

<b>Decision maker:</b>	<b>Cabinet member finance and corporate services</b>
<b>Meeting date:</b>	<b>Thursday, 19 September 2019</b>
<b>Title of report:</b>	<b>Digital Strategy Delivery 2019/20</b>
<b>Report by:</b>	<b>Assistant Director Corporate Support</b>

## Classification

Open

## Decision type

Non-key

## Wards affected

(All Wards);

## Purpose and summary

To approve the draw down from the IT reserve for specific projects. The report also seeks approval to adopt the Digital Declaration as a joint statement between national and local government on standards for utilising digital services for the benefit of residents. The report will also provide an update and outline of the delivery of the council's digital strategy for the financial year 2019/20. These initiatives ranging from increasing IT security, improving the council website and systems that support the effective delivery of services. Within the delivery is an outline of where reserve draw-down will be used or if part of existing revenue spend.

## Recommendation(s)

**That:**

**(a)** Up to £278k be allocated from IT reserves to support the following:

<b>Item</b>	<b>Amount £000s</b>
Firewall replacement	57
SQL Server and Windows Server 2008 Upgrade	50
Call centre License for Adults and Communities	17
Health Checks and Corius Implementation	47
Implementation costs / project management costs	50

UPS (uninterruptible power supply)	27
Compatibility with Windows 10	30
<b>Total</b>	<b>278</b>

; and

(b) The Local Digital Declaration at appendix 2 be adopted by Herefordshire Council.

## Alternative options

1. That the Local Digital Declaration is not adopted. This is not recommended as the declaration links closely with the intentions of the council in terms of the approach to using digital services as tool support access to services for residents and business, and supporting improvement of services. Also, by agreeing the declaration a range of support and training is opened to the council.
2. That funds are not drawn-down from reserve. This is not recommended as certain areas of work will not be completed putting the organisation at risk or key service improvements not made.

## Key considerations

### Digital Strategy Action Plan and Reserve Draw Down

3. Herefordshire Council agreed a [digital strategy](#) on 13<sup>th</sup> July 2018 that included the key objectives of:
 

**Customer access** – to enable users to access council services with ease by maximising digital technology.

**Empowered workforce** – to utilise digital technology for staff and councillors to work flexibly, responsively and making the most of the technology to deliver services.

**Innovation and efficiency** – for digital technology to support transformation of services whilst creating efficient ways of working including with partners.

**Protected and planned** – to ensure the systems, policies and procedures are put in place to protect the council from cyber-attacks, keep information secure and plan for future delivery.
4. A further set of recommendations was agreed on 26<sup>th</sup> November 2018 ([link](#)) which agreed the drawdown of up to £250k for the following items which were achieved within budget:
  - 20 Laptops for new starters and 10 to replace damaged laptops
  - MS Exchange (eMail engine) and Websense (Website filtering) upgrades
  - MS Systems Centre Configuration Manager
  - Education Tracking 16-19 Year Old System
  - MS SQL Server (Databases) Upgrade
  - MS Sharepoint Upgrade
  - Implementation Costs
5. The Digital Strategy reflects the range of activity across the organisation. Appendix 1 outlines the actions for the remainder of 2019/20 – including those which have already been

achieved. These are firm projects rather than future aspirations. The headings are explained below:

- Digital Strategy deliverables – these are set within the strategy as projects and schemes that will support delivery of the objectives
  - Actions – specific activity that will support the progress of the deliverables
  - Time scale – gives a time scale for delivery or when activity has already taken place. The focus is on 2019/20 but will also show when activity proceeds into future financial years.
  - Measure of achievement – this is based on how to measure delivery and impact. Some of this will be “soft” outputs which contribute to wider performance indicators.
  - Resources – illustrates where resources are coming from. For revenue that could be from different parts of the organisation or covered as part of the Hoople SLA. Reserve is from the ICT reserve and correlates to information contained within this report.
6. To deliver on aspects of the action plan means that funds need to be drawn-down from the IT reserve which is outlined in cabinet budget [papers](#) of 28 June 2018. Items that will be funded are as below which will subject to relevant procurement process:

Item	Amount £'000
Firewall replacement Replacement of Firewalls to provide a layer of internal security recognising risk of cyber attack.	57
SQL Server and Windows Server 2008 Upgrade Mandatory upgrade of the servers to MS SQL Server 2016 and Windows Server 2012 to comply with Cybersecurity standards.	50
Call centre License for Adults and Communities Extend call centre license enable a dashboard showing the number of calls received, numbers waiting, etc.	17
Health Checks and Corius Implementation Servelec Mosaic / Abacus System Systems health check by the software supplier and purchase of Corius (new Business Intelligence Tool) support child protection information system.	47
Implementation costs / project management costs Delivery on news projects and schemes listed as part of the reserve draw-down including reprocurement of Education Management and NEET procurement systems	50
UPS (uninterruptible power supply) Investment in a new UPS system to ensure replacement of current aging UPS hardware in the datacentre to ensure continuity of service in a power failure situation.	27
Compatability with Windows 10 Upgrade back office website and wider systems that comply with Windows 10 requirements and meet the accessibility standards required for websites.	30
<b>Total up to amount</b>	<b>278</b>

7. This will leave funds of £378,162 with the reserve which is a reasonable amount to retain for emergency requirements.

## Digital Declaration

8. The digital declaration was initiated by the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG), the Government Digital Service (GDS), along with public sector bodies from across the UK. This declaration aims to affirm collective ambition for local public services in the use of service to:
  - design services that best meet the needs of citizens
  - challenge the technology market to offer the flexible tools and services we need
  - protect citizens' privacy and security
  - deliver better value for money.
9. This fits well with the intention of Herefordshire Council as declared in the Digital Strategy, specifically in support of residents and businesses in accessing services in a cost effective way.
10. By signing the declaration the council will also be able to access free training and advice from GDS, along with learning and networking with other local authorities who have signed up to the declaration.
11. The full declaration is in appendix 2.

## Activity of Previous year

12. Appendix 3 gives an update of activity in 2018/19 since the instigation of the strategy. The activity is RAG rated with green for activity meeting planned delivery for that year and amber for if target date was missed or not planned for delivery that year. There was no red rating based on planned activity not taking place.

## Community impact

13. The programme of work supports the delivery of the council's [corporate plan](#) and has strong links to the council's [communication strategy](#) and Fastershire broadband delivery programme ([www.fastershire.com](http://www.fastershire.com)), and the council's workplace and workforce approaches and plans.
14. Whilst the strategy does not have a direct effect on the lives of looked after children, some programmes support this area of work and digital is key as familiar communications, social and engagement tool for young people.
15. The council endeavours to ensure that the work it undertakes does not adversely affect the health, safety or welfare of staff or members of the public. The health and safety information stored within the IT system is vital to demonstrate the council has adequate controls in place. Therefore council and its partners are expected to ensure systems are sufficiently robust to protect such information, as far as is reasonably practicable.

## Equality duty

16. Under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, the 'general duty' on public authorities is set out as follows:

A public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to -

- (a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
  - (b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
  - (c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
17. The public sector equality duty (specific duty) requires the council to consider how we can positively contribute to the advancement of equality and good relations, and demonstrate that we are paying 'due regard' in our decision making in the design of policies and in the delivery of services. Though IT is largely a back office function there are some implications for customers / users of service, specifically when interacting with the council. In terms of the protected characteristics the most significant impact is on "age" where older residents are less likely to be internet users which could cause digital exclusion.
18. Office of National Statistics shows that 93% of people in Herefordshire have accessed the internet in the last few months. This leaves the c10k people not using the internet regularly – the older people are the less likely to use the internet based on awareness, skills and confidence. Finance (cost of hardware and connections) can also be a barrier to use.
19. The projects outlined in the action plan shows a programme of activity for digital inclusion through Fastershire including:
- Free internet course workshops at libraries
  - Community grants for events organised locally
  - Parish Council training for website and standard mark
  - Co-production training in communities (Fastershire provide the trainers for sessions).

## Resource implications

20. The resource implications of this report are spend within allocated revenue budget along with use of agreed reserve for ICT schemes. In the first instance revenue spend will be used with maximum of £278k utilised from reserves, retaining as much as possible with that budget for future plans, programmes and emergencies.
21. There is no negative resource implications in agreeing to the declaration. The declaration means that the council can access free training and other support as part of national programme to promote digital services as a tool to support services and users.

## Legal implications

22. The council is not required to produce a digital strategy however it is best practice drawing together activity from different parts of the organisation.
23. All council websites need to adhere to [public sector website regulations](#) from September 2019 and will be monitored by Government Digital Services.
24. Proper procurement process to be followed in the purchase of good and services. Compliance with the Contract procedure rules, Public Contract Regulations 2015 and the EU Treaty Principles of Equal Treatment, Transparency, Non-Discrimination and Proportionality will be required.

25. There are no other significant legal implications arising from this report.

## **Risk management**

### **Risk/opportunity**

Available resource to meet the ambitions of the strategy.

Changing nature of technology means the strategy becomes out of date.

Ensuring the delivery of the strategy.

Digital Declaration – an opportunity for linking to national schemes, funding and training.

Pace of change making investment redundant.

### **Mitigation**

Use of the revenue and capital budgets to meet objectives and additional funding sourced for initiatives outside of the core allocations.

The strategy is a framework of the IT work of the council and allows for operational change and development.

The activity is monitored through performance framework process; formal decision made through the council's governance process.

To take advantage of opportunity to improve the council's digital offer to services and users.

With technology changing at a pace the investment in areas outlined in the report may become redundant. This will be monitored at the time of purchase to scan if technology advances influence a different direction.

## **Consultees**

26. None.

## **Appendices**

1. Digital Strategy Action Plan 2019/20
2. Digital Declaration
3. Digital Strategy Activity 2018/19

## **Background papers**

None identified