

Overview & Scrutiny Management Committee

DIGITAL COUNCIL PROGRAMME POSITION STATEMENT

Relevant Cabinet Member(s)	Wards Affected	Key Decision
Cllr Joe Blackham		

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. This report provides a current position statement of what the Digital Council Programme has achieved, is still progressing and aims to do in the future. Headline achievements by the Programme so far include:

- Transformation of 48% of Council services so they can be accessed on-line and 65% of the scope of the programme;
- Reduced the Council's operating budget by 2.8 million a year through streamlining business processes, enabling self-service, introducing automation and mobile working resulting in reducing the number of staff required to deliver;
- Increased self-service by residents on-line from 4% of Doncaster's population to a consistent 20% with peaks up to 30% at some points. This needs putting into context by being aware that a large proportion of the population have no need to contact local authorities so this % is not of 100% of Doncaster's population. Data intelligence indicates that 73,150 households would be willing to access their services on-line;
- Maintained and improved the more traditional channels that some residents and processes require. For example, the Civic Offices one-stop-shop and the much improved blue badge service; and
- Engaged with 2493 Doncaster people and trained 1538 Doncaster Council staff to operate digitally.

2. The programme is still progressing to complete the whole transformation aiming to:

- Transform the remaining % of services that are appropriate to put on-line and the remaining 35% of the programme;
- Further reduce the Council's operating budget by at least 1.9 million a year through further streamlining and automating business processes and reducing the resources required; and
- To further increase the % of self-service by Doncaster residents by continuous further promotion by the Council and staff, channel shift strategies so the website becomes the first and foremost access channel but still maintained a reduced traditional channel offer. The current average costs are:
 - Website 15p;
 - Phone £2.02;
 - Visit to Office £4.52;

Therefore, using the lower cost channels will give Doncaster people better value for money;

- Continue to provide access to technology and training for Doncaster people and staff;
- The further rollout of broadband and Wi-Fi across the borough; and
- Transform and streamline how the Council operates internally.

3. This report also provides a more detailed breakdown of where in the Council the efficiencies have been achieved and where they are still to be achieved. It also openly details some of the challenges and changes made to resolve them within this complex programme of work that involves a total change in how staff work and staff reductions. Despite these challenges, many Local Authorities have their Digital Transformation Strategies in place up to 2020 compared to Doncaster's 2017 targets. Therefore, it is felt Doncaster is in a strong position to follow the Government's 2020 agenda of the future digital strategy, including unlocking growth, transforming government and day-to-day lives and building the foundations of the future. Whilst still seen as the content of sci-fi and fantasy films, we are ever closer to harnessing drones, driverless technology and artificial intelligence to undertake seemingly day-to-day tasks. The Council must ensure it is best placed to harness this future technology, not only for the residents of today, but those of tomorrow.

EXEMPT REPORT

4. This report is not exempt.

RECOMMENDATIONS

5. The Overview & Scrutiny Management Committee are asked to note:
- i. The current position of the Digital Council Programme in relation to deliverables that have been achieved;
 - ii. The schedule and programme plan for the continued delivery of transformation during 16/17;
 - iii. The current financial position with regard to Directorate efficiencies through digital transformation to date and commitment to close the gap to balance the 16/17 budget; and
 - iv. The need for continued modernisation and transformation following the end of the Programme, based on additional work already commenced and that anticipated in line with the Government's Digital Strategies and of course, the future.

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR THE CITIZENS OF DONCASTER?

6. The Digital Council Programme is and will continue to impact on the residents of Doncaster by ensuring the Council operates effectively and efficiently to ensure that all services provide value for money.

7. As well as providing increased value for money through enhancements and improvements to business processes, the Council will also deliver improved quality of services for residents through modern and efficient processes, allowing for an improved organisation reputation. Customers will be encouraged at every appropriate opportunity to access the 24/7 services online from any location to improve their experience.

8. The Programme will continue to pay due regard to residents and will not be closing traditional face to face and telephone access channels. It will however,

also provide residents with inclusion support to help residents to get online and to allow online access to become their preferred method for contacting the Council.

BACKGROUND

9. The vision of the Digital Council Programme is to achieve a Council “Fit for the Future” – Doncaster Council will be a modern digital authority both internally and externally, with all services online. It will provide a modern, high quality and efficient integrated front office with improved service delivery through redesigned business processes, improved technology, mobile working and higher skilled staff. It will also utilise the resulting business intelligence to become a more intelligent and proactive organisation and remove barriers to technology focusing on assisting Doncaster as a place for its people to thrive.

10. The Digital Council Programme has been in delivery and reporting to the Council’s DN17 Programme since 2013/14 to deliver this vision of a modern digital authority both internally and externally, with all services online. The following provides an overview of the deliverables achieved and those currently in development to meet the vision of the Programme and Council followed by a review of the current financial position and that expected by the 31st March 2017.

Deliverables:

11. Since 2013, the Digital Council Programme has undertaken business process re-engineering across a range of key service functions of the Council and introduced technology to provide modern, efficient, 24/7 service access, including:

1. One Stop Shop, providing customers with a single access point to all Council and Housing Services in the Civic Office.
2. Provision of internet access in the One Stop Shop for customers, allowing signposting of customers to online access channels with digital assistance/support from Customer Service Advisors/Digital Friends.
3. Improved Blue Badge Service, reducing the average processing time from 45 days to 15 days, and the introduction of drop in appointments in the One Stop Shop.
4. Introduction of a new, fully transactional website, providing customers with 24/7 access to Report it, Apply for it, Pay for it and Track It function, in addition to a secure portal for transactions as well as anonymous customer reporting.
5. Online Council Tax & Business Rates (NDR) account management allowing customers to undertake all interactions online including moves, applications for discounts and exemptions, in addition to switching to paperless billing.
6. Online Waste & Recycling Portal allowing customers to undertake waste and recycling queries in addition to reporting missed and damaged bins, as well as requesting bulky and re-use collections.
7. Online Pest Control booking using any payment solution, allowing customers to book appointments 24/7 with upfront payment.
8. Online ability for residents, businesses and developers to search for Development Sites, including those in development, proposed and earmarked land (Strategic Housing).
9. Online Market Stall Application and stall management including meter readings and payments.
10. Modernisation of online Information, Advice & Guidance and Self-Help Questionnaire as well as an online Report a Concern web-form providing an

online digital triage function for Adult Social Care.

11. Mobile and remote working for:
 - a. Adult Social Care; and
 - b. FLAG, Street Scene & Pest Control Services.
12. A number of online forms for customer interactions, including:
 - a. Winter Services;
 - b. Allotments – damaged and replacement keys; and
 - c. Zero Fare Bus Passes.
13. Internal modernisation, including:
 - a. New transactional workforce intranet;
 - b. Hybrid Mail services; and
 - c. Post & Paper Reduction Toolkit.
14. Developed and implemented the foundations of the Single Customer Record through the Council's Customer Relationship Management System that has included:
 - a. The cleansing of data and removal of duplicate customer details ensuring customers have a single entry on the system.
 - b. The linkage of Revenues, Waste & Recycling and Blue Badges data to the Single Customer Record to identify, monitor and update enquiries and interactions across these areas.
 - c. The introduction of LLPG address referencing, ensuring the customer record accurately reflects property addresses and postcodes.
 - d. The capture of customer contact details and preferred method of contact where required.

The commencement of this activity has already enhanced the customer experience in providing a higher level of customer experience and service by ensuring the Council's Customer Service Advisors have a holistic view of customer interactions allowing for a more personalised, effective and efficient experience.
15. Introduction of the online facility for customers to "Track My Request" for Complaints, FOI and more recently Waste and Recycling queries.
16. Delivery of the Council's Digital Inclusion Strategy, including:
 - a. Improved 24/7 self-service capability and the introduction of a new customer website;
 - b. Working with employers across Doncaster to promote and support basic ICT Skills for all;
 - c. Established the on-going Digital Resident Group to engage with residents around the online service design;
 - d. Stakeholder of Superfast South Yorkshire (BDUK) delivering superfast broadband provision across South Yorkshire, with the implementation of the first upgraded cabinets in 16/17 and continuing;
 - e. Developed a One-Stop information point for customers to find free access to the internet with support & training in their communities, supporting residents in getting online;
 - f. Commenced a programme of work to modernise provision across all public access points to date, ensuring all equipment in the Libraries is upgraded and improvements to the Wi-Fi provision; and
 - g. Working with a local company to progress a potential concession contract to deliver Wi-Fi provision across Doncaster Town Centre.
17. Introduction of a communication and marketing campaign to promote the ability for residents to access services online with the programme slogan of "Don't wait in line... Get Online...", including:
 - a. Borough wide marketing campaign including local newspapers,

- buses, billboards and local radio; and
- b. Traveling across the Borough in the “DigiBus” meeting residents and encouraging them to access services online at locations including:
 - i. Town Centre
 - ii. Markets (Town Centre & Mexborough)
 - iii. Frenchgate Centre and Local Supermarkets
 - iv. Summer Fetes, Fairs and the annual Dragon Boat Race (Lakeside)

12. The extensive deliverables of the Programme have allowed the Council to be successful in achieving a shift of customer behaviour in accessing services from traditional telephone and face to face access channels to online, allowing the Council the benefit of providing a 24/7 service to residents but also taking the benefit of online contact costing significantly less than face to face and telephone access channels (£0.15 Vs. £2.02 and £4.52 respectively). Whilst this transition has been successful and 20% of interactions take place online, Doncaster’s Mosaic data suggests this should be at 55%. There is clearly significantly more work to do in addition to continuing to place more services online, this work has commenced through the development of a Channel Shift Strategy and will need to be continually owned and driven by the whole Council:

1. Enforce where appropriate, digital by default service access such as School Admissions, Benefits in line with Universal Credit (Customer & Landlords).
2. Placing online as the standard/priority access platform for service access and transaction such as Council Tax eBilling and Waste & Recycling Processes.
3. Ensure Digital Assist/Inclusion is available across all access channels to identify opportunities to sign-post the customer away from telephone and face to face channels to the online provision.
4. Alignment of communications to ensure all customer facing communications reference and sign-post customers to online provision.
5. The continuation of marketing campaign, raising customer awareness of the availability and provision of services online.

13. The Digital Council Programme was formerly governed under a Prince2 project management approach and Waterfall principles for the delivery of business process re-engineering. Whilst these styles can be effective, due to the sheer volume of deliverables of the Programme, this impacted in a delay/back-up of technical deliverables. In January 2015, the Programme introduced Managing Successful Programmes (MSP), specifically introducing the principles of:

1. **Alignment to corporate strategies:** including Digital Inclusion, Customer Services and ICT Strategies.
2. **Learning from experiences:** incorporating the lessons learnt from the Customer Access Programme to enhance engagement and ownership of the Programme across the Council.
3. **Designing and delivering a coherent capability:** shifting the focus to the Programme resource delivering the capability and the Service Area being responsible for realising the benefits.
4. **Adding Value:** reviewing the projects within scope of the Programme, ensuring the sum of the projects are valid and deliver value.
5. **Focusing on benefits and threats:** the Programme reviewed its deliverables and benefits ensuring they met and satisfied strategic

objectives which included the cessation of some projects and commencement of some new projects.

6. **Envisioning and communicating a better future:** the Programme re-introduced itself as the Digital Council Programme with a clear vision of providing a modern, digital organisation with all services online.
7. **Leading change:** the drive to ensure leadership is present at all various levels across the Council representing the Programme, including the introduction of specific roles and responsibilities against each of the following roles:
 - a. Sponsor Group (Assistant Directors)
 - b. Senior Responsible Owner (SRO)
 - c. Programme Manager
 - d. Project Managers
 - e. Business Change Managers
 - f. Change Officers
 - g. Communications, Marketing, Training & Testing.

14. As well as the introduction of MSP, in September 2015 the Programme, in following best practice for software and technical development, adopted Agile to support the business process re-engineering/analysis and technical development processes alongside the existing Prince2 project management principles.

15. During Q3 and 4 16/17, the Programme is working across a number of deliverables to provide additional functionality and enhance customer experience, including:

1. Online Housing Benefits and Council Tax Reduction (Benefits), delivering modernisation (online account management) and digital by default access channels in line with changes implemented through Universal Credit.
2. Online Registrars function and booking system, providing 24/7 customer access for booking Birth/Death & Marriage appointments as well as requests for duplicate and copy certificates; including transfer of initial customer contact into Customer Services with improved processes, technology and customer experience.
3. Introduction of Tracker across all other online service requests (Apply for it/Report it), extended from the functionality of Complaints, FOI and Waste and Recycling.
4. Online booking for Taxi Licensing tests, inspections and meter seals.
5. Online Planning & Building Control applications, requests for inspection and payments.
6. Continuation of mobile and remote working for:
 - a. Planning Services;
 - b. Building Control Services;
 - c. Markets Service; and
 - d. Attendance & Pupil Welfare Service.
7. Transfer of Council Tax and Benefits initial customer contact into Customer Services with improved processes, technology (including web chat) and customer experience.
8. Further transformation of Adult Social Care Services including the transfer of all initial customer contact into Customer Services with improved processes, technology and customer experience.
9. Commencement of modernisation across the Children's Social Care functions working across Learning & Opportunities and the Children's Trust.
10. Continued development and implementation of the Single Customer Record

through the Council's Customer Relationship Management System including:

- a. The continued cleansing of data and removal of duplicate customer details ensuring customers have a single entry on the system;
- b. The linkage of Benefits, Tell Us Once and potential appropriate Social Care data to identify, monitor and update enquiries and interactions across these areas; and
- c. The capture of further customer details, as legislation permits, potentially including National Insurance and Date of Birth.

This continued development and expansion of the Single Customer Record, will allow for the increased ability to utilise business intelligence, allowing the proactive identification of location based demand and "intelligence led nudging", allowing the organisation to more effectively support the residents.

11. Supporting the modern operation of the organisation and the development of the Single Customer Record, the Programme will drive forward the Tell Us Once concept across all key areas of the Council, ensuring customers only need to tell us once about key life events (deaths/change of name/address etc.) and we will be able to update key systems automatically, providing the benefits of:

- a. Improved reputation, service delivery and quality; and
- b. Reduction in fraud.

12. Continuation of the Digital Inclusion/Assistance, Communication, Marketing & Channel Shift Strategies, driving customer behaviour from traditional channels to modern online channels, allowing further efficiencies to be realised through the reduction in effort required through traditional channels.

16. With regard to the delivery of Internal Modernisation, the Programme has been working in partnership with Pricewaterhouse Coopers (PwC) to undertake analysis of business processes to develop a summary of the current state operating model across all support services (including: HR, Finance, ICT, Legal, Democratic, SPU, FM and Travel) and development of future state operating models, including design mock-ups for the future access of these services by the whole workforce.

17. This work will be complete in December 2016 allowing implementation to commence from January 2017. Whilst some efficiencies have already been achieved through improvements, including remote working, post and paper reduction and self-serve, the work currently being undertaken will more accurately profile the efficiencies across the Organisation. At present these efficiencies are allocated at Directorate level under the following categories:

- a. Self-Service – implement the ability for the workforce to self-serve accessing streamlined and improved support services including: ODR/CPR Waiver & Approval Processes, Starters/Leavers & Movers, Facilities Management;
- b. Channel Shift – changes of workforce behaviour from traditional telephone and face to face access channels to modern online self-serve functionality; and
- c. Removal of cash from across the organisation both internally and across customer facing services.

18. A comprehensive overview of the Digital Council Programme completed deliverables and those remaining during 16/17 is detailed in **Appendix 1**. A copy of the Digital Council Programme Plan is provided in **Appendix 2**, which details the expected achievement of all deliverables and the end of the Digital Council

Programme, including some significant current developments for Benefits, Planning, Building Control and Enforcement Services.

19. Benchmarking Doncaster's transformation against other local authorities places Doncaster ahead of many others' transformation programmes which end in 2020. This places the Council in a strong position to continue to develop and drive forward its future transformation ambitions. When the Programme ends, transformation must continue and the Programme is already receiving requests for immediate work as well as that to be scheduled into the long term plan. These requests, as well as the indicators from the Government's future Digital Strategy could translate into the following deliverables of Doncaster's future Customer, Digital & Strategies:

1. Continuous improvement and modernisation to those services already transformed, taking into account changes in legislation, technology and customer demand;
2. Working collaboratively to achieve the deliverables of Doncaster's Education and Skills Commission, ensuring not only our adult population, but that children and young people today have the digital skills fit for the future;
3. As our health system moves closer to paperless, we must better join the customer journey between Health and Social Care through delivery of the Local Digital Roadmap (NHS England) and the requirements of the Adults' Improvement Programme, ensuring we can provide or sign-post residents to the assistive technology required to enable them to stay in their homes for longer, as well as providing health and social workers with the required case information to support residents through making informed decisions;
4. The rationalisation of key systems used across the Council, exploring the feasibility and functionality to manage key services through single or combined core systems (Including People and Place).
5. Driving forward the use of spatial data and mapping, ensuring we not only meet the requirements of the Transparency Code, but provide open data as well as utilising our data for effective business intelligence, identifying location based demand and need; and
6. Continuing to be part of and drive the right for everyone to have access to superfast broadband, as that is now often seen as the modern day utility as well as providing residents with support and access to cyber security programmes.

Efficiencies:

20. The Digital Council Programme efficiencies realised to date (actual budget reductions) stands at £2.814m from a total target of £4.760m. Following intervention from the DN17 Programme (Modernisation Implementation Board), the total projected realisation of efficiencies by the 31st March 2017 is £3.908m, leaving a shortfall against the total target by £0.851m.

21. The following table denotes the financial position of the Programme (RAG) to provide a summary of the efficiency realisation:

- Those listed as GREEN includes projects in delivery with approved efficiency targets and those where projects are in delivery and Directorates have committed to the realisation of efficiencies.

- Those listed as AMBER are projects in delivery but Directorates have not committed to the efficiency realisation within 16/17.
- Those listed as RED are projects not yet started/early engagement and/or Directorates are unable to commit to the realisation of efficiencies within 16/17.

RAG:	16/17:	17/18:
	£590,356.00	N/A
	£503,880.00	£129,550.00
	N/A	£721,844.00
Total	£1,094,236.00	£851,394.00
<u>TOTAL</u>	<u>£1,945,630.00</u>	

22. The above efficiencies are inclusive of all Digital Council Programme projects including those to be realised through Internal Modernisation (£1m). Those detailed in 17/18 should be achieved in 16/17, however based on project and engagement status it is not predicted that these efficiencies will be realised in 16/17, hence they are currently shown as 17/18. **Appendix 3** provides a detailed efficiency position against each project making up the Digital Council Programme efficiencies with specific notes against each project denoting its RAG status rating.

23. Through reporting to the DN17 Programme (Modernisation Implementation Board), intervention has taken place during Q2 (16/17) with Directorates to ascertain the feasibility of them realising budgets allocated to digital transformation to close the budget gap by 31 March 2017. This engagement has successfully resulted in the full commitment of efficiencies from the following Directorates before the 31st March 2017:

- Finance & Corporate Services
- Learning & Opportunities: CYP

Delays and Intervention:

24. The Digital Council Programme is scheduled to end on the 31st March 2017, but based on the current position and as detailed in the Programme Plan in **Appendix 2**, the Programme is scheduled to end on 31st October 2017.

25. The Digital Council Programme Board and DN17 Programme (Modernisation Implementation Board) have undertaken a number of actions to mitigate the risk factors with support from both Finance and HR & Organisational Development. The introduction of MSP in January 2015 and Agile later the same year has improved the governance and pace of delivery across the whole Programme and helped address some of those issues and barriers encountered, however these measures have only allowed for some of the delays to be made up.

26. The cause of the delays/barriers, which still exist, are made up by a number of factors:

- 1. Organisation/Service Areas not embracing MSP delivery approach:** despite the Programme introducing specific resources and temporary funding, Service Areas failed to fully identify Business Change Managers,

primarily due to the lack of availability, skills and capacity on top of substantive roles. Whilst some have embraced, other Service Areas have failed to embrace training and skills as well as change management support.

2. **Delayed Engagement:** delays in engagement from Directorates across the life of the Programme have significantly impacted on the progress made in 14/15 and 15/16 which has resulted in a compounded work schedule during 16/17, exceeding the level of resources available to undertake the required business process re-engineering and subsequent digital transformation. Whilst all areas are now engaged with the Programme, delayed engagement with both Children's and Adult Social Care during 14/15 and 15/16 are the biggest factors in placing additional pressure on the work scheduled against available resources.
3. **Recruitment & Retention:** the temporary nature of the Digital Council Programme has resulted in much of the skilled expertise only being recruited on a temporary basis up to the 31.03.2017. With the end date approaching, the Programme has experienced a number of skilled expertise moving to permanent employment which has resulted in difficulties in recruiting new skills as a result of the short term contracts remaining.
4. **Competing Transformation:** during the tenure of the Digital Council Programme, there has been a number of Directorate specific transformation and intervention that has impacted on the level of engagement from Directorates and the commitments to efficiencies. Significant events that have impacted on the delivery schedule of the Programme, include:
 - a. Establishments of the Children's Trust and in-directorate transformation with Learning & Opportunities: CYP.
 - b. Adults Improvement Programme and the transformation business case following the delivery of the immediate business improvements (IBI), of which the Digital Council Programme is delivering IBI 9a (Digital).
5. **Ownership of Efficiency Targets:** whilst the digital efficiency targets for Directorates belong to the Directorates, there have been difficulties in ensuring Directorates fully own these efficiencies and undertake adequate measures to engage with the tools and skills of the Digital Council Programme to realise the efficiencies.

During project delivery, as the position of Future State Operating Model sign off is reached, the Programme has experienced significant delays from Service Areas across the organisation around the realisation of the efficiencies. The delay in the sign-off/agreement of the efficiencies to be achieved in the future state operating model results in delays in the development process or can create blockages in the development pipelines, as the Programme has adopted an approach to only proceed with technical developments when the Service Area is fully committed and engaged to the future operating model and associated realisation of efficiencies.

6. **Data Quality:** in undertaking business process re-engineering across the Council, the Programme has encountered data quality issues within Service Areas to undertake full transformation and present the data to the customer

allowing them to self-serve and undertake transactions without the need for traditional telephone and face to face access channels. The impact on some of these data quality issues has resulted in the Programme not being able to put developments live, as well as increasing the development time through working with Service Areas and Audit to resolve these issues in preparation for transformation.

OPTIONS CONSIDERED

27. There are no options to consider in this report.

IMPACT ON THE COUNCIL'S KEY OUTCOMES

28. This report will have an impact on the council's key outcomes:

	Outcomes	Implications
	All people in Doncaster benefit from a thriving and resilient economy.	None
	People live safe, healthy, active and independent lives.	None
	People in Doncaster benefit from a high quality built and natural environment.	None
	All families thrive.	None
	Council services are modern and value for money.	The modernisation across the organisation will contribute to reduction in the organisation's operating budget by providing modern and efficient business processes and services to residents.
	Working with our partners we will provide strong leadership and governance.	None

RISKS AND ASSUMPTIONS

29. The Digital Council Programme has a complete Risk & Issue Register in place to monitor all risks and issues at both project and programme level. The main direct risk associated with the contents of this report are as detailed below:

1. **Efficiencies** – the financial position detailed in this report and the realisation of efficiencies by Directorates are not met, resulting in a budget gap for the Council in achieving those required by 31 March 2016 and efficiencies requiring “one-off” buy-outs and being carried forward into financial year 17/18.
2. **Engagement** – Directorates (Service Areas) do not engage with the Programme and do not identify Business Change Managers resulting in the Programme not being able to meet the scheduled end date of 31 October 2017.
3. **Competing Transformation** – other transformation projects and programmes ongoing across the Council create conflict and pressures on resources to deliver transformation and achieve efficiencies.

4. **Recruitment & Retention** – due to the short life-cycle remaining for Digital Council, the Programme cannot retain or recruit the additional or replacement resources required.
5. **Data Quality** - as the Programme continues to deliver against the Plan, if data quality issues are encountered working with Service Areas, the delivery schedule may be delayed in resolving/waiting for the resolution of those issues.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

30. Section 1 of the Localism Act 2011 provides the Council with a general power of competence, allowing the Council to do anything that individuals generally may do. Section 111 of the Local Government Act 1972 gives an Authority power to purchase goods and services.

31. Legal services should continue to be consulted to provide the appropriate advice and documentation. The Council's constitution should be complied with including the CPRs and FPRs. Any procurements should be undertaken in accordance with the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 where applicable.

32. In taking this decision, the decision maker must be aware of their obligations under section 149 Equality Act 2010. This section contains the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED). It obliges public authorities, when exercising their functions, to have 'due regard' to the need to:

- a. Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimization and other conduct which the Act prohibits;
- b. Advance equality of opportunity; and
- c. Foster good relations between people who share relevant protected characteristics and those who do not.

33. The relevant protected characteristics under the Equality Act are age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. The duty also covers marriage and civil partnerships, but only in respect of eliminating unlawful discrimination.

34. Case law has established the following requirements for the PSED to be exercised lawfully:

- The equality duties are an integral and important part of the mechanisms for ensuring the fulfilment of the aims of anti-discrimination legislation;
- The relevant duty is on the decision maker personally. What matters is what he or she took into account and what he or she knew. The decision maker cannot be taken to know what his or her officials know or what may have been in the minds of officials in proffering their advice;
- It is important to record the steps taken by the decision maker in seeking to meet the statutory requirements in order to demonstrate that the duty has been discharged;
- The decision-maker must assess the risk and extent of any adverse impact and the ways in which such risk may be eliminated before the adoption of a proposed policy. It is not sufficient for due regard to be a "rear-guard action" following a concluded decision;

- In order to be able to discharge the duty the decision-maker must have information about the potential or actual equality impact of a decision. This information will often be gained in part through consultation;
- The duty must be exercised in substance, with rigour, and with an open mind. It is not a question of ticking boxes; while there is no duty to make express reference to the regard paid to the relevant duty, reference to it and to the relevant criteria reduces the scope for argument;
- General regard to issues of equality are not the same as having specific regard, by way of conscious approach to the statutory criteria;
- Officers reporting to decision makers, on matters material to the discharge of the duty, must not merely tell the decision maker what he/she wants to hear but they have to be “rigorous in both enquiring and reporting to them”;
- Although it is for the court to review whether a decision-maker has complied with the PSED, it is for the decision-maker to decide how much weight should be given to the various factors informing the decision, including how much weight should be given to the PSED itself;
- The duty is a continuing one.

35. Decision makers should in particular note that the duty is for them personally. It is not sufficient to rely on advising officers to discharge the duty by the preparation of the due regard statement and this report. Decision makers must themselves read and actively take into consideration the due regard statement and the consultation materials.

36. Decision makers should also note that as the duty is a continuing one, it will be necessary for decision-makers to have due regard again at the time at which subsequent decisions may be taken. There should be a record/audit trail of how due regard has been shown.

37. The decision maker must also pay regard to any countervailing factors, which it is proper and reasonable for you to consider. Budgetary pressures, economics and practical factors will often be important. The weight of these countervailing factors in the decision making process is a matter for the decision maker.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

38. The Digital Council Programme has a total saving allocation of £4.760m to achieve and to date £2.814m has been delivered, which leaves £1.946m outstanding.

39. Throughout the remainder of 2016/17 the programme plans to achieve £1.094m of this outstanding balance, which will leave a saving target of £0.852m to be identified and delivered in 2017/18. It should be noted L&O:CYP have a directorate saving total within this programme of £0.392m which will be met by one off and ongoing resources in 2016/17 and it is still to be determined what the exact split of this will be. Any use of one off resources in 2016/17 means a solution to the saving pressure will still need to be identified and delivered in 2017/18.

40. The financial position of the Digital Council programme is reported quarterly via the DN17 Programme (Modernisation Implementation Board) and is regularly reviewed so the most up to date position is always available.

41. The resourcing of the Digital Council programme is under review due mainly to

the extended delivery timescale to the 31st October 2017 and further reports will provide an update as required.

HUMAN RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS

42. The implementation of new improved technologies means it is important to ensure that staff are trained and developed to be able to use them which in turn ensures an improved service to customers.

43. Extending the life of the Digital Programme to October 2017 may have an impact on the staff delivering the programme. Temporary staff may need to have contracts extended and vacancies may be more difficult to fill. It is possible that agency workers may need to be sought to provide the necessary skills to complete the programme which is likely to be more expensive than recruiting temporary employees. The Hiring and Managing Agency Workers Policy must be followed if a need to source agency workers is identified.

44. Services undergoing transformation may find that efficiencies delivered impact on the number of staff needed which may result in a need to reduce staffing levels, leading to a need to try to redeploy staff into other roles. Where redeployment is not possible this is likely to result in redundancies. More detailed HR advice should be sought at the relevant time with appropriate policies, procedures and processes followed.

TECHNOLOGY IMPLICATIONS

45. Technology will continue to be an essential enabler to the delivery of the Digital Council Programme, together with its interfaces to the Digital Inclusion, Customer Services and ICT Strategies.

46. Although much of the technical infrastructure to deliver the required capability is now in place or currently being implemented, it is likely that additional technology will be needed to build upon the excellent progress made to date and support the delivery of the additional functionality, enhanced customer experience and delivery of internal modernisation, outlined above.

47. A business case detailing the ICT technical requirements and deliverables of the Digital Council Programme through a forward plan to achieve the strategic vision of the organisation was considered and approved by the Council's ICT Governance Board (IGB) at their meeting in August 2016.

EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

48. The delivery of the Digital Council Programme has direct equality implications on residents, the equality implications arising out of the Programme's deliverables are defined within the Digital Council Programme – Due Regard Statement which ensures that whilst transformation encourages residents to utilise and access services online, the Council will not close traditional face-to-face and telephone access points, it will however ensure services are quicker and easier to access online and therefore become the preferred way of contacting the Council for the majority of residents.

49. The Programme also has in place a Digital Inclusion Strategy forming part of the Due Regard Statement to ensure that the Council provides and sign-posts

residents who want to access services online to training, support and access points to support inclusion.

CONSULTATION

50. This report has been developed in consultation with the following Boards and transformation projects currently in delivery:

- DN17 Programme (Modernisation Implementation Board);
- Digital Council Programme Board; and
- Directorate Leadership Teams.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

51. This report should be read in conjunction with the following appendices:

- Appendix 1 – State of the (Digital Council) Programme 16/17
- Appendix 2 – Digital Council Programme Plan as at Q2 16/17
- Appendix 3 – Project & Financial Position as at Q2 16/17

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