experience, strategy, technology, operations, and culture, supporting the delivery of digital transformation.

- Undertake a digital skills assessment across the organisation to understand the capability required to empower staff to deliver services in a digital age.

- Provide high quality learning and development opportunities to support the growth of digital skills and capabilities across the organisation.

- Reinvigorate our Digital Champions programme, creating a community of staff who can share their knowledge, skills and enthusiasm for digital technology.

- Augment the human workforce with the implementation of emerging technologies and automation for high volume, transactional, and repetitive tasks.

7. Collaboration and Partnership

To collaborate and work in partnership with other local authorities and relevant organisations to achieve commonality, consistency, and value for money.

What we are going to do:

- Work closely with Digital Office for Scottish Local Government and the Improvement Service to deliver best practice and ultimately achieve standardisation, and value for our technology investment.

- Work collaboratively, and in partnership with the Angus Health and Social Care Partnership, Angus Alive, NHS Tayside and 3rd sector organisations to ensure digital and information technologies are aligned to outputs and outcomes and are not constrained by organisational boundaries.

- Work collaboratively, and in partnership with other local authorities, locally, regionally and nationally to share and learn from good practice.

- Investigate opportunities for shared services, exploring partnership working to deliver key digital services.

- Explore possibilities for single systems to deliver digital services, working regionally and nationally with other local authorities, promoting a 'Once for Scotland' approach.

- Work closely with the Digital Office, Scotland Excel and other local authorities to evaluate shared procurement opportunities to drive value for money for our investment in digital technologies.

8. Technology Architecture

To deliver a secure, resilient, reliable and value for money Information Technology Infrastructure, enabling the delivering of modern digital services.

What we are going to do:

- Continue to transition to the 'cloud', with a focus on our core internal services being delivered from a cloud environment, supporting high availability, flexibility and sustainability.

- Maintain a strategic emphasis on operating fully managed services for both core IT infrastructure and for the delivery of core software applications - software as a service (SaaS).

- Manage and deliver a successful withdrawal of our on-premise datacentre at Angus House.

- Increased prominence on software application rationalisation, identifying opportunities to reduce, replace, retire, and consolidate our core software applications.

- Focus on Enterprise Application Integration (EAI), utilising both technologies and services to enable the integration of systems and applications across the Council.

- Investigate new and improved Customer Relationship Management (CRM) systems to centrally manage all digital interactions with our customers.

- Design, deliver and manage a secure, robust and highly available communications network for both our corporate and schools' estate.

- Maintain and continually develop an integrated suite of communication and collaboration tools, supporting effective internal and partner interactions.

9. Security and Compliance

To meet our moral and legal obligations in securing, storing and sharing information and resources.

What we are going to do:

- Ensure the delivery of all digital and IT systems is fully compliant with both financial and procurement regulations.

- Support the implementation of our data retention policy, ensuring our systems comply with regulations relating to the storage and disposal of data.

- Design and deliver appropriate technical controls to adequately mitigate against cyber threats, adhering to National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC) good practice.

- Implement robust risk management processes, creating and continually evaluating an operational risk register and managing the cyber security risk on the corporate risk register.

- Provide external assurance of security and compliance through appropriate audits and maintain our Public Services Network (PSN) accreditation.

- Actively engage with key suppliers for all externally managed systems and services to ensure our growing supply chain provides adequate mitigations against cyber threats.

- Deliver appropriate cyber awareness training for staff and elected members, including regular simulated exercises to drive further enhancements to training and development.

- Maintain and test wide-ranging disaster recovery and business continuity plans, minimising the impact of system failures and cyber incidents.

6. Governance

Our Digital Strategy will be agreed by our Digital Strategy Board and the Council's Change Board and approved by elected members at our Policy and Resources committee.

Once approved, accountability for oversight and delivery of our Digital Strategy will be provided by the Digital Strategy Board, who will provide regular update reports to the Change Board. An annual progress report will be provided to elected members through the Policy and Resources committee.

An associated delivery plan will be created for each year to support delivery of the strategy and an ambitious digital transformation programme will be established to support delivery of the activities within the annual delivery plan.

7. Delivery and Resourcing

The annual delivery plan will detail the key deliverables for each of the themes. A key focus will be to ensure there is budget and resource to deliver with a strong emphasis on value for money and return on investment.

For large projects within the delivery plan, a clear and robust business case will be developed and approved, detailing any investment requisite, resource requirements and importantly, setting out the key rationale with an intense focus on benefits realisation, outputs and outcomes.

The Council will seek to work in partnership and collaborate with other local authorities and key partners to deliver consistency, commonality and share good practice. We will continuously evaluate opportunities for shared services, single systems, shared procurement, and pooled resourcing to deliver sustainable and value for money services.

The Council will pursue external funding opportunities and work closely with key suppliers to support the delivery of technology enabled services.

The Council will be required to adequately resource the digital transformation programme, and associated projects, that will ultimately deliver our Digital Strategy. This will require a combination of dedicated resource and key initiatives being delivered alongside staff's day-to-day roles, with a focus on flexibility and cross-departmental working. All projects and initiatives will follow appropriate project management frameworks.

Support from the corporate Change Team may be required to support larger scale projects, and where significant changes to business operations are required.

8. Evaluation and Measuring Impact

In an ever changing and fast paced digital world, it is important our Digital Strategy is flexible, agile and can be adapted to further internally and externally driven change and it is vital we know if our Digital Strategy is working and delivering positive outputs and outcomes for the people of Angus.

We will measure the impact of our Digital Strategy using a variety of qualitative and quantitative methods, including analysis of stakeholder feedback, and measuring against key deliverables for each theme.